Kant on Rules

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Thought can as it were fly, it doesn’t have to walk.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, Zettel §273
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Abbreviations

- Works by Kant
  A.../B... Critique of Pure Reason
  HL Hechsel Logic
  JL Jäschel Logic
  P Prolegomena zur einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik

- Works by Wittgenstein
  PI Philosophical Investigations
  PG Philosophical Grammar
  PR Philosophical Remarks
  RFM Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics

- Works by Kripke
  K Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language
Introduction

or

On what is not there

Gradually, I have come to consider the potential for talking about things that are not there to be one of the most interesting features of philosophical study. What I have in mind is a fairly large class of cases, making up the content of such topics as justice, morals, intentionality, the self, beauty, friendship, God and more than a few others; topics which are evidently shaped at a conceptual level and which are often thought to resist naturalistic reduction. In other words, they are not obviously part of our phenomenal experience, which makes it hard to tell whether they are anywhere at all.

Notwithstanding the title, this work will largely turn out to be an investigation into the nature of ‘what there is not’ and how we are able to justify our continued discussion of these things despite a lingering doubt about their reality. Such doubt is of an ontological kind, earning it the label of ontological skepticism. It will be argued in the first chapter that its ancestry is fairly recent, dating back to Hume’s skeptical investigations into the nature of causality. Our modern case in point of this skepticism is found in Kripke’s “Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language”, in which a well thought-through argument about the nature of rule-following leads a skeptical inquirer to conclude that there is no such thing as rule-following (or at least not in the parochial sense). This conclusion has important ramifications. It is argued by Kripke that if we cannot make sense of rule-following, then we cannot make sense of meaning and if we cannot make sense of that, then the possibility of thought in general becomes threatened by skeptical doubt.

We seem attached to the thought of morality, justice, beauty and intentionality as being more than mere human concoctions. Both Hume and Kripke share this view and propose a remedy to the skeptical threat in the form of a skeptical solution. This solution, however, is perceived by many as an inadequate redemption of causality/meaning. The skeptical solution they propose identifies our talk of these things with practices that have no self-
standing meaningful, or *normative* import, whereas most of us want to say that something is not merely beautiful, meaningful, true, or virtuous if we think it so. An early rejection of this particular skeptical conclusion/solution came from Immanuel Kant in the form of a *Critique of Pure Reason*. In this philosophical monument, Kant tries to argue for a view of human *thought* and how it can be *about* things, including those things that are not directly perceived. Taking my cue from Kant’s work, the aim of this thesis is to take the condensed argument from the *Critique* and apply it to the modern case of Kripke’s skepticism; the thought being that *if Hume’s problem is anything like Kripke’s problem and if Kant’s critical philosophy attempts to answer former, then it is not an unreasonable thought to apply his solution to the latter.*

By following the structure of this motto in setting out the lines of argument I hope to render it in its most perspicuous form. What this comes down to is a simple division between two analogous arguments. First, I will properly introduce ontological skepticism and take Hume’s skeptical argument as its paradigm example (ch. 1). Next, I will counter this skeptical claim with the one formulated by Kant (ch. 2). The same format will be rehearsed with regard to Kripke’s skepticism about meaning. I will introduce his rule-following paradox as a modern example of ontological skepticism (ch. 3) and counter it in Kantian fashion (ch. 4).

In addition there are two thoughts which will be introduced in due time and which lie under the surface of the main argument. The first is one of, one might say, an exegetical nature. Kant introduced his philosophy as a step in a transcendental progress of philosophical ideas leading towards what he called ‘critical philosophy’. Critical philosophy, according to him, is a natural reaction to skepticism and this is what would allow for a generalization of the critical response to any eruption of ontological skepticism – e.g. Kripke’s skepticism. Now, if Kripke is right in analyzing Wittgenstein’s discussion of rule-following as a case of ontological skepticism, \(^1\) then, however distorted the Kripkensteinian version of Wittgenstein’s argument may be, formulating a critical response to Kripke’s problem is an indirect way of responding critically to Wittgenstein’s problems. From an exegetical point of view this is an interesting way of linking Kant and Wittgenstein. Seeing their philosophies as connected through a shared response to *ontological skepticism* would provide some firmer footing for the numerous comparisons of aspects of both philosophies neither of which, it must be admitted, stands out as a paragon of clarity.

This brings me to the second consideration that lies at the heart of this work, but will only be discussed explicitly in the concluding remarks. In putting examples of ontological skepticism next to each other it will emerge that the recurring skeptical theme revolves around

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\(^1\)This is an exegetical issue that I will not be able to argue for in this work. I will treat it as a hypothesis, but the list of people endorsing this view outranks the number of people explicitly rejecting it – see [9], [28], [34] amongst others. To be honest I know of no one who explicitly rejects this view, the only implicit rejections coming in the form of epistemologically tainted analyses of the problem at hand.
a notion of freedom, spontaneity, or the absence of bounds to the human imagination. Our imagination allows us to conceive of what is possible and since this faculty appears to have a great deal of freedom in conjuring up contradictory possibilities, it is, in many cases, not clear what could function as a criterion for assigning truth-values to its products. In turn, this might lead us to doubt the status of any statement shaped by our conceptual capacity. Relating this back to the topic of this introduction: talk of non-directly observable things – e.g. causality, morality, justice, the self – leads us to consider them, at least partly, shaped by our imagination, but since the imagination is a spontaneous, or freely operating faculty, we are led to doubt the objectivity of whatever it shapes. When considering things that are not there, we are thus considering products of the imagination and when considering the affixed ‘are not there’ to be problematic, we express doubt as to our right to talk about these things in a meaningful, viz. objective way.

Seeing skepticism in this light makes it clearer why rule-following and ontology are explicitly drawn together in Kripke’s discussion and how they eventually relate to what there is not – I hope. Rules act as constraints on the limitless possibilities of the imagination and thereby render it, in some sense, a source of objective knowledge. Putting these rules into doubt, as Kripke does, unleashes the power of human spontaneity. Being set loose, any claim to objectivity is forsaken and with it our ability to meaningfully talk about things that are not there. Kant’s aim, in reacting to Hume, was to regain the constraints, while holding on to a notion of human experience as an expression of freedom. I think this is a valuable, if not foundational project for philosophy and bringing out this aspect of the rule-following debate is a way of exhibiting its importance.
Chapter 1

Divisions of Skepticism

The starting point for any investigation into knowledge is the consciousness of our own ignorance. The thought that reality might be different from how we take it to be, is what leads us to inquire into ways of ‘getting it right’. Greek philosophers were well aware of this human condition and their explanations of it are diverse, ranging from incompatibility between our static linguistic conventions and the worldly flux which they try to describe (Heraclitus), to a view of a colorless world of primary qualities to which we have no direct access (Democritus), or an all-out skeptical view denying any knowledge of reality to be possible. However doubtful these philosophers might have been about the status of our knowledge, their skepticism is restricted to a view of there being something out there. The doubt concerns the truth of our beliefs about the world surrounding us, not the question of whether there is a fact of the matter about which these beliefs can be right or wrong. The latter kind of ontological skepticism “is a modern invention”.¹ It is the “modern invention” of skepticism which will be our subject matter, but to get a clear view of what this amounts to, it will be convenient to contrast it with the ‘ancient invention’ of skepticism.

1.1 Epistemological & Ontological

The difference between the ancient form of skepticism and the modern version is one between an epistemological form over against its more radical ontological cousin. Epistemological skepticism comes up whenever there is ambiguity as to what is real, or actual. It questions our beliefs in relation to what they purport to represent. Ontological skepticism, on the other hand, does not involve the quest for ensuring the veridicality of our beliefs, but it inquires into the possibility of our beliefs being veridical, of there being a fact of the

matter as to whether my belief is true or false. In clarifying the distinction, an analogy might be drawn with the distinction in theological discourse between atheism and agnosticism. Agnosticism is the view that we should withhold judgment about the actuality of a divine being, because of our incapability of ascertaining this claim. Atheism is, properly speaking, the negation of theism. It negates the existence of something that we would call a divine being – be it a prime mover, a something whose non-being is impossible, or simply Ik Onkar.

Burnyeat notices this contrast and attributes the latter form to Descartes, supposedly, on the basis of his giving a proof of the existence of an external world in the Sixth Meditation. In doing so, I believe Burnyeat got the distinction exactly right, but he attributed it wrongly. Descartes’ skepticism is based on the acknowledgement dating back to the ancients, that we are sometimes deceived by our senses – e.g. we see towers from afar and judge them to be round, when on closer inspection they turn out to be square. This ancient invention is augmented with two claims. First, since we can imagine the possibility of having lived our whole conscious lives in a dream and since in a dream we do not form a true representation of the world, there might not have been anything true about the beliefs I actually have. Secondly, being “ignorant of the author of my origin”, I might well be systematically deceived by some evil demon, or due to the way that I am constituted – so constituted, presumably, by some evil demon. Although this Cartesian skepticism diverges from ancient skepticism in its tendency to generalize the skeptical claims, it is not yet a genuine rejection of the outside world. It appeals to a fact of the matter – the world – being either not-represented in a continuous dream or misrepresented through demonic intervention/constitution. The question asked by the Cartesian skeptic is whether I have knowledge – veridical beliefs – of the world, whether what I am perceiving is the external world, or some mirage. He does not deny the more fundamental claim that it is in principle possible to represent the world at all. Descartes’ skepticism investigates the link between inner and outer, between res cogitans and res extensa, their existence being his point of departure.

Genuinely radical skepticism about the possibility of meaning, knowledge etc. is an even more modern invention than Cartesian skepticism. A first radicalization of Cartesian skepticism is already seen in Berkeley’s views. Whereas on Descartes’ view the mind-world dualism is supposed to be part of the solution to the skeptical problem, on Berkeley’s view, the problem arises from this very distinction. It is because we think of real things as being ‘out there’ independently of us that the possibility of skeptical doubt arises. For, if this

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2A592/B621
4One might want to make the further distinction between pure epistemological skepticism and the more moderate epistemological form of Pyrrhonism to which the ancients tended. The point of this chapter being the distinction between epistemological and ontological skepticism as such, I will not go into these historical matters.
is the case – if there is this dualism, how could we be certain that the things that we are seeing accord with the real nature of things in the world? Berkeley reacts to this by bringing our certainty back to what I will anachronistically call sense-data. What we see when we perceive a dog is a bundle of ideas – elongated body, brown fur, wagging tail and the like – not a real object. In this sense, Berkeley chafes a bit of Descartes’ view. For Descartes, we stand in contact with things and a non-deceiving God acts to safeguard this relation. For Berkeley, the only real is what is in the ideas which are neither in the objects, nor completely self-induced – they are not subject to our will – therefore God must manifest himself in these ideas. Berkeley’s is a more radical skepticism in adhering to a form of immaterialism. Immaterialism, however, doubts the existence of matter, it does not doubt the existence of a fact of the matter. If anything, God in his role as non-deceiver distinguishes truth from illusion and this is what establishes both kinds of skepticism as epistemological in form. It is only when this fact of the matter is denied that we transgress into the realm of ontological skepticism, a realm where even God does not know right from wrong.

David Hume transgresses this boundary and attempts to demonstrate with his ‘skeptical philosophy’ that many propositions which we take to be justified statements about the world are in fact not of the veridical kind. In most of his writings Hume aimed to describe what was actually going on in cases where people ascribe causality to nature, beauty to objects, virtue to acts, or selves to persons. In every case, his investigations turned on the demonstration of a fact of the matter. If such a fact of the matter could be described in any case, then this could serve as an objective justification for talk of this causal, or moral kind. As is well known, every single Humean investigation turned up blank. On his view there is no fact of the matter in any of these cases and therefore no objective justification for positing things like causal relations.

Immanuel Kant famously reacted to this subjectivist claim by developing his ‘critical’ answer. In the course of this work I will be examining Hume’s problem as the paradigmatic problem of ontological skepticism, Kant’s critical solution and the possibility of adapting this solution to other manifestations of ontological skepticism. But before continuing on this path, let me rehearse and elaborate a bit on the differences between these forms of skepticism:

1. The Cartesian takes the possibility of experience for granted, but doubts the actuality of this experience; he doubts whether what he is seeing is real and not a dream. The Kantian skeptic asks for the possibility of experience: what it takes to be able to experience at all. He therefore does not take it for granted that there is such a thing as a fact of the matter.

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5 [3] §86
6 [3] §26
7 This description is based, for a large part, on the distinctions made by James Conant in [9].
2. In Descartes' *Meditations* what is doubted is the *veridicality* of experience. In Kant's exposition, the problem is not so much about veridicality, as it is about *existentiality*. Descartes concerns himself with the inferential step from "appearance to reality", whereas Kant investigates the possibility of an object to which to refer. The former doubts his claims, the latter doubts the possibility of making them.

3. The Cartesian skeptic is concerned with *truth*, whereas the Kantian is concerned with *objective purport*. The Cartesian takes it for granted that there are ways in which the world is and he wants to have certainty about his conformity with reality. The Kantian is not so much concerned with *truth*, that is to say, he is not so much concerned with *material truth* – the way things are – but with the way things ought to be to be able to experience them – i.e. *transcendental truth*.

Summarizing, the important distinction between the two kinds of skepticism is their directedness: Cartesian skepticism is directed at the *actual*, Kantian at the *possible*. The former is based on doubt as to whether the picture we have is the *right* one. The latter questions talk of "objects of experience" as such, it questions whether there is anything to be right about and in this sense the doubt is genuinely *existential*.

Conant gives three examples of the philosophical contexts where these kinds of skepticism arise. In philosophy of perception the Cartesian problem is to account for a justified endorsement of what you experience. I am sitting here, typing away in a library wearing a grey T-shirt, but who is to say that I’m not lying undressed in my bed at night, dreaming that this is taking place? The Kantian worry, in this case, would not be about the actuality of this scene, but about my ability to even have the thought of me sitting here in a library, to wit, what it is to have *thoughts* in which you judge about the sensible content, in Conant’s words “[t]he gap the Kantian seeks to overcome is from sensory blindness to sensory consciousness – from a form of sensibility upon which things merely causally impinge to one upon which things impress themselves as being thus and so”.

Another example alludes to Kripke’s infamous form of meaning-skepticism, which forms the conclusion of Kripke’s rule-following analysis. In this case the Cartesian skeptic would wonder about the correctness of my interpretation of a sign – how can I be sure that this is what is *really* meant. The Kantian skeptic, on the other hand, would be concerned with the possibility of meaning: What makes it possible to even mean anything? What kind of unity is necessarily required in language?

Setting these forms of skepticism over against each other might seem strange, especially to those familiar with the *Critique*. Surely, Kant’s aim in this work was to demonstrate the possibility of synthetic *a priori* propositions, or the “conditions for the possibility of knowledge”, why would this not be an epistemological concern? Putting the thought in

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9The third example given by Conant is that of skepticism about other minds. This problem is treated by Kripke in his postscript to [27], but I will not be concerned with it in this work.
epistemological terms, however, is not the same as rendering the question an epistemological one. Indeed, one could understand the question of “how knowledge is possible?” in terms of asking for necessary and sufficient conditions for a belief to be veridical – the *mechanism*, so to speak. Yet, the question can also be understood in terms of how it is possible at all, to have something like a judgment of experience that is open to how the world is. In modern times, this anxiety is brought out in Sellarsian terms: If judgments are placed in the space of reasons, then how can they ever stand in connection with the space of nature? How do objects act as a justificatory constraint on thought?\(^{10}\)

I see the breaking point of this division as contained in the second point mentioned above as the possibility of doubt. The Cartesian is rightfully said to doubt his claims. From the possibility of being wrong he infers the impossibility of ascertaining when he is right and this leads him to doubt his every claim. How would this kind of doubt be explained in the Kantian case? What kind of doubt does the ontological skeptic entertain? Admittedly, this leads me to soften the distinction I presented in this section. Although the ontological question is often framed in the form of skeptical doubt, it is not clear that this is the right way to describe it. When you doubt the possibility of making claims to the way the world is – possibility of thought/judgment, you are not expressing a kind of epistemic uncertainty. Doubt about the possibility of thought being open to the world is not of the same kind as doubt about the color of my laptop, or the number of people in this room. The question is a categorically different one and so is its range of possible answers. It would ordinarily make sense, in certain cases, to say “I guess this is what people would call ‘metallic’”, or “I guess there are about five people in this room”, whereas to say “I guess there is no possibility of making any kind of meaningful statement about the world being so-and-so”, would only make sense in very special cases – admitting to the skeptic’s argument would be one of them.\(^{11}\)

This is a point touched on by Wittgenstein in his last work: *On Certainty*. There he distinguishes between forms of doubt and the kinds of questions to which they are related. Meaningful doubt can be expressed with regard to, for instance, empirical propositions, statements about the state of the world. Doubting the possibility of making these statements, if it is to be regarded as a form of doubt at all, must be seen as a very strange sort, because admitting to this doubt would immediately invalidate our ability to doubt in all of the empirical cases. If there is no way in which we are open to the world and when we judge about it, then it makes no sense to say that one judgment is right and the other is wrong and this would make it senseless to doubt the veridicality of any judgment. I will not be discussing *On Certainty* in this work, partly because it treats of both kinds of skepticism described here, whereas I only want to talk about one of them – it would

\(^{10}\)McDowell sets this out as a commonly neglected, but crucial way of dividing the subject. ([35] p. xiii)

\(^{11}\)This is meant as an illustration of a grammatical difference, not as a definitive categorization. One could argue, for instance, that in mathematical judgments you can guess the answer, while they are not empirical – this issue will be treated in chapter 4.
unnecessarily complicate the exposition. However, at this point it gives me occasion to draw the distinction more clearly. Ontological skepticism, might be cast in epistemological terms (as is often the case), but and this is Wittgenstein’s insight, to do so leads us into a philosophical muddle. If we look at the grammar of these forms of doubt, at the questions related to them, then we will see that they are not the same and that a lot of confusion can be forestalled by drawing them apart. One way of doing this is to consider ontological skepticism as something other than an expression of doubt. Nonetheless, I consider it more productive to retain the distinction while including a disclaimer. For, even though you might think the ontological doubt is misplaced, it is skeptical at the root, i.e. you cannot deny that there are skeptics who take this to be a genuine form of doubt, resulting in a genuine problem. I take it to be the effort of those reacting against ontological skepticism – e.g. Kant and Wittgenstein – to demonstrate the inapplicability of doubt to such cases as were described by Wittgenstein as hinge propositions – propositions that cannot meaningfully be doubted without undermining the whole practice within which doubt makes sense. The goal is to dissolve the skeptical issue by showing that, what is taken to be a legitimate form of critical thinking, is actually a spill-over from justified epistemic doubt in cases of indeterminacy. Once the spill-over is contained, we have a clear view of what we may consider our genuine doubt: a form of integrity that characterizes healthy empirical inquiry.12

One last note on this issue is that the epistemological and the ontological side should not be taken apart too rigidly. It is definitely the case that the ontological worries inform epistemological ones. For instance, Kant purports to have proved, once and for all, the principle of sufficient reason through his transcendental logic and certainly the principle of sufficient reason acts as an epistemological principle. In short, I would not want to go as far as Heidegger in saying that “[t]he Critique of Pure Reason has nothing to do with a “theory of knowledge””,13 but I do think that whatever knowledge-theoretic results follow from this work are a by-product, not its intended result; the principle of sufficient reason only acts as an epistemological principle, because it “is the ground of possible experience”.14 15 What Kant intended with his Critique, was to safeguard empirical inquiry from skeptical doubt. In formulating this defense he is not at all dismissive of skepticism, per se. Within clearly defined bounds – those of transcendental philosophy16 –

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12 Notwithstanding, you might want to conclude that we are not talking about a genuine skeptic in the case of ontological skepticism. Although I cannot purport to have the last word on this definitional issue, I should warn that this would make it very difficult to understand a lot of is dealt with by Kant, Wittgenstein and Kripke when they refer to skepticism – a point made by Conant as well – as will become clear in the course of this work.

13 A200/B246

14 I do not, however, in any way want to gainsay the importance of these results. Not any more, at least, than I would take the Private Language Argument as a mere by-product of the rule-following paradox – see chapter 3.

15 A424/B452
1.2 HUME’S ONTOLOGICAL SKEPTICISM

To get a clear view of Hume’s skepticism, it is necessary to refer to his views on cognition and our acquisition of knowledge. According to Hume’s theory, cognition relies on certain faculties: (1) sensory faculty, (2) memory, (3) imagination and the (4) understanding – faculty of reason. Our knowledge of the world is based on our impressions of it, which we receive through sensory experience (1). These impressions are the cause of our ideas which are subjective representations – exact copies – of impressions. Ideas are stored in our memory (2). Memory is a faculty that works as a “faithful mirror” in representing what has come to the mind before. It always recalls ideas correctly, although the vivacity of these recollections is always less than that of any current experience.

Ideas, in turn, may be separated and united in different order through the use of the imagination (3). This association of ideas tends to follow certain principles – Resemblance, Contiguity and Cause and Effect – as if guided by a “gentle force”, but our imagination is not strictly bound by them. It still has the freedom to associate contrary to these principles; the opposite of a certain matter of fact is always thinkable. The only principle constraining the imagination is a logical one, namely the principle of contradiction. Apart from this

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17 A760/B788
18 Something to keep in mind is that a rejection of knowing, is not yet an admission of doubt. It is not the case that when Kant remarks that “I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith”, he is actually submitting to the skeptic in admitting that he has no arguments for what he believes. Rather, he is saying that the existence of God is not the kind of thing that you can have arguments for, therefore it is not the kind of thing that you can doubt, thus belief in God is excluded from the reach of skepticism. Taking all rejection of knowledge to be a form of skepticism would make belief in God part of a skeptical attitude, which seems to be at odds with the concept of belief.
19 This division of faculties is very common, as it is derived from Aristotle’s paradigmatic division in [1] books II & III.
logical principle, the aforementioned principles of regularity serve to bring about a certain unity in our associations. The origin of this unity lies in the utility of the faculty of imagination. Since man, according to Hume, “is a reasonable being, and is continuously in pursuit of happiness”, he uses his faculties in this endeavour. The intentional use of the imagination necessitates a certain coherency, or unity in its associations, reflecting the plan that the author of the imagination has in mind. For example, an engineer (given that his happiness depends on the design of a new car) would not be making much headway in his “pursuit of happiness”, if he kept conjuring up images of cars where the four wheels are replaced by a teddy-bear, a banana, a yellow tulip with red spots and his father’s heirloom wristwatch, respectively.

Lastly, understanding is a faculty for making inferences. This act is commonly referred to as reasoning and it consists in comparing objects to each other and establishing certain relations between them. Reasoning, according to Hume, may be divided into demonstrative reasoning and moral reasoning. The former concerns relations of ideas and aims at inferences which are necessary a priori. The latter concerns reasoning of matters of facts. Since this kind of reasoning is based on facts which we have gathered from experience, it can never yield a necessary claim to knowledge. The difference in justificatory status is due to the principle that is used in either case. In considering the relations of ideas only the necessary principle of contradiction is involved; the opposite idea is excluded from possibility. With matters of fact this is not the case. We can always imagine the opposite matter of fact to obtain. Therefore, a priori knowledge of matters of fact is categorically rejected.

As is well known, even outside philosophical circles, the result of this enquiry into the workings of the human understanding has resulted in a rather (in)famous claim about the nature of causality. The reasoning leading up to this conclusion runs roughly as follows: Relations of cause and effect are of the ‘matter-of-factual’ kind. Through the relation of cause and effect, we go beyond what is given and infer a state which is not given in experience, on the basis of what is given by sensibility. The only thing we notice in experience is a constant conjunction of cause and effect. We notice contiguity of two objects and we see a succession of states on several occasions and after a while we infer a connection of cause and effect. Hume concludes, however, that we can never arrive at the relation of cause and effect itself. We cannot go beyond the other two relations and derive a causal principle grounded in the principle of contradiction; we have no a priori knowledge.

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15 – Hume is effectively endorsing the imagination’s ability of unlimited mereological composition.

23[20] p. 20

24[19] p. 53

25When the comparison is made with respect to two objects which are directly present, this is what is called a perception. Comparison in perception is effected without the help of any reasoning; it is merely a passive acknowledgment of a certain kind of relation between the objects.

26[20] ch.4 part 1
of cause and effect, because a host of different situations might follow the perception of a certain situation. For instance, in the case of one billiard ball hitting another we might presume the one to transfer its force to the other, but there is no \textit{a priori} reason to exclude a number of other possibilities, such as the balls both remaining at rest, or the moving ball bouncing of the other. The conclusion is that there is no way for us to infer an effect from a certain supposed cause, except through having experienced this same cause-effect relation and inductively conjecturing a rehearsal of what has happened on previous occasions of a similar kind. Thus, absolute, justified certainty about the existence of a causal connexion is excluded.\footnote{\textit{... every effect is a distinct event from its cause. It could not, therefore, be discovered in the cause, and the first invention or conception of it, \textit{a priori}, must be entirely arbitrary. And even after it is suggested, the conjunction of it with the cause must appear equally arbitrary; since there are always many other effects, which, to reason, must seem fully as consistent and natural.”} (\cite{20} p. 32)}

Summing up: Hume does not doubt the experience which comes directly before the mind. He does deny any justification to inferences based on this direct representation. He does not doubt the perception of two billiard balls at a certain point in time, in terms of the veridicality of this perception. He does question the necessary existence of a \textit{causal-fact} which is to account for the one billiard ball moving the other. This form of doubt follows from his theory of ideas described above, taking as its starting point what comes directly before us in the mind. Perceptions contain certain knowledge and, in line with his cognitive theory, he admits that, if there were such a thing as a \textit{causal-fact} “discoverable by mind, we could foresee the effect, even without experience; and might, at first, pronounce with certainty concerning it, by the mere dint of thought and reasoning”.\footnote{\cite{20} ch. 7 part 1} Unfortunately there never has been any perception of a causal-fact and we therefore reason about cause and effect on the basis of subjective inclinations. This shows quite clearly that Hume’s doubt does not concern things we all take to perceive. Quite the contrary! He finds it much more interesting to doubt the things that everyone, after the least bit of Socratic questioning, admits to never having perceived at all. The distinction with the Cartesian form of skepticism fully reveals itself here, making intelligible why I should hold that skepticism concerning the existence of the external world is not – strange though it sounds – of an ontological kind. Only the Humean, radical form truly concerns things that are not there, but it is only to express this doubt given the a background of veridical, perceptual knowledge.

Does this mean that we should drop the notion of a causality altogether? Not entirely, says Hume. The principle of custom rather than the principle of reason is our guide in experience of these matters.\footnote{\cite{20} ch. 5} Our “propensity to renew the same act or operation” should readily be admitted by any man and it is this human disposition to grow accustomed to regularities in \textit{experience} which furnishes us with a causal principle for creating coherent associations.
We may, then, speak of causal ‘connexion’ in a subjective sense in the following way: on a single occasion of an event $a$ following event $b$, we can only speak of conjunction. However, when we have seen several instances of the form $a$ followed by the form $b$, we may connect event-type $A$ to event-type $B$ in our imagination, thereby securing a subjectively necessary connection of $A$ and $B$. “A particular idea”, writes Hume, “becomes general by being annex’d to a general term”.\(^{30}\) We come up with a general term – a concept – to describe the constant conjunction on many particular occasions. This general term is a rule which reflects the constant conjunction. The rule itself, however, is based on our subjective experience of conjunction and it cannot be justified as a necessary law in the objective sense.\(^{31}\) Hence, a belief can be distinguished from fiction – a mere proposition – through nothing more than a subjective feeling of appropriateness which is the direct result of custom. A belief in a causal connexion is of a very strong kind and this extreme vivacity of the idea is what led many a philosopher to mistake the causal principle for an \textit{a priori} principle of reason. Nonetheless, this difference is one of degree, not of kind.

\section*{1.3 Kant’s version of Hume’s Problem}

In the \textit{Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik} Kant describes his first Critique as the “execution of Hume’s problem in its widest possible extent”, implying that it is fundamentally a bulky anti-skeptical argument.\(^{32}\) Not many have taken seriously this rather strong claim about what seems to be a multifarious work on a range of philosophical topics. They contend that Kant is oversimplifying the matter in what is essentially an introduction to the much more fine-grained \textit{Critique}. They hold that Kant is simply mistaken, regarding this claim as a statistical bump.\(^{33}\)

Such ironing out of inconsistencies should, in my opinion, always be regarded as a last resort and in this case I consider it to have been called too early. I do believe there is some sense to be made of Kant’s remark and I think this is in line with his admission about ‘being awoken from a dogmatic slumber’ due to Hume’s skeptical raucous. If one would summarize the aim of the \textit{Critique} as that of showing how synthetic \textit{a priori} judgments are possible – as, indeed, the problem \textit{is} summarized in the B-introduction\(^{34}\) – and if one then refers to what he says following this summary:

\(^{30}\)[19] I.I.7 – The “great philosopher” to whom he attributes this discovery is probably Berkeley.

\(^{31}\)Note that the other two principles of Resemblance and Contiguity are constitutive of the causal principle

\(^{32}\)P p. 261

\(^{33}\)I have even heard it be claimed that Kant is wrong to attribute any form of skepticism to Hume and therefore his claim to anti-skeptical reasoning ought to be misguided. I cannot make sense of this rather bizarre claim in any other way than by attributing it to a conflation of epistemological and ontological skepticism. If the former is taken to be definitional of skepticism, then indeed Hume would ought not be labeled a skeptic.

\(^{34}\)B19
...[Hume], who among all philosophers came closest to this problem, [yet] still did not conceive of it anywhere near determinately enough and in its universality but rather stopped with the synthetic proposition of the connection of the effect with its cause (*Principium causalitatis*), believing himself to have brought out that such an *a priori* proposition is entirely impossible. (B19)

...then it will at least be clear that Kant’s admission in the *Prolegomena* is not just a bump in the exegetical data. If Hume’s problem is taken in its abstract form, without reference to causality, morality, the self, religion, or any other specific topic which he assessed, it is about how we think and speak of things that are not there. That is to say, Hume’s problem is the problem of ontological skepticism and the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgements is Kant’s answer to this problem.

Hume’s view of causality was discussed earlier as a form of generalization over particulars, or the “annexing of a general term to a particular idea”. No amount of singular impressions is going to furnish us with a direct experience of causal necessity. It is just not in our power to perceive any such thing, thus we are in the dark as to whether there is such a causal-fact. Kant follows Hume’s argument closely\(^{35}\) and it is obvious that he does not disagree with the structure of the argument, but only with its premises. These, Kant claims, should lead to even more radical conclusions than Hume ought to be willing to admit. Had he seen that he should have followed through on his argument, then he would naturally have come to doubt his faulty premises, for he would have noticed the *reductio ad absurdum*. His blindspot allowed him to stick to his original argument and live with the consequences of his mild skeptical conclusion, adopting the stoical-skeptical mindset he lauds at the end of his *Enquiry*. Kant’s reaction is to try and wake up Hume from his ‘skeptical slumber’, by pointing out the devastating effects of skeptical argument. According to him the whole idea of causality – not just its objectivity – would vanish into thin air if one would rest content with Hume’s conclusion:

> [in the proposition that every alteration must have a cause], the very concept of a cause so obviously contains the concept of a necessity of connection with an effect and a strict universality of the rule that it would be entirely lost if one sought, as Hume did, to derive it from a frequent association of that

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\(^{35}\)The problem is brought out differently at several points in the *Critique* and the *Prolegomena*, but they all seem to amount to the following two points:

1. We can only have necessity in direct impressions and in relations of ideas, but causality is found in neither (there is no causal-fact).

2. We learn causal relations from experience, thus
   
   (a) We are able to imagine a particular instance as being aberrant from our usual expectations.

   (b) We are able to imagine the causal principle (every event has a cause) as not holding for our world – as observed by Hume, in both cases – 2a & b – denial is not self-contradictory.
which happens with that which precedes and a habit (thus a merely subjective necessity) of connecting representations arising from that association. (B5)

Kant suggests that Hume’s reductionism might be able to offer a reasonable picture of the way in which certain generalizations are made, but it does not reduce it to what we mean when we talk of cause and effect. What we actually mean in this case, is that there is a certain rule or law at work, responsible for the effect following upon the cause and this way of speaking is lost when we adopt Hume’s argument. The very definition is of causality involves the intensional relation between cause and effect.

On Kant’s abstract formulation this loss comes out as being too great to bear. He does not present Hume’s problem as being about causality, nor even as being a more general statement on how we hypothesize about imperceptible objects. The way Kant spins it, the Humean problem is about the general character of a rule, be it in causality, ethics, or even in mathematics. So, the strangely Prussian-sounding Hume of the Prolegomena, asked reason to answer him:

“...mit welchem Rechte sie sich denkt; dass etwas so beschaffen sein könne, dass, wenn es gesetzt ist, dadurch auch etwas Anderes notwendig gesetzt werden müsse; denn das sagt der Begriff der Ursache.” (P p. 257)

In her article “Kant on Causality: What was he trying prove?” Béatrice Longuenesse articulates the non-Humean phrasing of this question. She traces his weird use of positing (setzen) back to Christian Wolff’s description of the hypothetical syllogism in modus ponens and she then rephrases Kant’s formulation of Hume’s problem as follows:

how can the relation between two empirical states of affairs be such that the first can be thought under the antecedent, the second under the consequent of a hypothetical judgement that functions as the major premise in a syllogism in modus ponens, such that “the antecedent being posited (as the minor premise), the consequent must be posited (as the conclusion)”?

This formulation suggests a broader skeptical problem. Of course, Hume’s skepticism about causal connexions was admitted to be only an example of a broader set of similar arguments. Kant, however, turns it into a question about how we can think in terms of a hypothetical judgment. This might seem to be a preoccupation that is far removed from Hume’s questioning of causal inference. But in fact, if we remember that Hume’s argument about causality is only a paradigm case for his investigation into the illegitimate universalizing tendency of the imagination, then framing Hume’s problem as being about the possibility of hypothetical judgment is not quite so far off. He questions the legitimacy of ascribing a lawful status to a hypothetical judgment, which is inherently synthetic – it

36 The latter is, as noted by Lanier Anderson ([29] p. 517), a rationalist “paradigm for philosophical cognition”, which is why Kant’s use of this subject functions as an obvious testcase.

37 [33] p. 150
1.4. KANT’S CRITICAL STEP

posits one thing upon positing another. He correctly distinguishes antecedent and consequent as being “distinct existences” and wonders how you could ever derive a relation between the two that holds universally in the sense that an analytic judgment holds strictly and universally through exclusion of its opposite. Hume’s problem, in general terms, thus comes to how a hypothetical judgment, being synthetic, can hold universally.

What one has to keep in mind, is the peculiar notion of the hypothetical that Kant uses. In contrast with the modern extensional meaning of a material conditional, Kant takes the hypothetical to stand for an intensional relation – Konsequenz. The meaning of Konsequenz is not fixed by its truth conditions – the conditions of the material conditional are necessary, but not sufficient, i.e. there is no Konsequenz between violets being blue and fire being hot. Kant’s answer to Hume is going to turn on this point. He will counter Hume head-on by saying that, for there to be an experience of cause and effect, it is already necessarily presupposed that an intensional relation holds between cause and effect. Only given this presupposition of a rule-governed order, are we able to produce specific instants of causality, like billiard balls causing other billiard balls to move and this is what allows us to see the specified instances as related to each other. Whereas Hume took instances as his building blocks for constructing causal inferences on the basis of custom, Kant wants to show that these building blocks cannot be thought apart from there mutual causal relatedness. In fact Kant goes even further than that. He wants to show that all thought, not just causal inference, is presupposes a rule-like order. That even mathematics gets undermined by Hume’s allegations against the synthetic a priori:

If [David Hume] had had our problem in its generality before his eyes, . . . he would have comprehended that according to his argument there could also be no pure mathematics, since this certainly contains synthetic a priori propositions, an assertion from which his sound understanding would surely have protected him. (B20)

In putting the Humean problem this way, Kant raises the stakes to include, not only questions of causality, but our whole rule-guided rational way of thinking. If he can show that causal reasoning is but a part of the rule-guided workings of our minds which are also responsible for logical and mathematical necessity and if he can then devise a grounding argument for the a priori validity of why it is that we think according to precisely these rules, then his critical philosophy has answered any (ontological) skeptical question in one fell swoop.

1.4 Kant’s Critical Step

Kant famously talks in the preface of the Prolegomena about his awakening from his “dogmatic slumber” due to being reminded of David Hume’s skeptical philosophy. Now, as it
stands Kant’s use of dogmatic in this context might strike someone as a mere dramatizing adjective, more common in the romantically infused German post-Kantian philosophy. However, the notion of dogmatism comes up at several places in the Critique and this would make it seem that its role in Kant’s philosophy is more substantial one. The following lengthy quote is one instance where Kant goes into some detail in explaining the ‘threefold distinction’ and it gives a nice illustration of the more substantive use of “dogmatic” which Kant seems to have had in mind:

All objections can be divided into dogmatic, critical and skeptical ones. A dogmatic objection is one that is directed against a proposition, but a critical one is directed against its proof. The former requires an insight into the constitution of the nature of the object, in order to be able to assert the opposite of what the proposition claims about the object; it is itself dogmatic, therefore, and claims to have better acquaintance with the constitution of the object being talked about than its opposite has. The critical objection, because it leaves the proposition untouched in its worth or worthlessness, and impugns only the proof, does not at all need to have better acquaintance with the object or to pretend to better acquaintance with it; it shows only that the assertion is groundless, not that it is incorrect. The skeptical objection puts the proposition and its opposite over against one another, as objections of equal weight, each alternatively a dogma with the other as an objection to it; thus on both opposed sides it is dogmatic in appearance, in order to annihilate entirely every judgment about the object. Thus both, the dogmatic as well as the skeptical objection, must claim as much insight into its object as is necessary to assert something about it either affirmatively or negatively. The critical objection alone is of such a kind that it overturns a theory merely by showing that one assumes on behalf of its assertion something that is nugatory and merely imagined, thereby withdrawing from it the presumed foundation without otherwise wanting to decide anything about the constitution of the object. (A388)

The picture sketched here is a familiar one. Hume speaks of it in the concluding chapter to his Enquiry and Kant illustrates the picture drawn in this quote when he comes to the four antinomies. In order to break the deadlock in this metaphysical Ideenstreit Hume adopts

38One could argue, with Michael Forster, that this metaphysical predicament – the antinomies – is what Kant described as his crise pyrrhonienne ([13] ch. IV), which he first reacted to – in the 1760’s – in Pyrrhonian fashion by withholding judgment. Forster then goes on to claim that this presents a solution to an exegetical worry that has perplexed interpreters of Kant to a point where they could only ascribe the inconsistency to onsetting senility ([2] p. 119). The problem in this case concerns a discrepancy between the two points at which Kant talks about having been woken from his “dogmatic slumber”. The first allusion to this is in the famous quote already referred to in the preface to the Prolegomena. The second, less familiar awakening was confessed in a letter to Garve (1798) in which Kant claims that it were the antinomies which awoke him from his slumber. Forster, his Pyrrhonian crisis in hand, attributes the latter claim to his 1760’s crisis concerning the equipollence of metaphysical arguments and the former to his reading – or
1.4. KANT’S CRITICAL STEP

a skeptical position, refusing to take a stance on such metaphysical matters. Kant takes a different view. As he sees it, the skeptical position is not a viable resting place for Reason, but only a dialectical step leading to a critical philosophy. That is to say, from the point of view of a critical philosophy the apparent contradiction between the various metaphysical claims is not an exclusive one. The opposition is dialectical, not analytic and this offers a way out of the dogmatic conundrum that has remained unnoticed by the skeptic.39 The skeptic wants to say that the metaphysical questions are nonsensical, but it is only after having critically assessed what falls within the realm of possible experience that we can exclude certain questions as falling outside of this scope of what is decidable – being a fortiori unanswerable. Critical philosophy, therefore, has to investigate the necessary grounds for experience, from which it can infer universal criteria for truth and determine the realm of decidable questions. Only this study can help us cope with the ‘consciousness of our own ignorance’ which leads us into skeptical doubt about the possibility of thought.40

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39 A504/B532
40 A158/B786: Hegel summarizes the impetus of the critical philosophy nicely and in terms which link it forcefully to the earlier discussed relation between epistemological and ontological skepticism:

Das denken der alten Metaphysik war deshalb kein freies, weil dasselbe seine Bestimmungen ohne weiteres als ein Vorausseidendes, als ein Apriori gelten ließ, welches die Reflexion nicht słość geprüft hatte. Die kritische Philosophie machte es sich dagegen zur Aufgabe, zu untersuchen, inwieweit überhaupt die Formen des Denkens fähig seien, zur Erkenntnis der Wahrheit zu verhelfen. Näher sollte nun das Erkenntnisvermögen untersucht werden. ([16] p. 114)
This science takes the form of a transcendental logic. The mistake of the dogmatists – rational philosophy – was to hold on to the idea that one can make metaphysical claims on the basis of “pure cognition from (philosophical) concepts according to principles”.\textsuperscript{41} They proceeded from the principles of general logic, whereas, on Kant’s view all cognition must necessarily involve intuition – i.e. a representation of an object – and therefore it cannot do without an investigation of the application of rules of thought to objects. In considering this relation to intuition we cannot just project our modes of thought onto the world, without falling into an idealist trap. Rather, we must ground a science that justifies our judgments – \textit{qua} free acts of the \textit{spontaneity} of the understanding – as being \textit{about objects} with which we are in contact through our \textit{receptivity}. A truly informative logic for metaphysical purposes must take into account this relation to objects. Kant’s proposal is to found a transcendental logic, going beyond general logic in applying the “laws of the understanding and reason, but solely insofar as they are related to object \textit{a priori}”.\textsuperscript{42} Kant’s objective thus is to investigate the forms of thought – understanding – in relation to the forms of sensibility. The outcome of this project is to arrive at the rules that shape human experience, establishing that anything contradicting them cannot be judged objectively; i.e. no thought can go outside of these rules, they delimit the realm of sense.

One can already hear the Wittgensteinian overtones in my description of the critical project: Breaking the deadlock, separating what is answerable from what is not – drawing a line between sense and nonsense – dissolving questions through philosophical analysis, making sense in application. All of these themes can in some way be linked to Wittgensteinian thought; some more fruitfully than others. It will not be my aim to decide on these particular exegetical issues.\textsuperscript{43} The suggestion that underlies this work is one that tries to bring together these two thinkers on a more abstract level; not by looking at what they said, but by bringing out what they reacted to. Hume’s problem and rule-following are both in their own way a paradigm case of ontological skepticism.\textsuperscript{44} The reaction to the first question took the form of Kant’s transcendental philosophy, the reaction to the second was a ‘Krumean’ \textit{skeptical solution}, but I will try to show that the Kantian option is a viable and possibly more satisfactory one for the problem of meaning as well.

\textsuperscript{41}Bxxxv
\textsuperscript{42}A57/B82
\textsuperscript{43}Specific comparisons of these two thinkers can seem trivial if, as Patricia Kitcher thinks, “Kant’s and Wittgenstein’s historical settings, projects, and back ground assumptions were so different that it is an interpretive and philosophical mistake to try to force an alliance between what are, in fact, deeply opposed camps” – [25]. It is my purpose to counter this broader claim. This may, or may not provide a setting for more systematic exegetical work on this point, by sketching a way of aligning “historical settings, projects, and back ground assumptions”.
\textsuperscript{44}See Conant’s examples of the application of the distinction between epistemological and ontological skepticism in the first section of this chapter.
Chapter 2

Kant’s Critical Solution

It was remarked in the previous chapter that, although the sphere of possible associations produced by the imagination is tremendous,\(^1\) the actual associations made by humans display a certain unity. Hume explained this unity as a consequence of an intentional stance taken by us, the author of the imagination, with respect to this faculty. Our striving for happiness will only be fulfilled if we use our faculties to achieve our goals in life – goals which in some way are conducive to our overall happiness, or so one hopes – and in order to achieve these goals we need to use the imagination to help us by presenting us with new courses of action which are goal-directed. The unity of our rational plans thus get reflected in the associations of ideas, most notably through the principle of cause and effect, which is our main instrument in bringing about a unity of action.

In her book “Kant and the Capacity to Judge”, Longuenesse takes this unity as a leading thread in her understanding of the Critique.\(^2\) Although she does not mention the ultimate ground of Hume’s unity, at the bottom of it all, the same idea is at work in both cases. The

\(^1\)In Hume’s view the freedom of the imagination amounted to what we would nowadays call a capacity for unlimited mereological composition.

\(^2\)Since this work is not meant to add another exegesis to the already voluminous stock of Kant-interpretations, a lot of the interpretative work will be based on Longuenesse’s views. My own views on the topic are very much in line with her interpretation which, contrary to many established views, takes the Critique to present us with a work, the greater concern of which is ontological, instead of epistemological. This comes out, e.g. in her rejection of Guyer’s epistemological interpretation in a footnote on page 337-8 (of [32]), and of Allison’s approach in a footnote on page 20. Moreover, in the conclusion she writes that the “transcendental synthesis of the imagination” – to be discussed in this chapter – “turns out to be the complex web of perceptual combinations by means of which we take up sensible data into what we, in present times, have come to term “space of reasons”” – p. 398. This clearly alludes to the problem posed by Sellars and more recently by McDowell: how it is possible for the mind to be open to the facts. This is clearly the ontological worry described in the previous chapter and it is emphatically distinguished as such by McDowell – see e.g. [35] p. xiii and [37] p. 8-9.
only way in which we can account for the unity displayed in our imagination – the non-random associations which we produce – is the presupposition of an intentional stance, an author shaping the imagination and therewith our entire cognition. The difference between the two forms of intentionality is, however, a crucial one. In Hume’s case the associations are made in the interest of serving its author in getting ahead in the world. For Kant, on the other hand, the unity displayed in cognition is a necessary requirement for experience to come about at all. Whereas Hume was concerned to show how empirical unity is an effect of a utilitarian minded understanding, Kant wants to show that it is a “conscious effort towards judgment” – our capacity to judge – that grounds experience. Given this “transcendental unity of self-consciousness” as a necessary requirement for experience, we are able to justify the fact that we reason according to this unity. Our judgments of experience, in being dependent on this logical shape, are thereby able to go beyond our subjective assessments and aspire to be the objective view of “everybody, always”.

The intentional use of the understanding in its effort towards judgement is what allows us, in other words, to go beyond the associative model espoused by Hume. Taking this as prerequisite for experience, it is grounded a priori, given the fact that we have experience – a transcendental argument as coined by Kant. By taking this unity to be the ground of experience, the rules resulting from it are also grounded as the minimal base for thinking, the necessary norms for being able to identify and individuate objects in time. In this chapter I will be taking a closer look at the Kantian account of cognition, how it shares a lot of the basic framework with Hume’s theory, but also where it differs and how this difference results in an answer to Hume’s problem.

### 2.1 Unity in the A Deduction

Kant’s analysis of the three steps leading up to the discovery of the “transcendental unity of apperception” as the necessary ground of cognition actually follow Hume’s account to a great extent. Let us pause to compare the two. As with Hume, our cognition is dependent on the impressions it receives through sensibility. Kant emphasizes the subjective character of these impressions, by calling them appearances. All we get through sensibility is a rep-

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3[32] p. 395

4Walker’s definition of a transcendental argument is: “There is experience; it is a condition of the possibility of experience that P; therefore, P”. ([41] p. 238

5This is the ‘bottom-up’-exposition which Kant gives in A119-128 after having provided the ‘top-down version’. Although I have nothing to base this conjecture on, it seems plausible to me that the structure of the A Deduction, in being a reply to psychological accounts of the Humean kind, intentionally follows the Humean exposition. The B Deduction might be read as a depsychologization of the A format. His greater awareness of the difference between his justificatory objectives and Hume’s explanatory ones might have let him to put more emphasis on the productive imagination and less on, for instance, the second synthesis of recognition.
representation of how the world appears to us as a perceiving subject. When one is conscious of what is thus given in appearance this results in a perception. So far, one would say that the two accounts run along similar lines. Nevertheless, it is at this basic level that Kant’s picture diverges most significantly. As Kant notices, the manifold contained in appearance is a complete hodgepodge of data. It could be perceived in infinitely many ways, so in order to make sense of this manifold, an act of synthesis has to “run through and then take together this manifoldness”, an act which Kant calls the synthesis of apprehension in intuition.

This first, productive synthesis of the imagination is Kant’s addition to the Humean framework which starts with what is Kant’s second synthesis, namely the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination. Hume’s reproductive imagination calls back and connects the separate representations provided by the productive imagination according to rules. This synthesis is called the “association of representations”, referring to the act of the (associative) imagination as conceived of by Hume. In this synthesis the imagination is solely regarded as a faculty for bringing back and relating ideas in spatially and temporally different orders than those in which they were originally acquired. Moreover, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, its principles of association were acknowledged by Hume to apply generally, but only given the utilitarian intentionality guiding our imagination. They are not grounded a priori.

Kant takes a different view on this unity of association. Given the productive synthesis of the imagination, he has argued that what is combined by the reproductive imagination already displays a unity. The possibility of being reproduced, according to Kant, presupposes that intuition is ordered in a certain way. In contrast to Hume, then, the unifying act is not performed by an author in associating representations, but in the act of apprehending these singular representations in the first place. Were it the case that such unity is not displayed in intuition, then there would be a whole range of perceptions in our minds which did not allow of being thought in connection to others. They could, in other words, not be ascribed to “one consciousness”. The productive use of the imagination in apprehension is requisite for creating a unity in intuition which allows it to be reproduced in the second synthesis. The unity of apprehension is thus a reflection of the role that the intuitions will play in later association.

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6, A99
7, Sellars takes intuitions to be representations of “thises” – i.e. an intuition is a this-such, something of a certain kind. I am inclined to agree with this suggestion. This suggestion will become clearer when we get to discussing the Schematism.
8, Kant stresses that “[n]o psychologist has yet thought that the imagination is a necessary ingredient of perception itself. This is so partly because this faculty has been limited to reproduction, and partly because it has been believed that the senses do not merely afford us impressions but also put them together, and produce images of objects, for which without doubt something more than the receptivity of impressions is required, namely a function of the synthesis of them” (A120). It seems likely that Kant is referring to Hume, being in fact the prime psychologist to whom Kant is reacting.
Since the appearances are structured according to the certain principles, namely the most basic rules for association, they display a certain kinship—being structured in space and time.\(^9\) The common ancestor of this kinship is to be found in the ultimate ground of unity, that is in the unity of apperception. Given the fact that all perceptions need to be related to one consciousness, it is clear that the appearances are shaped so as to be taken up in associations which display this unity of consciousness.\(^10\) The upshot of this transcendental argument is that we possess “a pure imagination, as a fundamental faculty of the human soul, that grounds all cognition \textit{a priori}” and guides the apprehension in intuition as well as the later reproduction.\(^11\) Another way of making the same point is the following: To experience is to make judgments on the basis of what we take in through sensibility by connecting this according to a unifying principle: the goal of judgment is unity. Every associative reproduction, as well as every apprehension in an intuition is a result of this unifying endeavour and should therefore serve to produce a coherent whole. Regularities in our associations are thus, not the result of a utilitarian minded author, but they are the necessary manifestation of any author. To be a subject is to be a cognizing subject and to cognize means to constantly strive to bring about a unity in judgment.

Kant’s divergence from the Humean point of view becomes more pronounced at this point. It is not just the case that the imagination produces intuitions instead of merely taking them in for reproduction at a later moment. Its productive acts are reflections of the principles of association, which, are grounded in a unifying principle. The major difference regarding this unity is that it is not grounded by referring to our utilitarian frame of mind. Instead, the ground of unity is a transcendental one; without this unity there would not be any cognition. To experience just \textit{is} to judge about objects, to think them, that is relate them to a single consciousness. It is only when we are conscious of representations as belonging to one and the same act of synthesis, that we are able to cognize. We thus need the ability to represent in one consciousness, to generalize over representations and combine them on certain grounds as belonging together, in other words, we require the ability to think through concepts serving as a rule for the recognition of unity. This is explained as the third synthesis, which is called the synthesis of recognition in a concept.\(^12\)

The third synthesis represents the step between sensible synthesis and discursive thought. In discursive thought you analyze representations through comparing them and abstract from certain features, thereby creating concepts by means of which we generalize over and

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\(^9\)The Guyer & Wood translation in this case is 	extit{affinity}. The german original in this case is 	extit{Affinität}. However, Kant also uses the term 	extit{Verwandtschaft} in the same context (A661/B689) which I prefer to translate as in its more literal sense as kinship, so as to stress the fact that there is not only a contingent affinity, but an affinity relating back to a common ancestor. The english translation reads affinity in both cases, whereas I would rather define it as kinship in the first instance as well.

\(^10\)A123

\(^11\)A124

\(^12\)A103
relate thought to objects. The mere associations created by the second synthesis are not enough to create our experience. It is only when we are conscious of the unity of the act of apprehension and association that we can speak of the appearances as relating to an object, the object being the Gedankending which serves to connect our representations. Only when objects are thus thought generally under the rubric of a concept do we cognize them; only then are we able to fit them in a unified whole of experience.

Again, a similar feature is presented in Humean psychology, where reasoning is the faculty for making inferences on the basis of a “comparison of ideas”. General terms get annexed to particular ideas in the context of being compared to impressions from the senses, or from memory. The comparison of these ideas and its eventual association into concepts, followed certain principles – foremost among them that of ‘cause and effect’ – but reasoning was not bound by any of these principles. A “gentle force” moves man to stick to certain ways of comparing and that explains the general conformity with them, but this general conformity is not thereby a necessary conformity, because the association in most cases still goes along a contingent synthetic path – demonstrative reasoning is of course exempt from this problem.

Kant’s solution to this problem is quite radical. On his view the analytic unity of discursive thought is dependent on the synthetic unity created by the productive imagination. Only because a pre-discursive synthesis has taken place, are we in a position to analyze – compare ideas, reflect on them and abstract from them to form concepts. The principle of unity is therefore analytic. The ‘I’ that thinks is an analytic I, but it can only be such in being constantly engaged with the world. The I is there, in some sense, as the necessary transcendental apperception needed to bring about experience, but it is only activated when actually performing this task. The objective unity of self-consciousness – the consciousness of a unified act of synthesis – is dependent on the transcendental apperception as the guiding, unifying force in cognition, but the latter is dependent on the act of synthesis to display itself. There is no subject, without its constant activity in making sense of the world around him.

The Copernican turn which Kant introduces to safeguard our knowledge and protect it from skeptical attack comes into full view at this point. If one thinks that all justified knowledge is analytic, then it is hard to see how there can be any relation to the world that is not threatened by skeptical doubt. Consequently admitting to the necessity of involving synthetic propositions, it becomes hard to see how any knowledge could attain a justified status, how any claim can be both about the world and justified. However, if you say that all knowledge is necessarily synthetic, then the tables are turned and the analytic certainty of justification spills over into all domains of human thought. According to Kant’s view, the justificatory division dissolves when it is strictly thought out.

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13An intuition – representation referring to an object – is nothing for us, if it is not subsumed under a concept. This will become clearer when we progress through the Critique.
2.2 Unity in the B Deduction

2.2.1 The Clue

The ‘I think’ must be able to accompany all my representations, for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me. (B132)

This is a recapitulation of the conclusion at the end of the A Deduction. The intuitions to which the ‘I think’ is prefixed must be such that it is possible for them to be united in one subject. There must then be a synthetic unity, the manifold must be ordered according to the formal intuitions of space and time, before any thought can arise. The first part of the A Deduction more or less followed Hume’s line of argument interspersed with Kantian innovations on the productive faculty of imagination. It gave an account of how material given in sensibility gets taken up and processed by the understanding. For Hume this early forage into cognitive psychology was the main objective. For Kant it was not, which is probably why in the B Deduction he only presents the top-down approach which was already layed out in the A version. In the top-down approach unity is taken as the starting point, not in order to describe how sensibility and the understanding work together to create experience, but in order to show why the order they thus present us with in experience could not have been structured differently. Its goal is not to describe, but to justify our the structure of cognition.

The first part of this deduction is used to make clear that the grounding feature of the categories is their relation to the logical functions of the understanding. The categories, Kant points out, are a reflection of the general rules for thinking of objects. They are the logical functions of the understanding, applied to the manifold of intuition as basic rules for picking out and reflecting on objects. Therefore, the Table of Judgments stands in a one-to-one correspondence to the Table of Categories. The latter simply are the logical functions, applied to the manifold of intuition. The second part of the B Deduction deals with the conformity of the manifold to the Categories; how it can be that the categories can be applied to any intuition.

Both of these investigations are part of Kant’s analysis of the understanding. The understanding can thus be understood as containing this dual aspect, of picking out objects and reflecting on them through the categories – pre-discursive as opposed to discursive use of the understanding. For now, we will be focussing on the ‘picking out’ aspect of the understanding, or the pre-discursive use of the understanding. This is what occupies Kant in the second part of the B Deduction. The question is how it is possible that the appearances necessarily conform to the categories under which they are subsumed. In other words: how it is possible that we are provided with a synthetic unity? Why is it
the case that all my representations allow of being thought? An instructive remark on this peculiarity is provided in the section “On the Clue to the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding”:

The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings he logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they [the categories] are called pure concepts of the understanding that pertain to objects a priori. (A79/B105)

Earlier I introduced Kant’s transcendental argument for unity of associations of ideas only summarily, contrasting it with Hume’s contingent ground of unity – a utilitarian intentionality shaping the imagination. This key quote in the Metaphysical Deduction helps to make the contrast clearer, as well as its relation to the objective of transcendental logic (ch. 1.3). The source of unity in the forms of intuition – space and time – and in forms of judgment in application to intuitions – the categories – simply is the pure understanding which Kant equates with our “capacity to judge” – Vermögen zu urteilen. With this phrase, Kant refers to the general capacity of the human mind to systematically unify judgments that we have garnered with the use of concepts and derived through syllogistic inference; it takes together our power of judgment (Urteilskraft) and our capacity for inference, or reason (Vernunft). The pure understanding thus grounds the synthetic unity of intuition and the analytic unity of taking intuitions up in judgements in order to reflect them under concepts. Rather than being a faculty of the human mind, it is the overarching concept representing the constant intentional activity which has as its ultimate goal the reflection according to the logical functions of judgment. It is this role of the understanding, not as a specific faculty of rules, but as the general impetus of an ongoing cognitive process which accounts for the structure of our conceptual framework and for the structuring of the intuitive field. In sum: affinity – or rather kinship – between concept and intuition is brought back to one capacity: the capacity to judge. Logical unity and the unity of appearances are nothing other than a effect of the act of “combination and reflection on the sensible given”.

To understand what Kant is getting at in the Clue we have to make a distinction between two forms of synthesis which are only introduced in §24 of the B Deduction. There he sets apart the synthesis intellectualis from the synthesis speciosa. The former kind of synthesis accords with the common notion of synthesis according to the logical functions

\[14\text{A69/B94} \]
\[15\text{[32] p. 394}\]
judgment. It is the discursive synthesis in abstraction from what is given in sensibility. The latter synthesis, which Kant calls a “transcendental synthesis of the imagination” is a more thoroughly worked-out version of the productive synthesis announced in the A Deduction. The Clue presents these syntheses as two sides of the same coin. For a cognition to arise, we need content as well as a concept under which this content is to be subsumed. Both, it turns out, are rooted in the same human disposition for judgment. On the one hand, the categories are, as Kant had already made clear in the Metaphysical Deduction, a reflection of the logical forms of judgment according to which we think. On the other hand, intuition is shaped according to forms which allow for the application of the categories, because its unity is effected by the same source, namely the capacity to judge. Their unity runs parallel, because it is grounded in the “same function”.

Although the parallelism was in place by the time that Kant wrote the A version, the distinct syntheses – intellectualis and speciosa – are only named by the time that he writes the B Deduction. The interesting result of his introduction of the synthesis speciosa in combination with the Clue is that it creates a much firmer link between concept and content than the common ancestry mentioned in the Clue would suggest. The synthesis speciosa not only shapes the manifold of intuition, it does so under the guidance of the categories. Understanding causes the sensible given to conform to its own forms, because it is already active at this pre-discursive level. We find order in the manifold, because it is put there, by us.

2.2.2 Synthesis speciosa, or the origin of synthetic unity

A concept without an object is not a yet a thought.\textsuperscript{16} To provide us with this content, the manifold is apprehended in intuition under the guidance of the understanding. This is done according to the forms of space and time, which are themselves pure intuitions – as explained in the Transcendental Aesthetic – and are necessarily presupposed in order to make experience possible. But it then seems obvious that the pure intuitions would have to precede the particular intuitions and no clear mention was made by Kant of any synthesis more fundamental than the synthesis of apprehension. This leaves us with two options: Either space and time are not really synthesized as intuitions, but given as ‘pure intuitions’ – for want of a better term – or their origin lies in another synthesis, which has not yet been fully specified. Kant’s answer in the B Deduction is to argue for the latter. Space and time are the product of an original figurative synthesis, or synthesis speciosa\textsuperscript{17} and because this synthesis is an effect of the pure understanding which, at the same time, grounds the categories, the a priori application of the categories to all appearances is established by the common ancestry of the forms of intuition – space and time – and the forms of thought.

\textsuperscript{16} “. . . thoughts without content are blind, intuitions without concepts are empty.” (A51/B75)

\textsuperscript{17}B151
2.2. UNITY IN THE B DEDUCTION

– categories – described in the Clue.  

This explains the answer to the riddle posed by Kant how it is possible that the objects of sensible intuition must “accord with the conditions that the understanding requires for the synthetic unity of thinking”. For it could well have been the case that appearances are structured in ways that do not conform to the categories; in which case no intuitions could be formed, no relations could be established and our experience would constitute a complete jumble of uncaused causes and dis-/reappearing objects. However, because space and time already stand under the unity of apperception in its effect on sensibility through the \textit{synthesis speciosa}, every appearance – being given in space and time – conforms to this unity. This automatically warrants their conformity to the categories, because they too are a reflection of this unity which is alluded to in the Clue as the “same function”.  

The picture becomes the following: First, the understanding combines the outer intuition in an act of apprehension. Second, it affects inner sense with this act, enabling the form of space itself to be intuited mediately through inner sense. Now, as explained in the Aesthetic the form of inner sense is time, which means that the form of outer sense – space – is represented mediately through a temporal determination. This sheds light on Kant’s remark that “[t]ime is the \textit{a priori} formal condition of all appearances in general”. Representations are always an inner state, even when they are about outer objects, because they are the result of the understanding affecting inner sense with an act of apprehension. All our apprehension of intuition is ordered successively in time, therefore we can only think a line – a spatial construction – when we draw it in thought and time is necessarily involved in this act, as being a successive act of combination. 

Explaining space and time as a result of a synthesis seems lead us into circularity. If space and time are not there right form the start, then where does the synthesis take place? What is there before this construction of space and time that guarantees \textit{a priori} the production

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \footnote{Kant explicitly admits the figurative synthesis as being the synthesis which gives us the pure intuitions in a footnote:}
\begin{quote}
“Space, represented as object (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the comprehension (Zusammenfassung) of the manifold given in accordance with the form of sensibility in an intuitive representation, so that the form of intuition merely gives the manifold, but the formal intuition gives unity of the representation. In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. For since through it (as the understanding determines the sensibility) space or time are first given as intuitions, the unity of this \textit{a priori} intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concepts of the understanding (§24”). (B161)
\end{quote}
\item \footnote{A90/B123}
\item \footnote{See quote above (A79/B105)}
\item \footnote{A34/B50}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
of exactly these forms? Kant’s answer lies in his “epigenetic” – original acquisition – view mentioned in his summary of the B Deduction in §27. According to this conception, the potential for giving a three-dimensionally ordered space is already contained in receptivity, but it is only activated upon being affected. The specific form of intuitions is original in being in accordance with the nature of receptivity, but it is acquired in not being actualized before receptivity is affected by impressions. In the same way, Kant justifies the acquisition of the categories. They are acquired in being activated when used in thought, but they are original in already being determined by the “subjective conditions of the spontaneity of thought”.

In other words, the Vermögen zu urteilen prescribes the forms of intuition and of the categories in its spontaneous act on sensibility, that is, in the synthesis speciosa. The specific aspects of space and time – their infinity, unicity and unity – can be seen in a new light when we regard them as the outcome of a synthesis. Being the product of our imagination, their structure can now be more readily explained as the requirements for human experience. They are necessarily anticipated in experience, because they reflect the only way in which we can bring about a unity in the manifold of intuition.

### 2.3 Schematism

Kant’s aim after having given a deduction of the categories, or a priori rules of the understanding is to show how particulars get subsumed under these rules. The synthesis speciosa plays a crucial role in this respect, for it is due to this synthesis that the manifold of intuition is subsumable under the categories. How this actually takes place is explicated in the chapter “On the Schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding”.

The role of a schema is to guide your synthesis of the sensible manifold. Its function is to serve as a “third thing, which must stand in homogeneity with the category on the one hand and the appearance on the other, and makes possible the application of the former to the latter”.

But why do we need a ‘third thing’, or “rule for determination of our intuition in accordance with a certain general concept”? This question hangs together with the second part of the B Deduction. If there is not “third thing” mediating between concept and intuition, then it is not at all clear how it could be that the intuition is of the ‘right shape’, so that it will be subsumable under a concept. This is where schemata come in. You can view schemata as dispositions for grouping together certain features of intuitions. A transcendental schema might, for instance, tell you to “[l]ook for what

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22[21] p.223
23A138/B177
24A141/B180 (my emphasis)
25Compare a quote from Pendlebury ([39] f. 18): “possession of a schema is clearly a disposition or capacity”.
can be recognized as remaining one and the same thing while its properties change\(^{26}\) – this would be the schema for the category of substance. Or an empirical schema might instruct you to “look for what can be represented by way of a synthesis that varies around: four supporting elements (the paws), an oblong-shaped body and pointed front part (the head), a wagging end-part, a loud sound, and so on” – the schema for DOG. Without such dispositions for grouping together certain features of the manifold rather than others there would be no way to relate a concept to an object. No particular structure of the manifold would be salient and the concepts would in fact be without significance. The schemata are therefore *rules guiding the apprehension*, making the move from mere sensation to sensation with relation to an object, that is, intuition.

Every concept, be it an empirical, mathematical, or a transcendental concept has a schema as a mediating rule, enabling the determination of the extension of a concept in intuition. Empirical schemata are formed through abstraction from features of the manifold, so that experience is needed for any empirical concept to come about. To illustrate this, Kant uses the example of savage perceiving a house to make clear the distinction between seeing a house as such and experiencing, that is, thinking it through the concept of HOUSE.\(^{27}\) A savage might very well be able to distinguish the same intuitive marks when seeing a house, but due to not having seen any houses on previous occasions, he has not had the opportunity to form the schema which would allow him to reflect his perception as a house. However, given the fact that the savage is a rational being, the basic rules governing his cognition are the same as ours and given suitable exposure to houses, he should therefore be able to grasp the concept through a learning process. This specific learning process is part of the continuous process in which we judge about the world. Our *Vermögen zu urteilen* is displayed in this constant process of specification of the world surrounding us. Specific empirical schemata are thus dependent on the more abstract ones in a chain of inference instituted by our continuous exercise of judgment. In the first place, by applying the categories to objects of experience and comparing their features, we abstract from those features to form specific combinations. Continuing on from there we form ever more fine-grained concepts with their respective dispositions for grouping features, eventually resulting in concept such as DOG, or even further down the road, that of BORDER COLLIE. If we follow this line of specification in the opposite direction we arrive at the most general and basic schemata, namely the schemata relating to the categories which set this process of judging into motion.

The next question becomes how these transcendental schemata are formed (if not through any comparison of marks, which is impossible considering that these schemata are transcendental and therefore devoid of any marks). The answer to this question leads us back to the previous section on the B Deduction. There, the *synthesis speciosa* was introduced.

\(^{26}\)[33] 26-7

\(^{27}\) *JL* V p. 33
as the determination of inner sense by the understanding, providing the formal intuitions of space and time as the conditions for the appearances. In the Schematism chapter, this thought is worked out by presenting the schemata as pure determinations of time, i.e. as a result of a transcendental synthesis of the imagination. To put it another way, the transcendental schemata are the specific determinations resulting from the *synthesis speciosa*. The schemata are the outcome of a “blind” synthesis of the imagination, providing rules for the apprehension of the manifold which are necessary for us in order to subsume these intuitions under concepts. It is a *blind* synthesis in the sense that it is a result of the application of the understanding, in order to form its own content. It needs to create blindly what it will later be able to see.

In connection with this Kant famously claims that “[t]houghts without content are blind intuitions without concepts are empty”. Read out of context, this might seem like an admission of need for non-conceptual content. However, it is precisely Kant’s idea that a blind synthesis is necessary to warrant the applicability of the categories to experience. The figurative synthesis stands for the first, blind, contentless use of the understanding. Here, the categories are applied *blindly* in order to apprehend the manifold in an intuition, thereby providing conceptual content, *relating to an object*. This figurative synthesis paves the way for an intellectual synthesis, in which the categories are applied discursively, thereby following Kant’s counsel that “I will always have to compare my concepts in transcendental reflection only under the conditions of sensibility”.\(^{28}\)

Seen in this light, the transcendental schemata, functioning as rules for the apprehension in intuition, are a specification of the productive synthesis introduced in the A Deduction. In the act of apprehension a certain rule is at work which reflects the concepts under which the intuitions are to be subsumed in an act of judgment. In the A Deduction this rule-like apprehension was only given a transcendental argument: there need to be rules at work, for otherwise we could not make sense of the manifold that is given as unordered, fragmented blur. With the *synthesis speciosa* of the B Deduction, however, it becomes clearer where the origin of these rules for apprehension lies and how they are able to play the justificatory role required of them. By constraining the imagination through these rules for apprehension, a whole range of associations of ideas is excluded from experience. Because these associations cannot be paired with a schema, they cannot be intuited and since experience rests on what is given in intuition, nothing in experience can run counter to our dispositions for grouping features of the manifold.\(^{29}\) However, since these dispositions are an effect of the *synthesis speciosa* as an effect of the understanding, they are consonant with our rules for thinking, that is, with the categories.

\(^{28}\)A276/B332

\(^{29}\)Although we might entertain certain concepts of this kind in thought – round squares for instance – we would not be able to determine their content. Although we can think of a world that is not causally ordered, of billiard balls changing into ducks upon being hit by other billiard balls and other strange events taking place, we cannot determine the content of these thoughts.
2.4 The Analogies

Going back to Hume’s empirico-associative theory of cognition we see that the source of the skeptical worries lies not in our understanding, but in imagination. It is the unconstrained associative power of the imagination which allows for the connection of cause and effect, yet it is the freedom of this faculty which prohibits us from ever drawing objectively justified inferences from its associations. This freedom is constrained, as we have seen in the previous section by synthesis speciosa which, through its determination of inner sense, creates a priori rules of apprehension, or schemata which mark of the limits of experience mediately through constraining intuition. In order to respond to Hume’s problem, then, Kant has to show how the schemata function as rules for apprehension in such a way as to necessitate the ordering of perceptions according to the principle of cause and effect. He does this by investigating the nature of time in our apprehension of successive appearances in the Analogies of Experience. These three analogies form a complete argument demonstrating the necessary presupposition of a synthesis of perceptions according to the categories of relation. The First Analogy intends to demonstrate that the background for the successive nature of appearance lies in our necessary presupposition of an underlying, permanent substratum for experience. This is then used in the Second Analogy to argue for the necessary presupposition of a relation of cause and effect to account for changes in appearance. The Third Analogy argues for the necessary presupposition of a universal interaction between substances as the ground for our experience of simultaneity. I will only go into the first two which aptly present the Kantian reply to Hume’s skepticism. It will be a short exposé because the real object of this thesis is not to give another rehearsal of Kant’s argument, but to frame his style of argumentation and apply it to Kripke’s case of meaning-skepticism.

The link between the First and the Second Analogy is seen most clearly when Kant gives his transcendental argument for the existence of a substratum in the First Analogy:

Our apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive and is therefore always changing. We can therefore never determine from this alone whether this manifold, as object of experience, is simultaneous or successive, if something does not ground it which always exists. (A182/B225)

Appearances are in time and as such they are fragmented, regardless of whether we are apprehending something stable, or a thing that moves. Therefore, we cannot perceive something as happening successively in the world solely on the basis of our apprehension of successive appearances. This is brought out by two examples Kant gives in the Second Analogy: that of perceiving a house and of a boat moving down a river. In the first case we get the intuition of a house by first taking in one part of the house – the roof – and then lowering our gaze to take in the other parts of the object – door, windows etc. Here we have a subjective succession, for I could have started at the bottom instead
of the top; it would not have mattered for the resulting intuition. The case of the ship is different, however. In this case we cannot reverse the order of our perceptions. We perceive the ship upstream at \( t_1 \) and downstream at \( t_2 \) and we are aware that we could not have observed the reverse. This change in itself is objective, yet we cannot infer this on the basis of our subjective apprehension of successive appearances alone, which can only operate with successive representations. What we have to presuppose in order to glue these fragments together is something that is permanent. What we need is a substratum, forming the stable background against which we can perceive change. In other words, we necessarily presuppose a pure concept of substance, of which the schema is a rule that tells you to “look for what remains permanent (substantia) in something while its properties (accidenta) change”. Given this rule, we are able apply the first category of relation – categorical judgment – to objects of experience in the form of the category of substance and accident.

This relation between substance and accident forces Kant to rethink the notion of change. Change (“alteration”) is described by him as “a way of existing that succeeds another way of existing of the very same object”.\(^ {30} \) It is only given the presupposition of this permanence, that we can start to look for systematicity in experience – rules which may be codified into laws of nature. Only on the presupposition of a permanent substance, can we note regularities which we ascribe to one and the same object. For example, if I notice a large tree in the very spot where I had planted one ten years earlier, then I infer that this tree has grown into full maturity. But I am only allowed to infer this on the basis of a presupposition of permanence, which has previously guided me in attaining the concept of a “tree” as a thing that grows over time. If instead I see a garage at the spot where I have planted a tree some time earlier, I do not infer that the tree has grown into a garage, because I have not encountered any regularity suggesting that the concept of a tree should be amended with the possibility of growing into a garage. It is simply not in accordance with my search for regularities in nature to amend a concept in this way, because it does not make sense of the permanence of substance as an \textit{a priori} determination of inner sense. If, due to my search for regularity I have noticed this seemingly strange tree-garage morphing on several occasions, then I might start looking for an explanation on the basis of which I can \textit{explain} how a tree can change into a garage, how the \textit{same substance} can go from a mode of being a tree, to a mode of being a garage. But I cannot go outside of this determination of the substratum, for without this presupposition I would lose all unity in experience. In other words, what the unity of time presupposes is the permanence of substance.

Kant’s description of change leads him to the \textit{Second Analogy} where he will fully set out his answer to Hume’s problem. In the previous chapter I noted the weird phrasing which Kant used to formulate this problem: “How, if this thing is posited, something else must be

\(^{30}\text{A187/B231}\)
posited”. This, Longuenesse noticed, is the same way in which the hypothetical judgment was formulated in German Schulphilosophie. This should come as no surprise, since the logical function corresponding to the category of cause and effect in the Table of Judgment is that of the hypothetical. In Kant’s terms, the relation of cause and effect, as a category, reflects the logical form of a hypothetical judgment in its application to intuition. Kant explains the nature of this logical function in the Jäsche Logic:

A hypothetical inference is one that has a hypothetical proposition as major. Thus it consists of two propositions, (1.) an antecedent proposition (antecedens) and (2.) a consequent proposition (consequens), and here the deduction is either according to modus ponens or to modus tollens. (JL §75)

This is explained in the Hechsel Logic as follows:

The major of a hypothetical inference runs thus. E.g., If God is just, the persistently evil will be punished. Here there are not 2 termini, but rather 2 propositions. From this it follows that the logicians’ definition of propstitio major and minor simply cannot be admitted, and that what we have said is more correct. The propstitio major expresses a universal rule, the minor subsumes under the condition of the rule, and the conclusion affirms or denies the predicate of the rule. (HL p. 95-6)

Hume’s problem, as explained earlier, thus becomes the problem of describing how two empirical states can be related in such a way that one can be subsumed under the antecedent and the other under the consequent of a hypothetical judgment that is the “major of the hypothetical inference”. To state it in more Humean terminology, the question is what justifies this relation as one of necessary connexion – what Kant called Konsequenz – where the judgment is not a relation of ideas – analytic – but a matter of fact, that is, a relation between distinct existences. What is it that allows us to presuppose a causal law as a “universal” rule to serve us in hypothetical judgment? Kant’s answer is the following: Through reflection on the way we experience, we can give a transcendental argument for the necessary presupposition of a rule according to which “All alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect”.

The argument in the Second Analogy starts out with the same premise which was given in the previous one: “The apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive”. The mere succession of the appearance, therefore does not imply a succession “in the object”. To illustrate the difference between succession in the subject and in the object, Kant introduces the familiar examples of perceiving a house and that of perceiving a boat floating down a river. Although both these intuitions are apprehended through the

31B232: It is this thesis that is proven in the B Deduction.
32A189/B234
successive taking together of appearances, I am aware that the order of the apprehension which constitutes the image of a house is not irreversible. I could start from the bottom, or from the top in drawing out a house, but it would remain the same intuition. In contrast, the order of the appearances of the ship floating down a river are not reversible. If I would turn my eyes back to the spot where a moment ago, the ship was quietly floating down the river, I would not see it. The former is therefore, a “subjective sequence of apprehension”, whereas the latter is an “objective sequence of appearances”.

We can only make sense of this difference if we relate the order of apprehension to the object. The irreversibility is, as it were, wrung from us by the object. The relation of representations – perceptions – to an object implies the recognition of the object under a concept. This explanation in fact leads us back to the First Analogy. In relating the different states to an object, we relate them to the object as the same substance which is the permanent that remains through alterations of its predicates while thought under a certain concept. So in the case of relating my perceptions to a large tree where I saw a smaller tree some years ago, I conclude that the same tree has grown, because this accords with the concept of TREE. If, on the other hand, I see a garage in the same place, I do not attribute this as a state to the same substance which formed the young tree. In the same way, I can relate the different states of a boat – \( p_1, p_2, p_3 \) etc. as different placings of the boat – to the same boat, because I relate this succession to an object thought under a concept which allows for movement along a river.

The First and Second Analogy are so firmly connected, because they present us with rules that are mutually dependent. Not only do I need to work with a schema, or rule telling me to “look for what remains permanent in something while its properties change”, I also need a rule which enables me to cope with any incongruous alterations in my perceptions while relating them to the same object. That is, I need a schema of causality as a disposition which tells me to look for “the real upon which, whenever it is posited, something else always follows”, i.e. the schema of cause. The determinate order of certain sequences of representations is thus constituted by a rule which underlies our apprehension of the manifold. Kant is at his clearest in formulating this thought in the following quote:

“In the synthesis of the appearances the manifold of representations is always successive. Now no object at all is hereby represented, since through this succession, which is common to all apprehensions, nothing is distinguished from

\[33\]
Note that they are constructed in as an act of the synthesis speciosa. This makes it clearer why the house is also successively perceived. We draw out the shape in intuition and this is a continuous process. If, so to speak, the outline I had just drawn would immediately be erased, I would not be able to intuit any shape, let alone that of a house.

\[34\] A193/B238
\[35\] A197/B242
\[36\] B137: “An object, however, is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united.”
\[37\] A144/B183
2.4. THE ANALOGIES

anything else. But as soon as I perceive or anticipate that in this succession there is a relation to the preceding state, from which the representation follows in conformity with a rule, I represent something as an event, as something that happens; that is to say, I cognize an object that I must place in time in a determinate position which, after the preceding state, cannot be otherwise assigned to it. (A198/B243)

The only way in which we can make sense of the irreversibility of the order of apprehension, is if this order is occasioned by a rule according to which the change takes place in the object. Our anticipation of a cause-effect structure necessitates a certain order of apprehension which we therefore see as irreversible. One could also frame this conclusion as follows: what the argument establishes is the necessity of a rule functioning as the unknown major premise in a hypothetical judgment of which the conclusion is the perceived state of change – the boat moving down the river. The necessity of the relation of cause and effect as Konsequenz is warranted because, for us to be able to experience at all, we necessarily anticipate every change to be due to a determining ground. Without anticipating experience according to this rule, we would not be able to relate alterations to an object and consequently we would not be able to bring our perceptions to unity in thought.

In the act of figurative synthesis, therefore, not only the permanence of substance is determined, but also the relation of cause and effect. In intuition nothing runs counter to these rules for picking out objects and because our experience is built on what we take in through intuitions, our whole experience is in accordance with these rules. Thus, it is not the case that we always cognize the causal relation in experience. Nonetheless, it follows from the fact that this relation is “a necessary law of our sensibility and therewith a formal condition of all perceptions”, that it will always be fruitful for us to look for a determining ground, because as a formal condition of all perceptions it is also a “law of the empirical representation”. The principle of cause and effect is able to serve as an epistemic norm telling us to look for causes, only because it is primarily constitutive of the ontology of experience that there is always a cause to be found. With this principle in hand the understanding, as the faculty of rules, can start digesting the experiential

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38 I cannot emphasize enough is the transcendental status of this argument. Irreversibility is not recognized in perception and then used as a ground for the objectivity of the judgment of a sequence determinately ordered in time. Rather, it is through our reflection on the process that we come to realize that the sense of irreversibility is necessary, due to its accordance with a rule. This rule is then accounted for in this critical step as the only way in which we can pick out objects and thereby experience the world.

39 A199/B244

40 A126: “Now we can characterize [the understanding] as the faculty of rules. This designation is more fruitful, and comes closer to its essence. Sensibility gives us forms (of intuition), but the understanding gives us rules. It is always busy poring through the appearances with the aim of finding some sort of rule in them. Rules, so far as they are objective (and thus necessarily pertain to the cognition of objects) are called laws. Although we learn many laws through experience, these are only particular determinations of yet higher laws, the highest of which (under which all others stand) come from the understanding itself a priori,
intake, discovering regularities which get codified more rigidly into laws of nature, but only given the presupposition that nature is structured in this way.

It might still seem entirely counterintuitive to present change as something that is due to our anticipation of it, being objective for precisely this reason.\footnote{This feeling of subjectivity in dynamical synthesis is much less pressing in the case of what Kant calls mathematical synthesis, that is, synthesis according to the categories of Quantity and Quality, where the dependence on what we take to be an independent (causally ordered) reality is absent.} What one has to keep in mind though in appraising Kant’s argument is the subject matter of the Analogies. They deal with the \textit{a priori} time determinations which make it possible for us to pick out objects. Note further, that time is not a thing in itself. It consists entirely of relations and is only perceived in our acts of synthesis. What the Analogies represent are the fundamental rules which govern these time-relations, because it is only these rules which allow us to place the appearances in one unique, unified and infinite intuition of time in which they reciprocally determine each other’s place.\footnote{An analysis of the Third Analogy would clarify this underlying idea, because it is here that the simultaneity of mutually determining appearances is explained.} If time were something real then we would not be able to structure it in this way, but because time represents our way of uniting appearances under the transcendental unity of apperception, it is clear that this rule-like structure is no subjective figment, but a necessary ground for its being.

Again, we see that Kant’s account of our thinking runs parallel with most of what Hume has given us. We reason from cause to effect according to a natural tendency, or gentle force guiding us in our inferences. Also, there is no talk of hidden powers which reflect in the causal connections that we perceive, since they are only relations which are attributed to the imagination. Contrary to Hume’s account though, Kant limits the freedom that the imagination has in associating ideas. The principle of cause and effect is not one that is subjectively added to the fragmented world view that we take in through the senses, but it is a necessary rule without which no perception of change and hence no experience would be possible. Through the act of the productive imagination or \textit{synthesis speciosa}, the understanding checks the otherwise unlimited freedom of the imagination, by prescribing it pre-discursive rules which guide the apprehension. In the case of causality, the schema of cause guides this process in combining representations so that they may be thought under the form of a hypothetical judgment. Whenever we perceive regular succession and say that we experience causal relations, it is not true that we add something subjective to the changes in the appearances. Instead experience gives us occasion to determine the major premise of a syllogism of which the event we are perceiving is the conclusion.\footnote{[32] p. 370}
Chapter 3

Rule-Following: The Paradox and its Solutions

Having allowed Kant to answer Hume’s problem we will now move to the second part of the analogy and try to apply his answer Kripke’s paradox of meaning. The setup will be roughly the same as in the discussion of Hume’s problem. First, an outline is given of where the ontological skeptic has taken aim (ch. 3). Second, a sketch will be given of how to counter this skeptical problem by redefining the stakes in critical fashion (ch. 4). It will be shown how the imagination is tamed in several ways, one of which is its inability to formulate infinitely many interpretations of sums like ‘2 + 2=’, or ‘68 + 57=’.

3.1 The Paradox

I suppose all who read this are confident enough of their arithmetical abilities to assert that they know how to add. When presented with sums ‘2+2 =’, you will probably exclaim “4!” , when asked to add the number of field players allowed on the field at the start of a football match you will probably, given some basic knowledge of the rules of the game and waiving certain interpretative ambiguities, be able to come up with ‘22’. My certainty (and I presume yours as well) about the correctness of these sums seems to be grounded in a rule for addition. It is not that I was trained to answer ‘4’ to ‘2 + 2’, I did not memorize this answer,¹ but at a certain point in time grasped a rule for addition which enabled me to come up with the answer to any sum, without being bound to a particular history of

¹Even though this might not be entirely true for this particular sum, at any rate I did not memorize every answer to every sum I have come across.
sums that I have met with before. This is a peculiar thing about rules: they are formulated finitely, but contain the power of determining indefinitely many cases.

Now suppose a famous mathematician comes along and asks you to compute something using numerals larger than you have ever encountered in performing an addition, say, ‘68’ and ‘57’. He then conjures up a skeptical challenge along the following lines: you might respond to this sum with ‘125’, but how can you be certain that you should not have answered ‘5’? Why can it not be that in the past you have always been using ‘+’ to denote quus, standing for a function which yields exactly the same answers up to a certain set of numerals, with higher ones giving you ‘5’ for an answer?

Since it is not logically excluded that this is the case, one would like to come up with a way of answering the skeptic appearing in the mathematician’s – Saul Kripke’s – discussion of the nature of rule-following. To do this, we have to answer the skeptical challenge in its two forms. The first is ontological in kind, i.e. the skeptic questions whether there is a fact as to whether I meant plus or quus. The second adds to this the normativity of the supposed ‘meaning-fact’, i.e. he questions your confidence in answering ‘125’ instead of ‘5’ to this paradigmatic sum; the meaning-fact must not just predict the ‘right’ answers and thus render a covariant set, the correct extension must be intensionally implied by the rule. The rule must allow for the extension to be “read off”.

It should be emphasized that the skeptic doubts whether any past instructions “compel (or justify) the answer ‘125’ rather than ‘5’ ”, since there has never been any previous limitation on using qu-like functions. That is to say, because there are infinitely many quus-like functions compatible with my previous usage of the ‘+’-sign, there is no way of telling whether I or any one else ever meant plus or quus. One might respond to this claim by appealing to a more basic function, say our knowledge of counting, which is constitutive of addition. But note that the skeptic can reply to this by positing the notion of ‘quounting’, throwing the ball back into our court, so to speak. This discussion is essentially a redux of Wittgenstein’s remarks on the infinite regress we get into when trying to account for our interpretations of rules, ending in the claim that, at the most basic level, we apparently follow rules blindly. Eventually, this would lead the skeptic to reject the first form of the challenge: there is no meaning-fact which accounts for my meaning plus or quus. There is nothing in my overt behavior, nor in my own inner life which can serve as the meaning-fact required by the skeptic.

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2K p. 13
3“Thus the sceptic can question my present interpretation of my past usage of ‘count’ as he did with ‘plus’. In particular, he can claim that by ‘count’ I formerly meant quount, where to ‘quount’ a heap is to count it in the ordinary sense, unless the heap was formed as the union of two heaps, one of which has 57 or more items, in which case one must automatically give the answer ‘5’.” ([27] p. 16)

4You might argue the skeptical challenge is posed in mathematical terms, because it is a peculiar fact of mathematical thinking that it allows of infinitely many rules that are extensionally equivalent (up to a certain point). In the case of words and their extensions there is not such a broad realm of possibility.
Harking back to the first chapter, this makes it clear why the sort of skepticism presented by Kripke is of the earlier discussed ontological kind and hence why it is in line, as Kripke admits, with Hume’s problem. Even though the problem might be read as saying “nothing in my mental history establishes what I meant by plus or quus – how can anyone know which of these I meant?”, the problem is not that there is ambiguity as to which function was meant in the past. Everything in my mental history could be interpreted as being in line with either addition or quaddition. Therefore, there is no fact of the matter as to whether I, or anyone else might have meant plus or quus. This is the ontological strand that sets our problem apart. We are not talking about doubt, we are not guessing what someone might have meant. Instead, the concern is more fundamental. There is no fact to be appealed to, therefore the answer can be made to accord with infinitely many different rules. Making things a bit more dramatic, Kripke asserts that even an omniscient God should he look at the entire universe – including my mind, would not be able to ‘see’ the fact constituting my meaning plus, entailing that there is no possible fact of the matter as to whether I meant plus or quus. Moreover, if there wasn’t ever such a fact, then there is not going to be one at present, meaning that there is no fact of the matter as to what I mean, leading Kripke to the disturbing conclusion that ‘meaning vanishes into thin air’.

However, consider the ways in which we could specify an ordinary concept like e.g. DOG. We could formulate a concept like DOG, having the same extension on earth, but a different one on, let’s say, Alpha Centauri. Even if this seems outrageous – which it is – it is not logically impossible. Moreover, an important feature of human language is its constant flux. Words and expressions change meanings constantly and these changes present endless different configurations. At any rate, there is no way of logically excluding a certain change in use to occur in the future.

5K p. 21
6I find it easier to understand the God-argument with reference to the following quote from Wittgenstein:

What is wrong with saying, e.g., that God knows all irrational numbers? Or: they all would be there, even if we know only a certain number of them? Why are these pictures not harmless?
For one, they hide certain problems. . . .

Even God can only decide something mathematical through mathematics. Even for him the mere rule of expansion cannot decide what it cannot decide for us.

One could put it this way: given a rule for expansion, a calculation can teach us that the number “2” stands at the fifth place. Could God have known this without this calculation, just from the rule of expansion? I want to say: No. (RFM VII/41)

The problem then is, that, given the fact that to determine a specific number in a row, which is represented by a rule, even God has to do calculations, the skeptical problem is as much a problem for Him as it is for us.

7K p. 22
3.2 Kripke’s Skeptical Solution

Kripke’s view is that Wittgenstein’s investigation into the nature of rules has left us with a new form of skepticism. This radical form can only be come to terms with through a skeptical solution and Kripke’s skeptical solution carries with it the refutation of any form of private language. It is important, for our purposes, to note the Kantian strand in the argument at this point – one of the very few points were Kripke acknowledges the “Kantian flavor” involved. Wittgenstein’s argument is not from the outset focussed on finding a way of disproving inner speech. It rather involves a transcendental exploration of how language is possible concluding that, if language is possible, then it is necessarily public, excluding private language.

Not surprisingly, this is also where Kripke spells out the analogy of Wittgenstein’s skepticism to that displayed by Hume. Hume’s “skeptical solution” is to serve as a model for Kripke’s resolution of the rule-following paradox. First, this skeptical solution is contrasted with the straight solution. A straight solution is of the kind Descartes gave and, more generally, it is of the kind used to answer epistemological skepticism. This solution is simply a refutation of the skeptic, pointing out some overlooked fact of meaning (or causality). The skeptical solution, on the other hand, concedes to the skeptic that he is right in arguing against our dogmatic claims, it then goes on to claim that there is still a justification to be given, yet this is not of the ‘factual’ sort. Hume does this by introducing the idea that humans are conditioned to constantly conjoin cause and effect situations. On the basis of seeing event \( a \) follow event \( b \) on several occasions, we construct the types \( A \) and \( B \) and make a connexion between these two event-types. Only given these types and the generalization to the effect that \( A \) causes \( B \), can we say that there is a causal relation. As a result there cannot be something like “private causation”\(^{10}\); events \( a \) and \( b \) can only be made sense of as standing in a causal relation when they are taken up in event-types, that is with other similar events.

Kripke’s attempt is to import this solution to the case of meaning-skepticism, consequently leading to the same conclusion regarding the privateness of meaning. His move is to switch from talking about rules in terms of truth-conditions – necessary and sufficient conditions for following a rule\(^{11}\) – in favor of justification conditions. This comes as a natural reaction upon having dropped the notion of a meaning-fact.\(^{12}\) The important difference is that on

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\(^8\)K p. 60
\(^9\)K f. 48 – I do not think I would disagree with equating the role of the thing-in-itself with that of private language in this case. Knowledge of the thing-in-itself is refuted as a corollary to Kant’s theory of cognition, not as a goal in itself. The possibility of experience excludes knowledge of thing-in-themselves in the same way that the possibility of meaning discards the possibility of private language.
\(^10\)K p. 68
\(^11\)K p. 87
\(^12\)Kripke sees this as a major change in Wittgenstein’s thinking between the Tractatus and the Investig-
the latter view, no correspondence to facts is required. Rather, we should look at how we use expressions like “green” and “plus”, in what situation certain utterances are deemed appropriate. Truth only enters the picture as a way of asserting a certain sentence – affirming it (or not). The view of truth is thus inherently deflationary and its deflation is a reaction to the absence of a meaning-fact.

In formulating a response to the skeptic, it is important to recall that in our everyday goings-on we add without thinking about it and these calculations are right most of the time. The skeptic does not deny that fact, but the justification for it, given the infinity of possible algorithms which might have been followed. To repeat Kripke’s often repeated (and often contested) phrase: “We act unhesitatingly, but blindly”. The characteristic to note about this situation is that it relates to a person in isolation. Given this one actor, he might as well be right in acting the way he does – whatever he does – for the skeptical argument showed that nothing in the person himself is normative for his own behavior. It is simply part of the grammar of rule-following that ‘believing to be following a rule’ cannot be the same as ‘following a rule’, without this expression loosing its content and claim to normativity – mistakes must be possible to make sense of rules and mistakes cannot be possible with regard to knowing your own intentions.

In the context of a community of rule-followers the picture changes. Whereas justification-conditions have no role to play in a private setting, in the communal sphere its members will judge each other by their own standards and this will result in a process of attributing the honorary title of ‘follower of rule x’, to their fellows. That is to say, they will call those persons rule-followers who, on a reasonable number of occasions, have reacted to certain situations in the same way that they would have reacted – having sufficiently ‘added’ numerals their way. And they will retract their former attributions of rule-following if it becomes apparent that people’s inclinations start to diverge greatly. Rule-following thus gets characterized as a calibration of inclinations. Inclinations for reacting to ‘+’ are tuned so as to accord with the use of ‘+’. The utility of this practice is obvious. Life would come to a halt without these shared practices. It allows human society to function in a way that would be impossible if everybody started acting in qu-like ways. Practices are reliant on a certain level of unity, for them to have a purpose. Kripke seems to take this utility as

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13K p. 86
14One might well generalize this claim: all skeptical solutions seem wedded to some kind of deflationism in order to allay the skeptical worries that come with an inflationary picture of meaning and truth. That is simply the nature of the skeptical solution as opposed to its straight counterpart. I will not be able to do justice to this claim here, but it is a thought which might prove helpful in understanding the solutions to the paradox we are about to discuss.
15K p. 87
16This will become more clear in the following section.
the impetus for rule-following, as did Hume, when he designated utility as the ground for this rule-based unity.

Similarly in line with Hume’s ideas, Kripke describes his solution as a *conditional inversion*. According to his reading, the “Humeans . . . concentrate on the assertability conditions of a contrapositive form of the conditional”. Humeans take regularity as primary and devise hypotheticals on the basis of that regularity which can be tested empirically and rejected when a counter instance to the expected effect (b) follows upon the cause (A). The same thing goes on in a community of rule-followers. A teacher does not look for the thing that ‘makes’ his students add, he attributes a certain inclination to some of his students and retracts it when he sees them as failing on many occasions. The responses he gets are the outward criteria for attributing to someone the grasp of the concept of addition. The upshot of the rule-following paradox is thus a rejection of the possibility of private language. There always has to be a community acting as a corrective device, because otherwise you interpretation of a rule would always imply your understanding of a rule and that would render the required normativity of rules void.

### 3.3 Reductionist solutions

Kripke’s first discussion of possible *straight* counterarguments to his skeptical conclusion concerns the prominent dispositional solution. The dispositional view suggests that there are dispositional facts about you which determined your answer in the past and which do so now and at any future occasion. Even though there might not be any way of distinguishing one disposition from the other on the basis of a finite list of applications of a rule, there is always the dispositional fact to differentiate plus from quus. The disposition, when picked out, will enable you to *read off* the extension of a term – the answer to a function of two numerals.

A first problem for dispositional solutions is what is known as the finiteness-objection. Besides our having a finite stock of previous examples of addition, we can only have a finite set of dispositions to respond in certain ways and this premise provides the same starting position for a skeptical inquiry. One might reply to this that the disposition proposed is inaccurate. It is only a contingent fact about us that we have finite brains and finite lives which constrain the dispositions it might be possible for us to have. Were we to have the optimal dispositions to deal with these problems, then we would have no trouble stating the answer to any addition using numbers larger than ‘68’ and ‘57’. Bearing in mind the epistemological/ontological distinction however, it becomes clear that this is not the kind.

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17 K p. 95-108
18[27] p.94
19K. 26
of answer the skeptic will grant you. The skeptic was not doubting the correctness of your answer, but the fact that there is a correct answer at all. The argument using idealized conditions, will work to provide the right answer given the fact that it is clear whether one meant to be doing addition or quaddition. However, it cannot provide this fact for you on pains of circularity. Idealizing dispositions only works given a fact about which function you mean and at the same time this is what one tries to establish through defining ideal dispositions.\textsuperscript{20}

Additionally there is a problem concerning the possibility of error. Being the fallible human beings we are, we all have dispositions to make mistakes. But, given the fact that a dispositional solution requires us to be able to read of the extension of a term from its disposition, the only thing we can say of a person systematically making mistakes in problems of addition is that he is not doing addition, but using some non-standard form of `skaddition'.\textsuperscript{21} A recourse to optimal conditions, abstracting from the ‘wrong’ answers, though much suggested as a remedy, is not going to help you in this case. To pick out the wrong answers one would first need a measure for determining what is a wrong answer and for this you would already need to know which rule is being followed. But, as was already pointed out, one could always fit the wrong answers into a function like skaddition, meaning that there is no way to distinguish error from correct systematic divergence.

This problem of accounting for error is related to a more general concern, undermining any dispositional solution: Given a fact about meaning, we want it to be a normative, not a descriptive fact. A rule should tell what one ought to do, not what one will in fact do. If they amount to the same thing, then we cannot even talk about right and wrong in the case of dispositions and they would thus lack the feature of normativity which rules are supposed to provide. If I mean something with a certain expression, say “dog”, then I intend this expression to apply to its extension, namely all dogs. In the dispositional case, however, the extension cannot be a distinct measure for judging the use of this expression. The extension would always be dependent on and, therefore, exactly covariant with my intension. But in that case normativity falls by the wayside. The extension is supposed to serve as an independent measure of correctness for your use of an expression, it is supposed to distinguish what you think is right, from what is right. It is exactly this feature which is lacking in the dispositional picture, because the extension turns out to be what you take it to be.

\textsuperscript{20}As Boghossian notes, this argument does not drive the point home. ‘Stuffing our minds with extra brain matter’ will only help us in making better use of the rules we have. Bigger brains will supposedly have the beneficial effect for us of allowing us to make fewer mistakes. The real problem addressed here is that there will “always be a serious indeterminacy in what my dispositions are” ([6]). But this fact will not in itself imply an inability to conjecture from certain optimal dispositions, once we have them. Once we have defined disposition for the behavior of gasses – ideal gas laws, we are perfectly allowed to describe variance in their volume as inversely related with the pressure on them, even if we might make some mistakes concerning the actual volume due to certain indeterminacies.

\textsuperscript{21}K p. 30
Now, this way of presenting the dispositional solution is of course rather crude and it is this crudeness which many philosophers pursuing reductionist theories of meaning have balked at. In order to get a satisfactory reduction of meaning to dispositions, one has to find a way of defining dispositions which are meaning-determining M-dispositions, that is, dispositions which are characterized “in non-intentional and non-semantic terms” and characterize the correct extension.\textsuperscript{22} Then, if one pulls this off, there still remains the problem of justifying that one has hit upon what is not only extensionally, but also intensionally the M-disposition – the second form of the skeptical challenge, thereby turning the M-disposition into a correctness condition of the kind rejected by Kripke.

Two kinds of approaches have been suggested for this. The first might be called the consensual approach. It essentially applies the crude dispositional solution at the level of a community. One simply looks at what the general disposition of a community is for the use of a term and adopts this as the M-disposition in question. A first methodological problem with this solution is its arbitrariness. There seems to be no way of defining when a community is large enough to constitute a M-disposition – is three already a crowd? The bigger problem is a theme from the private setting recurring at the communal level, namely its lack in defining correctness. If there is a systematic failing in our disposition, then it will not be picked out when defining M-dispositions at the communal level.\textsuperscript{23}

Secondly, there is the proposal that one might define optimal dispositions. By naturalistically specifying conditions in which it is impossible to be mistaken in your attribution of ‘dog’ to any dog in your sight, you can determine the disposition which can serve as a criterion for using the term ‘dog’ in all ordinary cases. More generally, this approach concerns the way in which words hook onto the world in a causal way, how semantic content gets naturalized. The literature on this subject is large and I will not be surveying it here; a very small introduction will suffice.

Optimal dispositions are dispositions people display under certain idealized conditions. Judging the color of a book in a red-lit hammam is going to yield you with a judgment about the color of the book, but the chances of you being right in your assessment are very slim, due to the bad lighting combined with the atmospheric conditions. Rather, you should go outside, or at least go somewhere in a decently lit spot with a clear view of the book and then judge the color; chances are that your color-judgment will turn out correct. In other words, you need (i) naturalistically specifiable conditions under which you (ii) cannot mistake the color of the book.

This sounds like a plan, but does it work? I will waive the contingent technical difficulties

\textsuperscript{22}[6] p. 40
\textsuperscript{23}It is important to keep in mind that the appeal to the community is used in this case to pinpoint a disposition to supply correctness conditions. This is not inconsistent with an appeal to community made by Kripke in providing justification conditions.
and refer to Boghossian who suggests that any naturalizing of content is bound to fail.\textsuperscript{24} This conclusion about the inadequacy of causal dispositional theories rests on two considerations. First, one wants to say that such a thing as a natural kind gets its reference fixed in the following way: “the substance is defined as the kind instantiated by (almost all of) a given sample”.\textsuperscript{25} This means that if there are two things which we cannot distinguish from each other, but which have a completely different internal structure, then it would be a mistake to refer to them with the same term, say ‘water’. A causal theory defining optimal dispositions – information theoretic semantics – is not able to account for this fact, according to Boghossian. If there exists the physical possibility of there being things out there which are intrinsically different, but cannot as such be distinguished by us, then “it will follow, on a pure informational theory, that all our ‘natural kind terms’, have wildly disjunctive extensions, and hence are not really natural kind terms at all”.\textsuperscript{26}

Secondly, even if one would find a way of excluding errors of the latter kind, it still would not be possible to describe the desired optimal dispositions. This is because any attempt at picking out optimal dispositions would have to abstract from one important, indeed necessary element of human judgment, namely the holistic character of belief fixation.\textsuperscript{27} The dispositions we are talking of are dispositions about judging something to belong to a certain extension of a term. A belief of this kind, or really any belief in general is formed in the context of a set of background beliefs. This means that, “given a suitably mediating set of background assumptions”, any stimulus is able to cause just about any belief. For instance, if I would be liable to form the belief that I saw a white pillar in front of me – because there is a white pillar in front of me, but in the background looms the recollection of the latest papal edict saying that it has been rigorously established by the Vatican based “Institute for Pillars and other Supportive Architectural Elements” that there are no white pillars and I have a deeply rooted trust in anything proclaimed by Vatican officials, then I might just reject the belief that there is a white pillar in front of me and instead adopt the belief that the pillar is green, or that it is a hologram projected to create a more balanced interior for this extravagantly large library hall. The point simply is that there is no way for the causal theorist to determine what a situation of optimality would be. Even if the situation would arise and the corresponding correct disposition would be detected, then still the dispositionalist would not have a way of making sure that this is the correct situation, because he would need to find a way of finitely stating the sets of beliefs that would have to be excluded in order for a tokening of something like a white pillar to be a correct tokening of a white pillar. That is to say, he would need the very thing that

\textsuperscript{24}[5] \textsuperscript{25}[26] p. 136 \textsuperscript{26}[5] p. 85. At the root of this objection lies the verificationist nature of informational theories and this is exactly the point – consistent with the kernel of Naming & Necessity – that Kripke brought to the fore in his rule-following discussion: that verificationist theories, of whichever complexity can only be descriptive, never normative. \\
\textsuperscript{27}[5] p. 88-91
we are looking for in the first place: “namely, a set of naturalistic necessary and sufficient conditions for being a belief with a certain content”.28

One final remark on the reductionism-issue is that I have not treated the hard-line reductionist thought that a meaning fact just is an ordinary fact. Boghossian’s argument only works given the assumption that meaning is – at least partly – a conceptual notion, not readily explicable in naturalistic terms. The person whom he is explicitly reacting to in [5], Jerry Fodor, does not share this commitment.29 I do not here want to argue that this hard-line naturalistic thought is implausible – it is not, or at least not straightforwardly so. Rather, I would like to point out that this kind of an answer dissolves the skeptical problematic. If there are only natural facts, then there are no normative facts, therefore there is no meaning fact, or none that would fulfill the second requirement of Kripke’s skeptic. Fodor actually nods in approval as he watches meaning vanish into thin air.30

3.4 Simplicity arguments

Having repudiated the (crude) dispositional account, Kripke moves on to another possible reply to the paradox. The claim is that simplicity will in the end favour one option – adding – over any other – i.e. the meaning of a term is to be brought back to the simplest hypothesis of what I could have meant.31 An example of this solution will help to illustrate this point that is crucial in underlining the ontological – as opposed to epistemological – problematic. The only real-life instance, where this solution is put forward – that I know of – is in David Lewis’s seminal “New Work for a Theory of Universals”.32 Lewis argues that adding is a more natural response, than quadding and therefore it is more appropriate as a ‘way of going on’, than quadding – it is a (more) natural kind. According to Lewis “[i]t’s not that you cannot intend to quadd”, but it would require something extra. “You must do something that, taking principles of fit and presumptions of eligibility and other principles of charity together, tilts the balance in favour of an interpretation on which you intend to quadd.” You would need a reason to quadd, like wanting to tease inquisitive philosophers, for example. Otherwise, the default intention is to add.

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29[12]: “[I]f it’s literally true that rationality, intentionality, normativity and the like belong to the mind essentially, then they must all be phenomena within the natural realm that scientists explore.”
30I think it has been shown that there are problems of inconsistency at the phenomenal level when we admit to this form of naturalism – e.g. Davidson, Sellars, Rorty et. al. – but that is nothing that cannot, in the end, be denied flatly by the naturalistically minded philosopher.
31K p. 38
32[30] p. 225. It is probable that there are so few attempts in this direction because of Kripke’s strong-worded refutation of it. (It also seems as if Lewis has not paid any attention to this refutation when formulating his argument, considering his lack of any reference this refutation, but that is a mere suspicion on my part.)
The way to argue against this position from the standpoint of the rule-following skeptic, is not to appeal to the relativity of ‘simplicity’, or to the problems philosophers have stumbled on in trying to define it. The skeptic’s reply is more basic and goes to the heart of the ontological-epistemological distinction. Simplicity is invoked to distinguish between competing hypotheses. Trumping the Ptolemaic picture of our solar system in virtue of the Copernican heliocentric one would be such an instance of deciding on hypotheses through considering their simplicity. However, such an analysis can only be carried out when there is a fact of the matter as to what you are describing. It is a way of making the best of our finite condition humaine. But if there is no fact of the matter at all, if not even God could adjudicate these hypotheses, then there is no point in adhering to one rather than the other. This is precisely the difference setting apart the ontological problem with which we are dealing in the Kripke case.

The skeptic claims that “he knows of no fact about an individual that could constitute his state of meaning plus rather than quus”. Lewis’s reaction is to say that ‘that is all fine and true, but you can simply point out that adding is more natural than quadding, so we should understand you as intending to add by default’. Now, what if “Individual” replies ‘5’ to the well-known arithmetical problem. Lewis will then have to respond that he is wrong to say ‘5’; the answer should have been ‘125’, because adding is more natural than quadding and it is clear that Individual has just quadded. However, what if Individual replies that he intended to quadd, or that he intended to ‘skad’, or that he did not intend anything and that what was taken to be his answer was just a mindless reaction? How are we going to find out whether Individual made a mistake in his addition, or not? What is going to decide the matter now? Answer: Nothing. There is no fact of the matter as to what Individual intended in the past (implying that there is no such fact in the present either), therefore a claim to simplicity makes no sense. It has no justificatory value, because there is no criterion imaginable to adjudicate the matter.

The fundamental problem with this approach via natural kinds is discussed by Kripke in relation to the arch-father of modern discussions of natural kinds: W.V. Quine. Wittgenstein’s problem, according to Kripke, is one of ought – what ought I respond in the future, how ought I apply a color-term like ‘sepia’? Quine protests that there is no problem in learning a term and applying it to its correct extension. We simply have a natural propensity to find some colors more akin to others and on the basis of this we learn color words like ‘sepia’ through a process of conditioning. In that case, a principle of simplicity might be a very welcome instrument in trying to determine what someone intends and indeed it is used by linguists in exactly this way. When we view people from the outside and try to determine their intentions – for instance when using an expression like “gavagai” – we may rightly hypothesize about the meaning of this expression using a principle of simplicity. However, the skeptic’s inquiry is not one that is conducted from the outside. The ontolog-

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33See K p. 14-5 & 55-8 for this discussion.
ical skeptic follows Wittgenstein in starting out on an *internal* investigation. He purports to show, that there is no *intentional* fact available, not even to the subject. Trying to regain this fact through the simplicity argument seems to lead us to the bizarre conclusion that I infer my intentions on the basis of what I take to be the most natural intention for me to have had. Relating considerations of simplicity to *our* retrospective concerns reveals their true colors, as being fit for external hypothesizing, not for intending.\textsuperscript{34}

3.5 Anti-Reductionist Solutions

3.5.1 Straight anti-reductionist solutions

The prominence of reductionist solutions seems to be a symptom of a broader reductionistic movement informed by its success in the sciences. Going against this trend, anti-reductionists would argue that, just because reductionism works for the physical realm – e.g. reducing everyday phenomena to their chemical underpinnings and reducing chemical laws to laws of physics – does not imply that the same can be done for the realm of intentions. The difference, they point out, is a difference in kind between physical and intentional explanation. The one is after a causal connection, the other is a way of making understandable why someone did something for some reason. Reductionism with regard to Kripke’s paradox could well be an unwarranted generalization of the physicalist thesis that any phenomenon of whatever kind can be reduced to laws mirroring nature. As John McDowell explains, “Physicalism, . . . , affords no reason for insisting that such mirroring must be available if semantics is to be otherwise than empty; that is (given the assumption that semantics is not empty), for expecting that mirroring will be found”.\textsuperscript{35}

Anti-reductionism is treated by Kripke as referring to an *irreducible experience* one has in following a rule. I simply *know* that I am right in answering ‘125’ and not ‘5’ in the same sense that I am aware of any other experience. This should immediately strike one as an awkward suggestion. How would I start describing such phenomenal experiences of meaning? I for one would have no idea how to imagine a way of ‘sensing understanding’. Moreover, the rule-following arguments can be used to defeat the point of private experiences in the case of irreducible experiences as well. Whereas this feeling may be enough for *me* to feel confident about my reply, it is hardly enough to answer the skeptic. The

\textsuperscript{34}This rejection, however, does not rid the simplicity account of all attraction. Simplicity is attractive in any theory, but it can only play a justificatory role in two cases: 1) if it is to act as a justificatory principle in problems of indeterminacy, or 2) in holistic models where a certain amount of circularity is inculcated and the simplicity argument will not necessarily need to be argued for on a separate basis. Our problem resembles neither. I will refer back to this proposal, however, when considering the Kantian proposal. For, when the ontological status is procured simplicity may well be a guide in determining rules.

\textsuperscript{35}[36] p. 151
3.5. ANTI-REDUCTIONIST SOLUTIONS

skeptic will simply correct you in saying ‘125’ by replying that ‘that particular feeling is the feeling associated with correctly answering ‘5’ to ‘68+57’. Similarly, one could propose that one ‘sees an image’ when applying a certain word – one sees a dog when saying “dog”. Most readers will probably agree that this is not what is actually going on. At least on the conscious level, we do not see pictures of things we say all the time. But let us grant the ‘imagist’ this way of seeing things and there is an even larger problem. To make use of a picture one needs a method of projection for it, but if that is the case, we get into the infinite regress of interpretations familiar from Wittgenstein’s treatment of the different projections of a cube.

The point to be made with regard to irreducible phenomenal experience I take to be this: that if we would have had the same kind of phenomenal experience in understanding as in being in pain, then the whole rule-following debate would have seemed obviously superfluous to us, just as the Humean skepticism about causal connexions would have made no sense, if there had been a clear perception of causal nexusses. It is in virtue of the fact that there are these things that are not there phenomenally, that ontological skepticism can take off. We have perceptions and pains, whereas we do not in the same way have ‘understandings’. To repeat Kripke’s divine overstatement: God will in the end ‘know’ whom of his stock are ‘in pain’, but He will have no clue, at least not any more than his stock does, as to whether person X has really understood the sentence in Hebrew he just read out loud.

One last attempt at locating a meaning-fact might get around this problem by making the experience of meaning even more irreducible than any qualitative state – something one could not find in experience, or some ‘primitive state’ of doing something ‘in the right way i.e. *sui generis*’. Such an anti-reductionist theory would have to show is that, at a certain point in our investigations, content properties have to be taken for granted, without prospect of identification with properties otherwise described. The question is how we can do justice to this kind of anti-reductionism, without losing sight of our earlier conclusions following Kripke’s argument. First, we may ask: How can there be something which does not manifest itself in any way, but is causally – how else? – efficacious in bringing

36 According to Colin McGinn, it is not at all clear why there could not be non-qualitative states of knowledge, since there are such states as beliefs and intentions, which are not of a qualitative nature ([38] p. 89). This argument obviously fails – Crispin Wright refers to it as a flagrant form of “philosophical stone-kicking” ([48] p.). It is exactly Kripke’s point to show that these kinds of states have no such factual basis because they do not have this qualitative grounding and putting wax in your ears is not a way of answering this problem.

37 Of course, you might say: God could very well attribute a disposition to someone and He could do that better than any mortal person hindered by their finite capacities. But He would have no more certainty about it than we do, other than a gradual certainty regarding what we might suppose to be His justified confidence in His own ability to ascribe dispositions. That confidence, however, would then be just as ripe for doubt by an infidel skeptic – see the earlier footnote containing Wittgenstein’s quote from RFM.
about certain ways of applying a rule? Second, we remain stuck with the question how this primitive fact will deal with the logical argument given earlier to the effect that it cannot be a thing tautologically applicable to every state, without loosing its normative function?

I believe these problems to point out the inconsistency of any appeal to a *sui generis* fact. They reveal the contradictory notion of a fact that does not manifest itself – the non-factual fact. If such a fact would be causally effective, then we would have a way of establishing its presence by looking at its indirect manifestations in the world – e.g. as we do with elementary particles. But if that is the case, then it is no more *sui generis* than any other thing which we speak of in derivative terms. This problem is related to a deeper lying problem involving the kind of thing we are looking for in a *straight solution*. What is needed for a satisfactory *straight solution* is a *fact* of meaning. Now, factual propositions are decidable – something is the case or not – and decidability is precisely what is at issue in the discussion on rule-following and its close relative: the Private Language Argument. If my taking myself to follow a rule constitutes the fact that I *am* following the rule, then this taking myself to follow a rule does not function as a criterion for deciding whether I am actually following the rule. One might want to add this admission of an inner feeling of appropriateness, but it would not be playing any substantive role. It would, so to speak, not put any weight in the balance which decides whether one is, or is not following a rule. It would be nothing more than a “wheel that can be turned though nothing else moves with it”, in which case the wheel is “not part of the mechanism”. This would be different if the *sui generis* fact were causally effective. In that case, the ramifications of the presence of this fact would constitute a criterion for deciding whether someone is following a rule. But how would this be explainable as a non-naturalizable fact, different in kind from other things which we describe indirectly in empirical theories? What would be *sui generis* about this fact which would not be *sui generis* about elementary particles, or C-fibers firing? Given that there are these effects one might well want to follow Paul Horwich’s suggestion of describing meaning-facts in terms of a use-theory, which is a reductionist programme.

Another way of putting it is this: We cannot conceive of a *sui generis* fact, because it leads us into a seesaw argument. If, on the one hand, you find a coherent pattern of causal traces relating to a *sui generis* fact then there is no reason why you should not reduce these traces to an empirical description of a meaning-fact to which you affix the normative seal, but if, on the other hand, the causal traces do not hang together in this way, then we are not talking about a possible rule, and therefore it cannot be a meaning-fact – a free rule, a freely developing sequence is a senseless concept.

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38 See Boghossian’s finishing paragraph of [6]
39 Note that, if Kripke were to be viewed as holding a fully naturalist view of semantics – along earlier sketched reductionist lines, then it is easy to see why Kripke would want to make quick work of the *sui generis* suggestion, following straightforwardly from his naturalistic assumption.[7]
40 *PI* §271
41 See [18]
3.5. ANTI-REDUCTIONIST SOLUTIONS

The *sui generis* objection, in my opinion, succinctly shows the force of the skeptical argument. What is left to be constitutive of a rule is a tautologous (one might say epiphenomenal) “queer” thing accompanying all its applications. But of course, this will not tell us anything. It will never be capable of playing the normative role we expect a *meaning-fact* to have, it is not going to serve as a criterion for the right application of a rule, indeed it is logically prohibited from doing this, for there seems to be nothing against constraining its use to any particular set of sentences; it is “not part of the mechanism” and cannot function as a decisive criterion. The point is that if something is a fact then it is decidable, if it is decidable, then it is reducible and if it is reducible then it is descriptive and cannot function normatively – following from the discussion on reductionist solutions. The requirement of looking for a normative *fact* thus precludes the success of any *straight solution*, because such a solution depends on specifying a fact of the matter. Kripke’s point is that this is exactly the kind of inconsistency threatening all candidates for *meaning-facts*, namely that “[m]eaning is not a process which accompanies a word. For no process could have the consequences of meaning”.

3.5.2 Skeptical anti-reductionist solutions

A viable anti-reductionist solution, it seems, can never amount to being a straight solution as such. It cannot provide a meaning-fact, because it does not defuse the skeptical conclusion that “no process could have the consequences of meaning” – the *sui generis* objection only illustrates the fundamental inability of anti-reductionist attempts in this direction. Nonetheless, saying that a straight anti-reductionist solution is impossible is not the same as saying that any anti-reductionist solution is bound to fail. Kripke’s solution, for one, is anti-reductionist and skeptical. Its relativistic connotation, however, has caused many to shy away from endorsing this solution. Rightly so, I am inclined to add, for especially in the case of such truths commonly perceived as cut in stone – consider mathematical and moral ones – we are not at all willing to let their fate rest on the contingently formed practices of a community. Our sense of confidence in the outcome of ‘2+2’ being ‘4’, though maybe not given by a rule, seems rooted in something more substantial than a Humean

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42 This is, in my view, what knocks down the only genuine straight *sui generis* solution I know of, namely Hannah Ginsborg’s argument ([15]). Interestingly, Ginsborg admits to taking her cue from Kant – which is a main reason for mentioning her forthcoming work – by providing a solution that aims for the middle ground between dispositionalist and *sui generis* solutions. Frankly, though, I cannot see how she diverges anywhere from the Humean line in referring to a “feeling of appropriateness” which supposedly accounts for normativity and this kind of feeling, Hume clearly saw, cannot ground any objective norms, precisely because it can be gratuitously attached to any proposition. Finding a way of differentiating this feeling from a strong feeling of Humean “vivacity” – Hume’s *sui generis* claim *avant la lettre* – seems like a tough argument to make, especially considering that *sui generis* items are inherently hard to compare.

43 Note that this argument appears to be (appropriately) close to a revival of Hume’s is-ought distinction

44 K f. 35 – Kripke is here quoting Wittgenstein
“custom”. We have a sense that, concerning certain truths, their normativity does not stop at the gates of our community, while this is exactly what appears to be happening on Kripke’s solution. The community might provide a criterion for the individual to abide by, but “for the community itself there is no authority, so no standard to meet”.\footnote{\[47\] p.220 – Wright refers to Wittgenstein’s remarks on mathematics, not to Kripke’s which were still to be written at the time. This quote has been used to by McDowell to link the two and I will use it now to introduce his own reaction to these approaches.} The rule-following skeptic might well return at the communal level and ask why he cannot use quus and, frankly, who is to say that he cannot?

John McDowell regards this as a problem. He proposes to read the rule-following paradox as a dilemma between taking the orthodox stance on rule-following and meaning leading to the paradox, or taking Kripke’s view and declaring void any content not instituted by practice within a community – here we already recognize the contours of his position taken ten years later in \textit{Mind and World}.. His attempt comes down to “steering a course” between these choices he refers to as \textit{Scylla} and \textit{Charybdis}. The mistaken idea underlying Kripke’s interpretation of the skeptical paradox comes from reading Wittgenstein as saying that “understanding is always an interpretation”. The skeptic, remember, can bring in his claim whenever a rule has to be applied. If the application involves interpretations, then qu-like interpretations cannot be excluded and for Kripke both are \textit{always} the case. McDowell counters this suggestion by reinterpreting the notion of a community practice. “[W]e have to realize”, he writes, “that obeying a rule is a practice if we are to find it intelligible that there is a way if grasping a rule which is not an interpretation”.\footnote{\[34\] §7} There is a difference between a practice which underlies our interpretations and personal opinions and the interpretations themselves. This practice which functions as a bedrock, might on the one hand not be justifiable in the same sense as any interpretation, but on the other hand it is not used \textit{zu Unrecht}.\footnote{McDowell here quotes Anscombe’s translation of “nicht zu Unrecht” as “without right”. This translation, as he is aware of, is not quite right. A better translation would, in my opinion be “not inappropriately”.} Its bedrock-rules are what define a certain institution – like rules of inference and the successor function defining mathematics – and these rules are \textit{normative} rules. The important thing is to realize that we ought not and cannot dig deeper than this bedrock level. McDowell approvingly quotes Wittgenstein on this point as saying:

\begin{quote}
The difficult thing here is not, to dig down to the ground; no, it is to recognize the ground that lies before us as the ground.\footnote{RFM VI 31}
\end{quote}

We have to recognize that the bedrock which makes rule-following possible is already rule-laden. The discursive level at which we take part in procedures of interpretation and justification is grounded in a practice, but this practice itself is not, as on Kripke’s view, devoid of meaning. What lies at the bottom of these considerations, then, is a much broader
theme than the mere paradox of rule-following outlined by Kripke.\footnote{Boghossian [6] and Blackburn [4], amongst others, note this concern as underlying the importance of the rule-following considerations.} Kripke’s skeptical solution commits us to a view where meaning-content is not in any way “ratification-independent”. Saying of a dutch train that it is yellow only makes sense within a community of people who are competent speakers of English. Seen from outside of the community there would only be air moving at a certain wavelength corresponding to “datsh ’träns ar yelô”. This was seen as the necessary outcome of the paradox when locating meaning “in the subject, as contained in a set of rules. However, this picture does not do justice to the normativity that we usually ascribe to meaning; that when I say “dutch trains are yellow” I intend this proposition to contain a thought which I want to convey. Entertaining Kripke’s view of a contingent network of dispositions of competent speakers which gives rise to a practice of linguistic meaning cannot account for this fact. It tries to “locate meaning on the surface”, explaining our mutual expectations within a practice as based on inductions from how we know other speakers to have responded in the past. What McDowell wants to claim on the other hand, is that, when we correct him, we can point to the fact that he has gone wrong \textit{by his own standards}. If there is to be meaning and if this meaning is to be of the normative kind, then we are excluded from using Kripke’s anti-realist picture, because on this picture, the relation between a communal language and a normless world which precludes a different picture in which individuals are genuinely open to correction by their fellows.\footnote{\cite{34} See the conclusion of §10}

The problem sketched here is familiar to us. Hume’s picture (based on similar considerations as Kripke’s) draws out how we can understand our practice of attributing causality to the world and moral virtue to people without making any claims \textit{about} nature or \textit{about} people other than their conforming to a certain pattern. Kant’s mission was to adapt the image so that it could incorporate more than just a subjective conviction about these things, but an entitlement to saying that these things are objectively true for everyone, everywhere. Shaping this view included a transcendental argument to the effect that certain rules are necessarily presupposed if we are to be able to speak of experience at all. This argument purported to show that at a pre-discursive level, conceptual capacities are already activated in shaping our world according to necessary rules, rules which you may regard as Kant’s transcendental bedrock

A similar move is effected by McDowell in response to the rule-following paradox. We have to acknowledge the bedrock to be able to talk about meaning. Saying that this bedrock is not justified as an interpretation is not to mean that it provides no normative base for our claims to meaning. It enables us to come to interpretations on the basis of implicit rules making out its core. It is these implicit rules which make it possible for speakers to communicate, not on the basis of mutual hypotheses about dispositions of competent speakers, nor through interpretation of each other’s utterances, but through hearing “someone else’s
meaning in his words”.51 We, as speakers of a language, become able to see through the dispositional exterior and catch the meaning of what the other is trying to say through a process of acculturation. Being taken up in a community of speakers, means to acquire a second nature which is pervaded with meaning and not reducible to natural facts of the ‘first’ kind.52 Our discursive practice rests on this ability to convey thoughts and that is what establishes the necessity of presupposing a normatively laden pre-discursive level.53

To be sure, McDowell sees his own solution as an antidote to the skeptical solution.54 I think it is not. Something has got to give when it comes to the skeptical requirements, either facts, or normativity and I think the same happens in McDowell’s case. The notion of factual that he is defending is not that of an actual given fact. Bedrock does not consist of facts, because it does not consist of anything that can be right or wrong. It would be better to term what he is referring to as ‘epistemic norms’ showing themselves in a practice. Hence, the ‘third way’ which McDowell touts as the answer to Kripke’s paradox, also presents us with the possibility of a third option apart from the straight and the skeptical solution. This solution is skeptical to the extent that it accepts the paradox, given the skeptic’s requirements – a meaning-fact of the kind envisaged by Kripke is not given – but it is straight insofar as it deduces certain a priori constraints on meaning, which in turn can serve as criteria for rejecting qu-like functions. It is exactly this direction which I will be taking in he following chapter.

51 [34] §11
52 This appeal to second nature is only formulated by the time that McDowell writes Mind and World. It is what he sees as the essential ingredient lacking in Kant’s framework. He credits Wittgenstein with seeing the importance of second nature to make sense of meaning, explaining his remarks about communal practice in this light.
53 McDowell actually calls this a transcendental argument, presumably while having Kant in mind (considering his later allegiance to Kant on this very point).
54 [34] f. 20: “Kripke cannot distinguish rejecting the “superlative fact” of PI §192 – rejecting the mythology – from refusing to countenance a fact in which my attaching a determinate meaning to “plus” consists – accepting the paradox”.

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Chapter 4

The Transcendental Approach to Rule-Following

If Hume’s problem is anything like Kripke’s problem and if Kant’s critical step attempts to answer former, then it is not an unreasonable thought to apply his solution to the latter; that is the basic thought behind this paper. Now that the stage-setting is over let us see how this thought works out. Before I proceed, however, I would like to provide what may be called a ‘disclaimer’ on the following exposition. This transcendental solution is meant as an illustration of a less-chartered approach the problem. Very roughly: The goal of the approach is to base meaning on more than contingent behavioural patterns. The means are to analyze the a practice to get at what is implied as the underlying bedrock constituting this practice. This kind of transcendental argumentation is used by Kant to arrive at universal principles. You might however be able to apply the same method on a smaller scale. When Wittgenstein mentions that “[t]he procedure of putting a lump of cheese on a balance and fixing the price by the turn of the scale would lose its point if it frequently happened for such lumps to suddenly grow or shrink for no obvious reason”, ¹ he seems to be giving a transcendental argument of this kind – interestingly he skids the surface of the Humean/Kripkean appeal to utility at the same time. We necessarily presuppose cheeses to remain roughly the same, or else our practice of weighing them would not have any use. There is a certain external constraint that governs the practice, namely the relative stability of lumps of cheese. Kant’s general strategy is to link these specific constraints back to the categories, being the most basic rules for experience, the most basic constraint on experience and in the case of cheeses, this would work pretty well. Experience would not make sense if cheeses, or anything else for that matter, would suddenly grow, or shrink, i.e. if there were no underlying substance – see ch. 2 on the Analogies.

¹ *PI* 142
But perhaps it is advisable to aim lower than Kant did. Maybe our forms of thinking are as much part of a culturally formed second nature as they are based on our natural endowments as rational creature. This could imply that the basic rules for thinking are not as basic as Kant claimed them to be, the differences between man’s diverse cultures presenting us with differences which cannot be fitted into the single systematic unity as the guiding principle for the experience of every rational being. Be this as it may, the following exposition will try to provide an answer to Kripke’s skeptic by appealing to Kant’s views on mathematics and it will therefore illustrate the method from a standpoint that does take there to be a single set of logical forms that govern thought. If it convinces, claim it as a solution; if it does not, consider it an illustration.

4.1 Kant on Rules

Hume’s skeptical anxiety stemmed from a mismatch between his conception of an unbounded faculty of imagination and his idea of necessity as grounded in the principle of contradiction. Only if we can exclude the other possibility, can we say that there is a necessary connection between cause and effect, but since the imagination is not constrained in conjuring up infinitely many different effects following a similar cause, there is no necessary relation of cause and effect to be had. Kant’s answer was to offer a conception of logic – transcendental logic – which would consider the principle of contradiction in relation to the pure forms of intuition – space and time. This would allow for the specification of rules that are necessary for our judgments to be objective – i.e. about objects – a priori. In doing so, human thought is recognized as being constrained to the possibilities that fit within this frame of necessary rules for thinking of objects – that is, by the categories, being the most basic rules for ordering intuition. By providing this background, Kant is able to establish an intensional relation – Konsequenz – between cause and effect. The possibility of something happening in experience which is not in accordance with this rule is excluded, because this would run counter to the rules which enable us to order temporal relations which allow us to pick out objects. Naturally, it does not imply that in applying this principle we always make the right inferences as to which effect will follow a certain cause, or what is the proper cause of a certain effect. It is not excluded that we make mistakes, but what is established is that there must be some cause for every effect, for otherwise it could not as such be fitted into our experience.

These features seem suitable for an answer to the Kripkean skeptic. We want to establish an intensional relation between the rule and its application, which allows for mistakes, but ultimately grounds and thereby justifies its application. In order to arrive at this result we will likewise have to devise a way to constrain the imagination. An argument has to be found to the effect that the Kripkean skeptic will not be able to justify his claim to a qu-like function. In Kantian phrasing, this will come down to showing why qu-like functions
do not cohere with transcendental unity of apperception; the skeptic ought in the end to be constrained to formulating functions which are in accordance with transcendental logic.

While explaining Kant’s reaction to Hume I touched upon the subject of schemata as being dispositions for structuring the manifold in such a way as to be processed by the understanding in discursive thought. The schemata enumerated in the Schematism are of the peculiar sort, in that they are the transcendental schemata. They relate objects to pure concepts through being determinations of inner sense by the understanding – the immediate results of the synthesis speciosa. The schemata are thus formed with the intention of subsumption of objects under the categories. The “blind” – i.e. non-discursive – syntheses of apprehension are performed according to a schema – a rule of apprehension – and this rule is at work at an earlier stage than the reflective use of the understanding in the form of discursive thought. Without this “running through and taking together” (zusammenfassen) the categories would have no significance, they would be the mere logical functions of the understanding. It is only when they get affected by intuitions, apprehended in a way that accords with these functions that we can speak of categories – this is what was explained as the epigenetic origin of the categories.

Analogously, you could say – as Kant actually does – that mathematical concepts only get their significance in the act of doing mathematics. It is in doing additions that we form the concept of a number, just as it is in drawing geometrical figures that we gain a concept of their universal properties. If the analogy works, then the trick in answering the Kripkean skeptic would be to work our way to the most basic form of rule-following involved in arithmetic functions. In other words, we need to specify the schematic origins of these functions by using a transcendental argument. Schemata being transcendentally deduced dispositions for apprehension, this would provide us with something to beat the skeptic over the head with: transcendental dispositions for rule-following.

In a sense, the answer to the Kripkean problem will come as more natural than Kant’s original answer to Hume’s problem. Kant’s method is to take the mathematical synthesis as paradigmatic for his dynamic synthesis. His examples of drawing shapes in space and combining units in time all refer to the role of a priori intuition in pure mathematics, which he later applies in dealing with the grounding of causality. In other words: Kant was able to solve Hume’s problem by dealing with it at a much more abstract level, that is, he solved Hume’s problem by solving Kripke’s problem. To get a Kantian answer to Kripke’s problem we will therefore have to look at the mathematical synthesis and its schematism (which was skipped in the earlier discussion of Hume’s problem). We then need to trace back the origins of mathematical synthesis and see which schema underlies it. If we go along with this transcendental argument leading to the bedrock of our mathematical practice, the upshot will be a schema that could serve as a transcendental criterion, a primitive form to which all arithmetical functions, but no qu-like function can in principle be traced back. The benefit
over Kripke’s solution in going the transcendental road is obvious: this bedrock will not be a foundation of contingent practices devoid of any intrinsic normativity, as in Kripke’s case. By providing the transcendental argument, a criterion ought to be established which is not dependent on what we arrive at in our discursive practice – what we have reason to believe, but one that is necessary as a ground for such practice of giving reasons to come about at all, justifying it as a genuinely normative and formal criterion.

A way of providing such a basic criterion for arithmetical truth is to abstract from the more complex calculations in this field and look at what underlies it, namely number theory. This route has actually been proposed by Kripke in the following “primitive” account of rule-following:

What was the rule? Well, say, to take it in its most primitive form: suppose we wish to add $x$ and $y$. Take a huge bunch of marbles. First count out $x$ marbles in on heap. Then count out $y$ marbles in another. Put the two heaps together and count out the number of marbles in the union thus formed . . . Despite the initial plausibility of this objection, the sceptic’s response is all too obvious. True, if ‘count’, as I used the word in the past, referred to the act of counting (and my other past words are correctly interpreted in the standard way), then ‘plus’ must have stood for addition. But I applied ‘count’ to finitely many past cases. Thus the sceptic can question my present interpretation of my past usage of ‘count’ as he did with ‘plus’. In particular, he can claim that by ‘count’ I formerly meant quount, where to ‘quount’ a heap is to count it in the ordinary sense, unless the heap was formed as the union of two heaps, one of which has 57 or more items, in which case one must automatically give the answer ‘5’. (K p. 16)

The suggestion is that, at the most basic level, counting is simply the taking together of units, one after another. If we then take the two number concepts of already counted heaps together, we can form new heaps, which can themselves be used in counting even greater heaps. This thought is rejected, because it is not clear how one can block the possibility of a deviating form of counting. Interestingly, this “primitive form” of rule-following is exactly the kind process that Kant seems to suggest is at work in arithmetic:

The concept of twelve is by no means already thought merely by my thinking of that unification of seven and five, and no matter how long I analyze my concept of such a possible sum I will still not find twelve in it. One must go beyond these concepts, seeking assistance in the intuition that corresponds to one of the two, ones five fingers, say, or (as in Segners arithmetic) five points, and one after another add the units of the five given in the intuition to the concept of seven. For I take first the number 7, and, as I take the fingers of my hand as an intuition for assistance with the concept of 5, to that image of mine I now add the units that I have previously taken together in order to constitute the
number 5 one after another to the number 7, and thus see the number 12 arise.
(B15-6)

As presented here, Kant’s conception of arithmetic seems hopelessly naïve. If we need assistance of objects like fingers, beads, or an abacus in coming up with numbers, then our finite capacities for grasping things in general would imply a flagrant restriction on mathematical practice. Kant’s mathematical views, though perhaps restricted in light of modern standards, were not that limited. Rather, what Kant wants to point out is that numbers depend on our ability to take to gather – \textit{prehend} – units thought under the same concept. The ability must, in some way, consist in a rule for generating these images of similar units. Now, this is where we link up with the previous discussion of Kant. For, what can this rule for generating numbers be, other than a rule for apprehension, that is, a \textit{schema}. If it can be shown that the process of counting as it is sketched here, is grounded pre-discursively, that is to say, if the concept of number is based on a transcendent schema, then there is also a transcendentally grounded criterion favoring counting over quounting. Indeed, this is precisely what Kant suggests in introducing the schema of magnitude/quantity:

The pure image of all magnitudes for outer sense is space; for all objects of the senses in general, it is time. The pure schema of magnitude, however, as a concept of the understanding, is number, which is a representation that summarizes the \textit{successive addition of one (homogenous) unit to another}. Thus number is nothing other than the unity of the synthesis of the manifold of a homogenous intuition in general, because I generate time itself in the apprehension of intuition. (A142-3/B182 my emphasis)

In apprehension I run through and take together elements of the manifold to form an intuition. Taking together these units in order to generate a judgment of quantity amounts to running through and taking together all objects that fall under a certain subject-concept – e.g. chair in this room – and compare these units with respect to a particular predicate-concept – e.g. red – in order to come up with the judgement “all chairs in this room are red”. The role of the schema is to provide unity to units successively apprehended under in order to reflect homogenous units under a concept. As with the other schemata, the power of judgment generates this schema of quantity in its first (blind) application of the category – as a rule of sensible synthesis “generated with the view to forming judgments”.

After this, the category is applied in its second application as a universal representation of pure synthesis according to rules – as the concept of number for instance. Note also, that

\footnote{As noted by Frege: “I must protest against the generality of Kants dictum: without sensibility no object would be given to us . . . Even those who hold that the smaller numbers are intuitable, must at least concede that they cannot be given in intuition any of the numbers greater that $1000^{1000}$, about which nevertheless we have plenty of information.” ([14], p. 101)}

\footnote{[32] p. 253}
the schemata, as well as the concepts are originally acquired. They are *acquired* in the sense that sensible impressions are required to perform an act of synthesis and in the case of concepts, the empirical concepts are also needed to provide content to the categories, but they are *original* in that their structure is determined by the forms of objective unity of apperception. \(^4\)

Relating this back to Kant’s description of the schema of the category of quantity, there arises a seeming inconsistency. The “pure schema of magnitude” is equated with number. \(^5\) However, one might then ask: What is the schema of the concept of number? The explanation offered by Longuenesse is as follows:

When Kant says that number is the schema of the category of quantity, he is not thereby denying that there is also a *concept* of number . . . Rather, he is insisting that the schema corresponding to the concept of number is not an empirical schema, but a result of *synthesis speciosa*, that is, of the “effect of the understanding [Vermögen zu urteilen] on sensibility”. Number is the schema of quantity in that it is a rule of synthesis we are able to produce by virtue of our faculty of constituting the extensions of concepts when generating judgments determined with respect to the logical form of quantity. \(^6\)

Being a “result of the *synthesis speciosa*” it becomes obvious why Kant insists – contrary to modern, set-theoretical number theory, on the relation between number and time. The successive taking together of homogenous units simply refers to determination of inner sense in accordance with the logical function of quantity. The concept of number reflects this synthesis which is the act according to a rule for generating an *extension* of a concept. In other words, there is the schema that produces the extension and there is the concept of number that reflects on this generation of numbers – a generation that is guided by our disposition for taking together homogenous units. Number as a concept simply is the rule of synthesis that tracks our ability to form extensions of concepts, that is, our ability to constitute “*sets of objects thought under the same concept*”. \(^7\)

\(^4\)The necessity of relating to impressions in the original acquisition of the categories is confirmed when Kant writes that no category can be described as such and therefore magnitude cannot be defined as such, without referring to the taking together of units in temporal intuition:

No one can define the concept of magnitude in general except by something like this: That it is the determination of a thing through which it can be thought how many units are posited in it. Only this how-many-times is grounded on successive repetition, thus on time and the synthesis (of the homogeneous) in it. (A242/B300)

\(^5\)It is also the only schema mentioned for all three categories. This seeming inconsistency can be preempted, however, if one considers the full formulation of this schema, which addresses all three moments of quantity.

\(^6\)\[32\] p. 255

\(^7\)\[32\] p. 257
Time, as the form of inner sense, is thus linked inextricably to number. Number reflects the constitution of an extension and this constitution is the act of temporal synthesis. Numbers are limitations of this quantum continuum. In contrast to the earlier example, then, this concept is not constituted by an aggregation of units – it is precisely not the case that the concept is dependent on beads, nuts, or fingers. The example was rather intended as an illustration of the taking together of discrete homogenous units. Anything can count as a unit to be counted with:

Our counting (as is especially noticeable in the case of larger numbers) is a synthesis in accordance with concepts, since it takes place in accordance with a common ground of unity (e.g., the decad). (A78/B104)

Because I possess the rule for generating multiplicities I have the ability to apply this recursive function at any level and this is due to the intuitive representation of the addition of discrete numbers. It is because we can trace these larger multiplicities back to the basic function that we can add indefinitely and do arithmetic with any number. As long as the relation to the unit can be traced back, then our outcomes in problems of addition are justified. The concept of number is the rule for constructing multiplicities, not a representation of aggregated units.

The result is a picture that can be used to refute the skeptic who proposes quounting as an alternative to counting. What the skeptic mixes up is the conception of the image of a determinate extension with the schema for generating this image. Arithmetical operations are not based on the combination of marks – nuts, beads etc. – but on the single representation of determining multiplicities. Arithmetical propositions are therefore not reducible to an extensional analysis – Kripke’s example of a heap which is thrown together with another heap. The numbers that constitute an addition do not stand for marks, they stand for rules for taking together units. The addition – 7+5=12, or 68+57=125 – stands for the generation of a multiplicity from two other multiplicities. This is also what explains Kant’s view of arithmetical propositions as synthetic. The result is not contained in the equation – which would make it analytic, because there is nothing to be contained in the equation. The skeptic does take the extensionalist view of arithmetic. He makes it seem as if there are two concepts – 68 and 57 – where there is, according to Kant, only one – i.e. the number-rule. Without this ability to represent the successive addition of units, there would not be a heap of 68 nuts and a heap of 57 nuts, there would not be a heap of 2 nuts, because there would not be any way of construing such multiplicities. A divergent qu-function could not arise on this view, because there is only one function and when putting 68 and 57 nuts together and doing arithmetic according to the qu-function, in the end, you forego the necessary relation to the unit. In other words, because you are not able to relate your answers back to a single rule – i.e. the successor function – which underlies the constitution of the multiplicities, the answers you give to the arithmetical propositions are not related back to the objective unity of apperception. The quarithmetical proposition is
quite simply senseless.

Although we might be able to describe such a function as quounting – as is evidently the case – we cannot make sense of it. We cannot apply it to intuition; we have no way of coming up with an image according to a function which makes a heap of 68 combined with a heap of 57 nuts contain 5 nuts.\(^8\) And why can we not conjure up such an image? Because such an abnormality would contradict the rule of apprehension which makes it possible for us to form heaps in the first place. To be sure, it is not a priori excludable that there are such life forms which might have a different form of sensibility, but even if that would be the case, we could not form “the least concept of another possible understanding, either one that would intuit itself, or one that, while possessing a sensible intuition, would possess one of a different kind than one grounded in space and time”.\(^9\) The concept of number reflects the barest rule-like structure of human thinking, because outside of this framework, representations are nothing for us.

As I have announced earlier, it is quite a remarkable outcome of this contemporary application of Kant’s thought is that it suits the Kripkean paradox of meaning more than the Humean problem of induction. Kant’s way of dealing with Hume’s worries about justificatory status of causal connexions is to translate them into a skepticism about hypothetical judgment. Having done that he can justify causal connexions within the transcendental framework. From this perspective, Kripke’s problematic is exactly what Kant tried to answer with the Humean problem being a mere consequence of this rule-following solution. It is the sterilized version of what Kant thought of as Hume’s problem: the proof of the possibility of synthetic a priori proposition, without having to take into account a dynamical reality of nature that is to constrain our thinking from without. It is a bare way of showing the necessarily presupposed rule-like structure which enables us to think.

\section*{4.2 Putting Kant in Context}

Having expounded the transcendental approach to the problem of rule-following, it will prove worthwhile to see to how the proposed Kantian solution relates to the different approaches discussed in the previous chapter. As pointed out, there are two ways of answering the dual skeptical requirement on rules, if one accepts the rule-following argument – the requirements being those of a specification of (1) a meaning-fact and (2) accounting for its normativity. You can either follow Kripke in refusing to answer (1) and giving some kind of conventionalist answer to (2), or you can refuse to answer (2) and present a reductionist answer to (1) without wanting to pass judgment on (2) – e.g. Paul Horwich’s use-theory of

\(^8\)A way of understanding the differing Kantian view is to picture an infinitely extended bowl of nuts within which smaller partitions of nuts can be taken together or separated.

\(^9\)B139
meaning. It is clear that Kripke’s concern is one of normativity, leading him to propose a skeptical solution, dealing with (2) after having dropped the need for a meaning-fact. Likewise, for Kant the question he is struggling with is not one of fact, but one of right. However, if we consider the transcendental approach I have just sketched and the way in which he argues for the categories, there is an obvious reductionist strand in his thinking and in the proposed answer to the problem of rule-following. What is given in the end, is a transcendental reduction – or rather deduction – of dispositions for rule-following. How is this not an answer to (1)? Does this show that a straight solution is feasible after all?

I do not see the Kantian solution as a straight solution of any kind. It is precluded from being one, because it does not claim to give us a meaning-fact, something to be “read off”. The first requirement is never to be met. The key to the transcendental approach is that what we arrive at is not a fact, but the structure which underlies our talk of facts – talk of right and wrong. These transcendental dispositions function like a logical rule of inference, that is, they themselves cannot be right or wrong. Rather, they serve as the rules for a game by which they exclude certain moves – ‘qu-moves’. They form the layer of bedrock beyond which we cannot dig, but which shows itself as being the necessary foundation for human practice. Hence, the Kantian approach is not straight, but neither does it exclude the notion of a reduction. Rather, transcendental argumentation brings you to the verge of a reduction, but it will not assist you in crossing it. The benefit of using a transcendental argument is that there is no requirement to cross this boundary. You are not required to formulate ideal conditions, because the necessary requirements it attempts to deduce are not the be “read off”. The possibility of being ‘wrong’ in your attribution of this basic disposition therefore does not come up. Moreover, once we have established these ‘transcendental dispositions’ we do not need to refer to them every time in acting on non-transcendental dispositions. Their justificatory status is transferred to any future disposition, through a (hypothetical) chain of inferences. The possibility of referring back to transcendental propositions is what justifies your practical use of rules – as was the case with any arithmetical proposition which can be traced back to the rule for taking together discrete units.

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10[18] The Kripkean concern for justification and its implications for any solution are still too often overlooked (as noted by José Zalabardo in [49]).
11As stressed in A84-5/B116-7.
12The whole point about using transcendental argumentation is that it allows you to infer what cannot be read off in any way.
13This evokes Kant’s formulation in B132 in which he is careful enough to state that the “‘I think’ must be able to accompany all my representations”.
14Although these are not the terms in which someone predating the linguistic turn would have put it, the benefits of this move are evidently foretokened when we compare Kant’s contrasting his own approach to the deduction of the categories with that of Locke’s sensibilist, or “empiricial derivation” (A95/B127). Locke’s way of deriving the pure concepts from experience is considered futile by Kant, for the whole point about finding pure concepts is that do not exhibit themselves as such in experience. The proper aim of a
This leads to the following, interesting suggestion regarding the *simplicity argument*. If it is true that meaning is constrained by transcendental dispositions along the lines of Kant’s schemata, then our justification of the most primitive content – mathematical propositions like ‘68+57=125’ – ought to be straightforwardly verifiable and, as shown in the previous section, this could well be the case, given that it leads back to a single transcendental disposition for counting.\(^\text{16}\) However, with ordinary meanings it might not be so easy. Who is to say that I do not mean CAT by “dog”? Indeed, when taken as such, this statement might well be a contingent fact about me, concerning the way I incorporated the concept DOG*\(^\text{17}\) in *my* idiolect.

Of course, this concept is not of the right kind to raise any skeptical doubts of an ontological kind. A concept like DOG* could not be applied throughout\(^\text{18}\) without stumbling upon what are not ontological, but epistemological constraints. If you persist in calling something by a different name, then you are either an extraordinarily foolhardy type, not much interested in successful communication, or a persistent, yet unsuccessful linguistic innovator. In any event you have been obviously out of step with the community. The referent has always been the same – i.e. that thing with the four supporting elements (the paws), an oblong-shaped body and pointed front part (the head), a wagging end-part, a loud sound, and so on – and therefore this problem is not something that a translational schema cannot fix. There is no issue with a possible divergence which the ontological skeptic finds worrying. If I asked what you had meant yesterday with “dog”, then you would either point at a thing with a long tail, reflecting eyes giving a whiny sound resembling “meow”, or you would be contradicting your idiolectical concept. The problem is an epistemic one: there is a fact of the matter, because the concepts exclude each other. There is a finitely stateable sequence leading back to a transcendental disposition.

The skeptical challenge could only gain traction if you were to entertain a concept like QUOG – calling dogs “dog” except . . . – and this is precisely where the transcendental dispositions come in. Concept formation only makes sense on the presupposition of a certain unity of experience. We presuppose, for instance, “the persistence of the real in time, i.e. the representation of the real as a substratum of empirical time-determination

\(^{\text{16}}\)Better yet, you could say that we are involved with the transcendental exclusion of quonting.

\(^{\text{17}}\)DOG as a concept applied to all and only cats.

\(^{\text{18}}\)With this I mean constantly saying “dog” where fellow speakers would have said “cat”.
in general, which therefore endures while everything else changes” – substance – and that
upon the real, “whenever it is posited, something else always follows” – causality.\textsuperscript{19}

The point is that a concept like QUOG is in violation of these transcendental dispositions. To be able to form concepts we need to presuppose coherency amongst the objects to which the concept refers and when we include a certain object in this concept, we must be prepared to face up to questioning as to our application of this concept – in accordance with the presupposed coherency. In most cases this will not happen. I straightforwardly use a concept like FRUIT to refer to everything that is ‘normally’ conceived of as a fruit. If I use the concept to refer to a different extension and I get asked about this, I might say something like “look, I know many people refer to a tomato as a vegetable, but in fact it is considered to be a fruit because . . .”. The interrogator might be satisfied with this answer. I may even have convinced him to amend his concept in in conformity with my own use. Or, he may not be satisfied with my answer and continue to question me. At any rate, the unity of meaning must be demonstrated in my ability to give reasons for my particular use of a concept. If there is to be a change in the extension of a concept, this change has to occur for some reason – e.g. botanists categorizing fruits and vegetables according to certain traits, or scientists assigning the atomic number 76 to gold. If I admit to having always had in mind a different extension of a tomato, say quomato, then I will be asked for my reasons for this use of the concept. I may be asked where I first saw these juicy, red balls, hanging from their stalks, (or on which shelf in the supermarket you first saw them stacked), what my reaction was, how my peers referred to this object. This inquiry might reveal some misunderstanding on my part, or it might not and I steadfastly hold on to my diverging concept, at which point the questioning will move to a more abstract level, asking me for concepts of plants and colors etc.

The point of the matter is that there has to be a moment where this (hypothetical) query must come to an end. The question is what this end will look like. If we stick to Kripke’s view on the matter, we will arrive at a set of practices, which have contingently evolved and have been infused with meaning at some functional level. If the transcendental approach is taken, our endpoint will be a different one. In that case, our abstraction from specific empirical concepts will ultimately reveal transcendental concepts which guide our discursive progress to ever more fine-grained categorizations. Of course, this outcome functions as an ideal. It might well be that the inquiry halts at some point, because there is insufficient evidence for a adopting particular reason. We do not always know where and how our idiolect has developed. In many cases we have no clue and just go with whatever feels natural to us. Notice, however, that if the query stops at this point, then the indeterminacy is of an epistemological kind. There is a fact of the matter, but we are unable to give it. There is no question of a missing ontological fact, because we have established the endpoint of our enquiry as being our transcendental dispositions for rule-following and taken these rules as our ultimate guide in distinguishing good reasons for concept use from

\textsuperscript{19}A144/B183
bad ones.\textsuperscript{20}

What follows from this is that, when a speaker of a language cannot give a reason for his particular use of a concept, then:

1. Either there is indeterminacy as to the exact extension of the concept under scrutiny and the divergent speaker can claim that his use of the concept is warranted within this margin of epistemic vagueness, or

2. there is indeterminacy as to what the exact extension of the concept under scrutiny is and the divergent speaker cannot claim that his use of the concept is warranted within this margin of vagueness, which justifies his peers in castigating him for his divergence, or

3. there is no indeterminacy as to what the exact extension of the concept under scrutiny is – we are involved with transcendental concepts – and what the speaker is doing is not recognizable as a concept: it is senseless.

What has this still got to do with the simplicity argument? Answer: The effect of the transcendental approach is that it creates transcendental constraints, or criteria for meaning and thereby changes the ontological problem into an epistemological one. This, in turn, allows for the adoption of a maxim of simplicity. Whereas, in the ontological version of the problem there was no way to make sense of what simplicity is, because there was no fact of the matter as to which function was being applied, in this case, although there is no meaning-fact, there are constraints in place which provide for decidable propositions. There is not any more the possibility of reading-off meaning from a certain fact. Nonetheless, there is the possibility of establishing how one ought to apply a concept considering your knowledge (or supposed knowledge) of the world and certain epistemic constraints in the form of transcendental dispositions. In this way, the Kantian position comes very close to the Lewisian,\textsuperscript{21} but the difference between the two is a crucial, and peculiarly Kantian one. According to Kant, a common mistake for philosophers is to start from certain definitions and work their way towards philosophical conclusions. This is exactly the way that philosophers should not proceed. On Kant’s view, the philosophical project should always proceed vice versa: definitions are the end-product of philosophical reasoning, not their starting point.\textsuperscript{22} What Lewis does is to presuppose a definition like simplicity and derive a

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\textsuperscript{20}One might say that the \textit{principle of sufficient reason} thus gets an application as a criterion for meaning. If there is a difference in concept use, it has been determined antecedently; if there is a different use, then we can look for the cause of this difference in experience and the question is, in principle, decidable. Interestingly, Kant purported to have established the validity of this principle, through his transcendental logic.

\textsuperscript{21}I believe, Lewis comes close to admitting this by endorsing Ray Langton’s thesis about Kant’s “Humility” in [31]. He endorses Kant’s epistemological humility with regard to the nature of the thing-in-itself and links this to his preferred form of Ramseyan humility concerning fundamental properties.

\textsuperscript{22}A727-32/B755-60
hierarchy of (natural) kinds on the basis of it. What he ought to have done, is to establish on what transcendental argument he can ground a notion like ‘simplicity’; once that is established he is free to use it in arguments about the epistemological salience of certain models. In other words, what ‘simplicity’ comes down to, on the transcendental approach, is another definition of the transcendental unity expressed by our bedrock consisting of transcendental dispositions.

In turning the ontological problem into an epistemological problem we are led to recognize the kernel of transcendental philosophy. The whole idea behind transcendental philosophy is to limit the imagination and therewith the realm of possible experience, thereby creating a domain within which every question is answerable in principle. Transcendental logic furnishes us with a formal criterion of truth – i.e. the necessary conditions for the decidability of a proposition.\textsuperscript{23} Kant summarizes this feat in discussing the repercussions of the antinomies of pure reason:

\begin{quote}
Now I assert that among all speculative cognition, transcendental philosophy has the special property that there is no question at all dealing with an object given by pure reason that is insoluble by this very same human reason; and that no plea of unavoidable ignorance and the unfathomable depth of the problem can release us from the obligation of answering it thoroughly and completely; for the very same concept that puts us in a position to ask the question must also make us competent to answer it, since the object is not encountered at all outside the concept. (A478/B506)
\end{quote}

A question either makes sense – it is transcendentally true – or it does not, rendering the question senseless.\textsuperscript{24} If an answer of the first kind cannot be given then this is due to epistemic indeterminacy, but this does not absolve us from our obligation to answer it, for we know that the question is decidable. If the question is of the second kind, then it has no answer, because there has never been a question. Characterizing the critical step made by Kant: Transcendental philosophy delineates the realm of sense, excluding ontological doubt, while allowing for a healthy dose of epistemological doubt that fuels critical, empirical inquiry.\textsuperscript{25}

Considering this to be the central concern of transcendental philosophy brings me back to square one. There I set out the two major strands that we were to follow. The more superficial argument dealt with the analogy between Kripke’s and Hume’s skeptical arguments.

\textsuperscript{23}This is the thrust of Kant’s criterion argument, where he concludes that “no general sign of the truth of a proposition can be demanded” – A59/B83; a material criterion, on his view, would be self-contradictory – see [40] for an interesting, recent discussion of this argument.

\textsuperscript{24}E.g. the question “What kind of constitution does a transcendental object have?”, according to Kant, is nothing – see also the conclusion of the Amphiboly section including the Table of Nothing.

\textsuperscript{25}Note the similarity to the central tenet of the \textit{Tractatus} in separating the realm of \textit{facts} on the basis of their decidability.
and their roughly congruent solutions. If, indeed, both have to do with the very same problem of ontological skepticism, then Kant’s argument might well be applied to either case. At the abstract level – the second strand – this result is generalized. It is no contingent matter that Kant should have conceived of a critical philosophy. Taking a Hegelian view of the dialectical process culminating in a *Critique or Pure Reason*, one might say that it gets recognized as a necessary reaction to any form of ontological skepticism. If anything, I hope that identifying the root of this ‘transcendental’ reaction in the its ‘ontological anxiety’ provides some philosophical clarity. It offers a point of view which helps to understand, for instance, why it is that these philosophers are so often compared to each other. It gives us an account of similarities that goes deeper than a shared eminence in the hierarchy of first-year introductions to philosophy.
Conclusion: Rules and Freedom

What is problematic about rule-following? It is not that we cannot conceive of someone, or better yet, some thing – a machinery so rigidly built that it cannot go ‘out of step’ – displaying a regular reactive pattern which allows for codification. In fact, the main premise for our discussion of rule-following is this phenomenon of regularity in our daily lives. We see it happening before our eyes; the existence of rules was never seriously questioned. The real problem, as was most clear to Hume, is not to be sought in the bare fact of a regular succession. Rather, the origin of the paradox lies in us. The unboundedness of the imagination is what enables us to conjure up infinite contradictory possibilities, offering a rich soil for skeptical doubt. Rule-following considerations, therefore, do not present us with an inquiry into rules, so much as they put the ability to follow rules over against our ability to deviate from them – the spontaneity of the understanding. It is not the rule-following as such which is paradoxical; if that were the case, then it would be hard to understand our grasp of any regularity. The paradoxical fact about humans following rules is that they do not act automatically, they do not display mere regularities, or knee-jerk reactions. Instead, we act according to norms. We can go wrong in light of the normative standards, whether they be those of our peers, or our own and we have the ability to choose not to follow certain rules and adopt different ones. In other words, considerations of rule-following are not so much about rules, as they are about the paradoxical nature of human freedom with regard to rules.

We find this thought in the formulations of the skeptical problem by all authors. Hume tried to demonstrate the unboundedness of our imagination by letting us imagine all the different things that could happen to a billiard ball being hit by another billiard ball. Kant explicitly took over this formulation of the problem in terms of the freedom of the imagination to frame his critical philosophy in which he tried to show how the spontaneity of the understanding is the guiding force in the productive imagination. Kripke mirrors Hume’s problem in many ways and restates it in a mathematical format using infinitely many possible divergent algorithms. Finally, Wittgenstein captures the Humean thought

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26In the *Prolegomena* he refers to Hume’s insight that the concept of cause and effect is nothing but a “bastard of the imagination”. (p. 257)
when he says in *PI* §95:

“Thought must be something unique”. When we say, and *mean*, that such-and-such is the case, we – and our meaning – do not stop anywhere short of the fact; but we mean: *this–is–so*. But this paradox (which has the form of a truism) can also be expressed in this way: *Thought can be of what is not the case.*

*Thought can be of what is not the case.* It is well-rounded summary of what baffles us when contemplating the capacity of our own minds *vis-à-vis* the lawfulness of nature and it is a tradition of bafflement, or “boggling” that persists in modern philosophy.

If my conclusions about the nature and legacy of ontological skepticism are accepted, then it will come as no surprise that one of the most perspicuous recent examples of a philosophical treatment of this boggle, McDowell’s *Mind and World*, presents us at the same time with a marriage of Kantian and Wittgensteinian thought. The question which plays at the heart of his work is that of how we can think of our beliefs as subject to external constraints – *receptive* – while at the same time allowing for the way in which we experience the world to be *spontaneous*. McDowell’s insight was to link this theme to the rule-following considerations.

27 Conant’s preferred description of the state of mind we are brought to by ontological skepticism.

28 Of course, I am now framing McDowell’s thought in the opposite temporal direction. He first worked out his reply to the rule-following paradox in the 1980’s and continued to link this to a discussion of freedom in the 1990’s, most prominently in *Mind and World*. In this work, the problem we fall into when trying to combine these features of human experience, is described by McDowell as an “interminable oscillation” between two extremes (p. 9). If we conceive of our empirical thinking as a free activity of judging within the conceptual sphere, an activity in which we deliberate about whether something is actually the way in which we experience it, then it becomes unclear how our judgments are constrained by the ‘world’ by the way things are in the world. One might respond to this by separating our conceptual judgings from their content, taking recourse to an empirical Given as the ultimate justification for what claim to know. This option was effectively demolished, however, and has been relegated to the status of “Myth” ever since Wilfrid Sellars’s attack. We are therefore led back to our first step in the oscillation, a conception of our epistemic practice as contained within the conceptual sphere without any constraint to justify a link between our beliefs and the world being the way our beliefs make it out to be: a “frictionless spinning in the void”. (p. 11).

One could equate what he called the first horn of the dilemma – *Scylla* – with an appeal to the Given. According to this view, our ultimate justification for our answer to the arithmetical question is the appeal to the brute fact of the rule for ‘plus’. The skeptical argument showed that this position is hopeless, leading us to ponder the second horn of the dilemma, Kripke’s solution, which places the justification of our answer wholly within the communal practice. This form of a *skeptical solution* can be characterized as a “spinning in the void” – perhaps unwittingly, but nonetheless aptly referred to in his earlier work as *Charybdis* – because the only standard for our use of a rule is contained within the discursive sphere, or in this particular case in the community of rule-followers. The only justification for the following of rules is the communal belief that this is the right way to proceed – capturing the Davidsonian slogan that “nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief” (p. 310). McDowell’s answer to the dilemma was to try and steer a middle course. Kripke’s solution only convinces in case one conflates understanding with interpretation. It is when we recognize what Wittgenstein terms “bedrock” is pervaded
to a form of anxiety that I have treated under the name of *ontological skepticism* and he realized, following Kant, that this anxiety is the result of the tedious balance between our freedom in thought – spontaneity of the understanding – and the notion that thought must be *about* something, that it must face the “tribunal of the senses”.

The worry for the ontological skeptic is not that we are wrong, but that there is nothing to be wrong about. In the rule-following debate this thought is articulated in the conclusion that “meaning is not a process which accompanies a word. For no process could have the consequences of meaning”. There is no fact of meaning, hence there is no meaning to be wrong about – it vanishes into thin air. In the introduction to this thesis, I proclaimed this work to be about *things that are not there*. In the course of this work I hope to have made clear what I had in mind when writing that rule-following is inextricably linked to the topic that, on the face of it, seems to be far removed from Kripke’s consideration. Things that are not there are facts of a certain kind, they are not straightforwardly phenomenally present yet they do profoundly influence our beliefs and our actions. A way to make sense of non-phenomenal facts having such an influence on our lives is to interpret them as *normative facts*, facts as internal functions of some sort. Rules, in this sense, stand in for facts. We expect something to be there, something limiting our conceptions, constraining our imagination, in the same sense that perception constrains our experience to what is actual. Yet, we cannot conceive of what this ‘thing’ could be. How can there be something in our minds that, at the same time, constrains its own functions? How does this constraint evade the Private Language Argument by being non-contingent?

It was Kant’s central thought that human freedom is expressed, not by a lack of constraints, but by our ability to conform to rules. Conceptual, or spontaneous – i.e. *free* – thinking is only possible given limitations to its freedom – rules only make sense within a realm of freedom, because an absolutely free thought is no thought at all. An internal investigation of the sort conducted by Kripke challenges the status of rules; it shows that, if there is to be anything like rule-following, it is not due to some function that is given to us introspectively and if the rule is not there, then it is hard to imagine it being anywhere. This result threatens the possibility of following rules, but indirectly it threatens to debase something a lot more valuable to us: it threatens the most distinguishing features of human life with a most form of pervasive ontological relativism. A transcendental approach stands to answer this problem by pointing out the incongruency of the skeptical conclusion with the facts of human life. The problem dissolves, not by proving the skeptic wrong, but by showing that he cannot be right.

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with meaning instead of a contingently formed web of mutually supporting dispositions, that we can see a way out of our conundrum.
Appendix: Contrasting Wittgenstein’s Thoughts on Number

Having presented the argument for what seems to me like a reasonable Kantian reaction to Kripke’s paradox, it is quite another question whether this is the kind of reply that Wittgenstein would have been content with. If I am right in my attribution, placing Wittgenstein next to Kant in the ‘critical’ tradition, then it would be fruitful to compare their views from this perspective. This would, however, go beyond the scope of this thesis. I will therefore include this appendix to do a minimum of justice to what I think are very interesting parallels between the conceptions of mathematics. It is especially the role of normativity that Wittgenstein attributes to mathematics, which, in light of previous discussion, must strike us as very interesting. Again, to do full justice to this claim would mean to write a new paper, so you may regard this as a sketch of the kinds of bonds between these two philosophers that can be seen from a new perspective when tracing back their concerns to a single source of skepticism that shapes the paradox of rule-following.

At any rate, these references to Wittgenstein’s views on mathematic should give pause to those who would want to argue that Wittgenstein’s ‘quietism’ kept him far from any substantial theses and that on these grounds the Kantian approach would fail right away as an option which Wittgenstein could endorse. The claims made by Kant about the foundations of mathematics are, indeed, quite fundamental and substantial, involving the constitution of numbers and mathematical thinking. Nonetheless, Wittgenstein seems to suggest a way of looking at mathematical practice that is not too far removed from these substantial claims. Revealing a few of these suggestions will, in my view, demonstrate that, were Wittgenstein the thoroughly quietist that he is sometimes taken to be, his quietism did not extend to all branches of his thinking, certainly not mathematics.

29 RFM VII 61 – Wittgenstein also calls logic a “normative science” in §81 of the Investigations in a remark which bears a striking resemblance to his remark on the normativity of mathematics.
A first point of contact with the Kantian view is quickly established when we look at the explicit mention of the concept of a number in Wittgenstein’s work:

A real number yields extensions, it is not an extension.

A real number is: an arithmetical law which endlessly yields the places of a decimal fraction. (PR 186)

The true nature of real numbers must be the induction. What I must look at in the real number, its sign, is the induction. – The ‘So’ of which we may say ‘and so on’. If the law, the winding of the spiral, is a number, then it must be comparable with all the others through its position (on the number scale).

An irrational number is a process, not a result (AWL p. 221)

Even more conspicuously in line with Kant’s conception of numbers is the following:

I mean: numbers are what I represent in my language by number schemata.

That is to say, I take (so to speak) the number schemata of the language as what I know, and say numbers are what these represent. (PR 107 – my emphasis)

It is in most striking that Wittgenstein and Kant come together in their adoption of an intensional view of numbers, Infinite possibility of applying rules is not harmful in itself, as long as we do not attach any kind of actuality, or existence to this possibility. According to Wittgenstein this is just where extensional view goes wrong. A better picture would be to regard the possibility as implicit in mathematical functions, with the operations always being actual. The possibility showing itself in doing mathematics. This point is a very important one for Wittgenstein. It defines his views on infinity and therewith his views on rule-following, as is clear from his invocation of the God argument so often used by Kripke to describe the skeptical paradox:

A proof that shews that the pattern ‘777’ occurs in the expansion of π, but does not shew where. Well, proved in this way this ‘existential proposition’ would, for certain purposes, not be a rule. But might it not serve e.g. as a means of classifying expansion rules? It would perhaps be proved in an analogous way that ‘777’ does not occur in \(\pi^2\) but it does occur in \(\pi \times e\) etc. The question would simply be: is it reasonable to say of the proof concerned: it proves the existence of ‘777’ in this expansion? This can be simply misleading. It is in fact the curse of prose, and particularly of Russell’s prose, in mathematics.

What harm is done e.g. by saying that God knows all irrational numbers? Or: that they are already all there, even though we only know certain of them? Why are these pictures not harmless?

For one thing, they hide certain problems –
Suppose that people go on and on calculating the expansion of \( \pi \). So God, who knows everything, knows whether they will have reached '777' by the end of the world. But can his omniscience decide whether they would have reached it after the end of the world? It cannot. I want to say: Even God can determine something mathematical only by mathematics. Even for him the mere rule of expansion cannot decide anything that it does not decide for us. (RFM VII/41)

The extensional view tempts us into paradox, it is the “curse of prose”. Although this is not the place to discuss the matter, I would like to point out the relation of this passage to the putative connection between Kant and Wittgenstein and their mathematical views. In both cases, the problem is with the extensional view of numbers, in both cases this is apt to lead us into paradoxes of the rule-following kind, therefore, in both cases, recourse is taken to intensions, painting mathematics as a practice governed by rules, not by mathematical objects.

Most remarkably, in concluding the exegetical waive contained in this appendix, is the remark directly following the final quote – PR 107. Although it does not by any means establish conclusive evidence for allying Kant and Wittgenstein on their mathematical views, it nonetheless ought to be suggestive of the potential rewards involved in a future exegetical undertaking:

108. What I said earlier [PR 107 and earlier] about the nature of arithmetical equations and about an equation’s not being replaceable by a tautology explains – I believe – what Kant means when he insists that \( 7 + 5 = 12 \) is not an analytic proposition, but synthetic \textit{a priori}. 
Bibliography


