

APA Newsletters

NEWSLETTER ON TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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We welcome readers to the Spring 2009 edition of the *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy*. Our present edition consists of five papers, three of which concentrate on the teaching of Kant, one of which is a review essay of a prominent book on the history of analytic philosophy, and one of which is a short “note” on a topic that is of interest to teachers generally.

The three papers devoted to teaching Kant were presented—either in the form in which they appear here or in a previous version—at The American Philosophical Association’s Annual Central Division Meeting in Chicago on April 18, 2008. The session, entitled *Teaching Kant to Undergraduate Students*, was held under the auspices of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers.

Our first article, “Back to Kant: Teaching the First *Critique* as Contemporary Philosophy,” by Robert Hanna, is likely to arouse interest in those who teach Kant. Professor Hanna begins his paper on Kant with a statement and defense of his view that there is ‘No Deep Difference’ between works in contemporary philosophy and texts on the history of philosophy, a view that, inevitably, informs the way he teaches his course on Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. Professor Hanna illustrates his ‘No Deep Difference’ thesis by describing how he teaches his course on the *Critique of Reason* (a course that is open to both undergraduates and graduates). So that the reader can easily follow his description, Professor Hanna provides the reader with the first six pages of class notes for the first week of a course that he taught on the *Critique* in ‘07. These notes appear in an Appendix at the end of the article. Toward the end of the paper, Hanna argues that teaching Kant in the way that he does not only imparts to students an understanding of Kant’s philosophy but, as well and just as important, transforms their understanding and appreciation of contemporary philosophy whether of the analytic or phenomenological variety. We are grateful to Professor Hanna for not only submitting his presentation for publication in our *Newsletter* but for providing the link to his notes to our readers also. (Although the full set of notes for the course that he describes here are no longer available on Professor Hanna’s website, Professor Hanna has helpfully included the link to the full lecture notes for the subsequent course that he taught on this topic. These notes, essentially the same as the notes for the course described in this article, are currently posted on

his Cambridge web page and are accessible until the end of the 2009 academic year.)

The second paper in our ‘Kant series’ is authored by George MacDonald Ross and is entitled “Translating the *Critique of Pure Reason* for Undergraduate Students.” In this paper, George MacDonald Ross argues—against the background of his view of what is important that undergraduate students get out of philosophy courses generally—for studying Kant by reading the text itself (albeit in translation if necessary) rather than secondary sources for the text. Like Nils Ch. Rauhut (see article #3), MacDonald Ross counsels against having students focus on the secondary literature that explains Kant’s views, and he offers suggestions as to what *not* to do if one wants to promote students’ engagement with the primary text itself. MacDonald Ross explains what motivated his translating Kant’s *Critique* given that there are at least four translations—of various vintages—available. He tells readers what is wanting in two of these translations that make them inappropriate for use in undergraduate courses on Kant, and states the principles of translation that he himself has used in order to make his translation of Kant’s *Critique* more “user friendly.” Included in his article is a link to his translation of the *Critique*. We are happy to be able to provide both George MacDonald Ross’s introduction to his translation and the link to his material, and thank him for his openness and generosity—evident in the sentences that end his presentation: “I should say that my translation is open source, and anyone is welcome to use it in their teaching, provided that they acknowledge my intellectual property rights. I would be delighted to receive any comments about its usefulness in comparison with other available translations.”

The third paper, by Nils Ch. Rauhut, is entitled “Teaching Kant to Undergraduate Students: Is It Worth the Effort?” In this paper, Professor Rauhut argues that despite the acknowledged difficulties in having students read the Kant text itself rather than secondary sources on the text, there are great benefits in having students try to grapple with the text. He details these benefits and describes the techniques that he uses to encourage students actually to do the reading and then to come to some understanding of what they read. He also shares with readers why he thinks that teaching Kant as part of a survey course rather than as a stand-alone course gives a misleading impression of the influence that Kant has had on subsequent philosophy. Finally, Professor Rauhut states why he believes that in understanding Kant, students are most likely to undergo an intellectually “transformative” experience.

The fourth article that appears in this issue is a review essay by Isaac Nevo entitled “Between Realism and Pluralism: A Review of Scott Soames’s *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century*: Vol. 1: *The Dawn of Analysis* and Vol. 2: *The Age of Meaning*. Since this two-volume book has received much attention and is likely to be considered for classroom adoption in courses devoted to the history of analytic philosophy, we

thought it would be of service to our readers to provide a more than brief review of it. We therefore present Professor Nevo's review of the book as a "review essay." Professor Nevo describes Soames's account of the history of twentieth-century analytic philosophy as culminating in two fundamental achievements or theses: (a) realism with respect to necessity, and (b) non-foundationalism with respect to philosophy. While detailing Soames's account, Professor Nevo raises questions about its coherence. For, Professor Nevo argues, non-foundationalism with respect to philosophical theses implies the possibility of a pluralism of philosophical views none of which can lay claim to exclusive justification; but the acceptance of such a possibility undermines Soames's view that the history of analytic philosophy inexorably culminates in the achievement of a single philosophically justified viewpoint. Though Soames acknowledges the pluralism implicit in the non-foundationalism that he advocates as one of the lasting achievements of twentieth-century analytic philosophy, Professor Nevo claims that Soames does not himself employ a sufficiently pluralistic viewpoint in his discussion of alternative traditions within analytic philosophy, with the result that Soames's conclusion seems undermined by the arguments he develops along the way to it.

The fifth and final paper in this issue of the *Newsletter* is authored by Felicia Nimue Ackerman and is entitled "A Blind Devotion to Fair Grading." This piece was previously published in the June 24, 2008, issue of *The Providence Journal*—with whose permission it is reprinted here. We find publication in our *Newsletter* of this previously published piece warranted on the grounds that it is well-written, brief, useful, and of particular interest to our readers, most especially because they are not likely to have been included in the readership of the publication in which this article originally appeared. In this piece, Professor Ackerman makes a brief for the use of blind grading by answering common and typical objections to the practice. We thank Felicia Nimue Ackerman for having brought this short article to our attention.

In the book review section we present reviews of two books, one on Timmerman's recent study of Kant, and one on Buddhist philosophy. They are reviewed by Thomas Kennedy and Eviatar Shulman, respectively. We hope these reviews will help readers to decide whether the books are appropriate materials for the courses and their students.

We always encourage our readers to suggest themselves as reviewers of books and other material that they think may be especially good for classroom use. The names of the other books and materials we have for review are listed at the end of the *Newsletter*. Please remember again that our publication is devoted to pedagogy and not to theoretical discussions of philosophical issues, and that should be borne in mind when reviewing material for our publication.

As always, we encourage our readers to write for our publication. We welcome papers that respond, comment on, or take issue with any of the material that appears within our pages.

The following guidelines for submissions should be followed:

- The author's name, the title of the paper, and full mailing address should appear on a separate sheet of paper. Nothing that identifies the author or his or her institution should appear within the body or within the footnotes/endnotes of the paper. The title of the paper should appear on the top of the paper itself.
- Both electronic and paper copies of papers are acceptable. In the case of paper copies, we would

appreciate receiving four copies for our review purposes.

- Authors should adhere to the production guidelines that are available from the APA and that are available on the APA's website.
- In the case of electronic copies, in writing your paper to disk, please do not use your word processor's footnote or endnote function; all notes should be added manually at the end of the paper.
- All articles submitted to the *Newsletter* are blind-reviewed by the members of the editorial committee. They are:

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ARTICLES

Back to Kant: Teaching the First Critique as Contemporary Philosophy

Robert Hanna

University of Colorado at Boulder

I. Introduction

I believe that there is no fundamental difference in philosophical content between the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy. Let's call this the *No Deep Difference Thesis*.

What I mean by the No Deep Difference Thesis is that every serious philosophical text is a logically governed attempt to say something comprehensive, illuminating, and necessarily (or at least universally) true about the rational human condition and our deepest values, including our relationships to each other and to the larger natural and abstract worlds that surround us, and that in order to convey this basic content it does not matter *at all* when the text was written or when the text is interpreted.

If I'm right about this thesis, then it cuts three ways: first, it means that everything in the history of philosophy also belongs substantively to contemporary philosophy; second, it means that everything in contemporary philosophy also belongs substantively to the history of philosophy; and third, it means that Quine was completely wrong when he wickedly

and wittily said that there are two kinds of philosophers: those who are interested in the history of philosophy, and those who are interested in philosophy. In fact, there is really only *one* kind of philosopher, and whether he likes it or not, he *should* be interested in the history of philosophy. The sub-discipline called “History of Philosophy” is real philosophy, as real as it gets, and real philosophy is also History of Philosophy, as historical as it gets. Those who on the contrary are *Deep Differentists* must hold that History of Philosophy is at best an enterprise in historical scholarship with a superficial philosophical inflection, but not real philosophy, and that real philosophy in effect always begins anew, from argumentative Ground Zero, with every new philosophical text that is written. And that seems to me not only very implausible as a way of thinking about the relation between philosophy and its own history, but also apt to trivialize and undermine the very practice of philosophy itself.

Before I go on, however, I should make it clear that by asserting the No Deep Difference Thesis I’m *not* asserting that there is *no difference whatsoever* between a written text’s belonging to the history of philosophy and its belonging to contemporary philosophy. On the contrary, I think that it is possible to give a plausible contextual definition of what it is for a written text to belong either to the history of philosophy or to contemporary philosophy, as follows:

A written text *T* belongs to the history of philosophy if and only if *T* belongs to a corpus of texts whose author is dead; otherwise *T* belongs to contemporary philosophy.

The rationale for this definition is that once a philosopher is dead, then she can’t change her mind about what she’s written, or re-interpret it, or add it to a larger corpus of texts that might significantly affect how that text is to be understood. So once the philosopher is a corpse, then his corpus of texts is semantically closed to that author’s intentions, although of course it is still fully semantically open to philosophical interpretation and use by others. In this way, there is a difference between the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy. But it’s not a difference in fundamental philosophical content. It’s only a *hermeneutic* and *pragmatic* difference, or just a difference in how we go about understanding and using a philosophical text.

For better or worse, however, this hermeneutic and pragmatic difference does have a direct bearing on how we actually *teach* philosophical texts, in that it provides us with an effective criterion for putting certain texts into a curricular box called “the History of Philosophy,” and segregating those texts pedagogically from texts that are in the Contemporary Philosophy box. Oddly enough, however, this criterion is not always actually applied: as everyone knows, there are important, seminal texts that were written by people who are now dead, that are still generally considered core parts of contemporary philosophy, e.g., texts by Quine, Davidson, and David Lewis.

On the other hand, once a text is actually put into the curricular History of Philosophy box, for some strange reason it never again goes back into the Contemporary Philosophy box.

For this reason, I teach undergraduate and graduate courses on Kant’s metaphysics and ethics just as I teach courses in contemporary philosophy of mind and ethics, and conversely, I teach courses in contemporary philosophy of mind and ethics just as I teach courses on Kant’s metaphysics and ethics.¹ So you might say that my philosophical teaching is *anachronistic with an attitude*.

But with equal correctness I think you might also say that my philosophical teaching is *historical with an attitude*. I take

Kant every bit as seriously I take Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, Putnam, Kripke, David Lewis, Frankfurt, Parfit, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of logic, the philosophy of mind-and-cognition, action theory, the metaphysics of free will and moral responsibility, cognitive science, phenomenology, and existentialism. I take all of these philosophers, their views, and all of these different philosophical sub-disciplines and topics equally seriously in relation to each other, just because I think that as philosophers we’re all trying to say something comprehensive, illuminating, and necessarily (or at least universally) true about the rational human condition and its deepest values, and that we can all learn something important from every part of serious philosophy.

What I want to do now is to give a brief description of how I teach Kant’s *Critique of Reason* in a yearly course at the University of Colorado—PHIL 4010/5010—that is open to both undergraduates and graduate students, as a case in point of the No Deep Difference Thesis, and then finish with some equally brief remarks about why teaching Kant’s first *Critique* as contemporary philosophy is especially apt, given both the history of twentieth-century philosophy and the different possible futures of philosophy in the twenty-first century.

II. Back to Kant!

As you probably already know, “Back to Kant!” was the philosophical call-to-arms of the mid-nineteenth-century German neo-Kantian tradition, in response to the Hegelian philosophy and other leading idealistic systems of the early nineteenth century.² So I’m saying that if the No Deep Difference Thesis is true, then we should be reading and engaging philosophically with the first *Critique* every bit as seriously as we read and engage with any text in contemporary philosophy.

When I teach Kant’s first *Critique*, instead of trying to get it out of the History of Philosophy box and into the Contemporary Philosophy box—which would be a hopelessly Quixotic enterprise—what I do instead is to teach it just as if the No Deep Difference Thesis were true. In other words, I teach the first *Critique* both on its own terms and also in direct relation to contemporary philosophy, and just go freely back and forth across the hermeneutic and pragmatic borders without ever showing my passport or getting a work visa.

To give you a more concrete sense of what I’m talking about, I’ll briefly describe the first six pages of class notes for the first week of my Kant course from May 2007 (see the Appendix below for details). I’ll just draw your attention to three things about it.

First, if you look at the first section, you’ll see that I claim that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is arguably the most important book in the history of modern philosophy, and then I show how the history of modern philosophy flows directly through and beyond Kant’s Critical writings right up to the twenty-first century. In short, I argue that twentieth- and twenty-first-century philosophy is essentially a series of important footnotes to the first *Critique* and the Critical Philosophy.³ The most obvious examples of this historical fact are how the post-Kantian tradition has grappled with Kant’s idealism, his analytic-synthetic distinction, his a priori-a posteriori distinction, his conceptions of synthetic a priori truth and synthetic a priori knowledge, his theory of freedom of the will, and his deontological ethics.

Second, if you’ll look at sections 3 and 4, you’ll see that I initially characterize what I call Kant’s “transcendental project” in terms that are drawn almost entirely from contemporary philosophy. This means that when the students first encounter the texts themselves, they’ve already got a working conception of transcendental idealism as an interpretive frame of

reference that can be immediately and smoothly transferred to contemporary philosophy and directly applied there.

Third and finally, if you'll look at the diagram, you'll see that I've characterized Kant's transcendental theory of the mind as a thesis in philosophical psychology, drawing on contemporary cognitive science as a model for how to understand it. Almost every day in class I refer to this diagram, re-sketch parts of it in chalk on the blackboard, and generally emphasize its structure as the key to understanding Kant's theory of cognition and also his metaphysics. I should also particularly emphasize here that my intention in using this diagram is every bit as much to change or anyhow deflect my students' views about contemporary cognitive science as it is to make it easier for them to understand Kant and to recognize, at least implicitly, that the No Real Difference Thesis is true.

III. Forward to Kant!

This brings me to my last point. If the No Real Difference Thesis is true, and if I'm also correct that the history of twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century philosophy is essentially a series of footnotes to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and the Critical Philosophy, then teaching Kant's first *Critique* to undergraduate and graduate students by freely transgressing the borders between the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy can radically change students' understanding of contemporary philosophy, whether in the analytic or phenomenological traditions. So, really, the purpose of teaching the course I've described to you is that it will be philosophically liberating and transformative for my students.

Here is why I say that. I do truly think that it is currently an open and deeply important question whether mainstream philosophy in the twenty-first century will move in one or another of the three following possible directions:

(Option 1: *the "experimental philosophy" direction*) Mainstream philosophy will move even further towards scientific or reductive naturalism, in order to become—in effect—a mere sub-department of the exact sciences, or a true Lockean "underlaborer" to the exact sciences, as it has been steadily doing since the middle of the twentieth century, and the publications of Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" and Sellars's "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man."

(Option 2: *the "analytic metaphysics" direction*) Mainstream philosophy will move even further towards a highly abstract and formally rigorous modal metaphysics and epistemology, driven by mainly ungrounded philosophical intuitions, with little or no connection to either empirical facts or human values, as it has been steadily doing since the 1980s, and the publications of Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* and Lewis's *On the Plurality of Worlds*.

(Option 3: *the "two-way Kantian" direction*) Mainstream philosophy will move simultaneously critically backward towards the recovery and re-working of its actual historical Kantian origins and also creatively forward toward working out a unified, fundamental metaphysics and ethics of rational human animals.⁴

I teach this Kant course in the way I do, and with all the intensity and passion I can muster because I intensely and passionately want to move us in the direction of that third option.

From the editors: The most recent and complete version of Professor Hanna's notes (essentially the same as the ones from the '07 class that he discusses in this paper) is currently posted on his Cambridge web-page and can be found there until the end of the academic year 2009: http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/teaching_staff/hanna/kant%27s_CPR_lecture_notes_fall08.pdf

APPENDIX

Philosophy of Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*

PHIL 4010/5010

Spring 2007

Bob Hanna

Lecture Notes

WEEK 1

CPR: 95-124 = Ai-xxiii/Bi-xliv (Preface, both editions).

Kant's Transcendental Project

(1) *Why the CPR rules.*

Kant's CPR is arguably the most important book in modern philosophy. Why do I think that? There are three answers.

The first is that CPR offers a radically original resolution of the basic semantic, epistemological, & ontological problems of Rationalism and Empiricism (what kinds of truths are there? how do they have meaning? how do we cognize them? how do we know them? what really exists & what is its nature?).

The second is that CPR offers a radically original resolution of the basic metaphysical problems of Rationalism and Empiricism (does God exist? how can we be free in a deterministic world? what is the nature of the mind & can it exist independently of the body?).

And the third is that K's CPR in particular & his Critical Philosophy more generally have had a greater impact on the modern tradition than any other single book or philosophical theory.

I'll offer an argument for all of these claims, starting with the third one.

(2) *The place of the CPR in the history of modern philosophy.*

Let classical Rationalism (esp. Descartes & Leibniz) or CR be the thesis that: all fully meaningful cognition & knowledge begins in & is derived from (strictly determined by) reason, independently of sense experience.

Let classical Empiricism (esp. Locke & Hume) or CE be the thesis that: all fully meaningful cognition & knowledge begins in & is derived from (strictly determined by) sense experience, independently of reason.

Then we can easily see that K's CPR in particular & the Critical Philosophy more generally are in fact the central nodes on the following history of modern philosophy timeline & line-of-influence:

History of Modern Philosophy Timeline & Line-of-Influence 1600-2007

Classical Rationalism (Desc, Leibniz) {early 17th c. to early 18th}

vs

Classical Empiricism (Locke, Hume) {mid-17th c. to mid-18th}

↓

Kant's pre-Critical period = 1746-1770: early commitment to Leibnizian/Wolffian philosophy → Hume's wake-up call + "the year 69 gave me great light" = space and time are forms of our sensibility, not things-in-themselves

↓

Kant's Critical period =

ID + CPR + {PAFM+ GMM+ MFNS}
1770 1781/1787 1783 1785 1786

ID: *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770)
 CPR: *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787)
 PAFM: *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783)
 GMM: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)
 MFNS: *Metaphysics Foundations of Nature Science* (1786)



Kant's post-Critical period =
 CPrR + CPJ + RWLMR + MM + A + L + OP
 1788 1790 1793 1797 1798 1800 1790s

CrPR: *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788)
 CPJ: *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790)
 RWLR: *Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason* (1793)
 MM: *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797)
 A: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798)
 L: *Logic* (1800)
 OP: *Opus postumum = Transition from the MFNS to Physics*
 (1790s → ? unfinished)



Absolute Idealism (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) {late 18th to early 19th}



Neo-Kantianism (Trendelenburg, Cohen, Natorp, Fischer, Rickert, etc.) {mid 19th}

Marburg

Heidelberg



Neo-Hegelianism
 (Bradley, Bosanquet, Royce, etc.)
 {late 19th}



Analytic Philosophy
 (Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, Putnam/Kripke)
 {late 19th to early 21st}



Phenomenology
 (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty)
 {late 19th to late 20th}

(3) K's two projects in CPR

'CPR' was not the original title of CPR; in fact CPR was originally called *The Limits of Sense & Reason*, as K tells us in his famous letter to his student Marcus Herz of 21 Feb 1772. This letter is philosophically important for other reasons as well, & I'll come back to it shortly.

But for the moment the relevant point is that the 2 titles nicely pick out two distinct but also intimately related philosophical projects that K is working on, which I'll name & correlate with their relevant titles as follows:

the Transcendental Project → *The Limits of Sense & Reason*
the Critical Project → *The Critique of Pure Reason*

This gets us back to my first two claims about CPR. The transcendental project is how K offers a radically original resolution of the basic semantic, epistemological, & ontological problems of Rationalism and Empiricism.

And the Critical project is how K offers a radically original resolution of the basic metaphysical problems of Rationalism and Empiricism, especially the problem of free will & determinism.

In this course, I will focus almost exclusively on K's Transcendental Project, except for the material from the Transcendental Dialectic, which covers some of the highlights of Critical Project.

(4) *The Transcendental Project, or: K's Cognitive Semantics*

The CPR is, in one sense, a treatise on epistemology and ontology. But K's way of doing epistemology & ontology is sharply different not only from CR & CE, but also from contemporary epistemology & ontology.

This is because K grounds epistemology & ontology on the theory of human *cognition* (*Erkenntnis*) or conscious mental representation. This is explicitly stated in the letter to Herz, & is the key to understanding the Preface of CPR, not to mention the rest of the book as well.

A theory of human cognition focuses on the nature of the various *acts*, *objects*, and *representational contents* of conscious mental representation. A theory of content is also a theory of meaning. So K's theory of human cognition is also a semantics.

What I want to do now is to try to explain some of the basic doctrines of K's cognitive semantics, which he calls *transcendental idealism*, by comparing & contrasting it with CR and CE, & without using any Kantian technical terminology.

If we can get a synoptic grasp of the basic notions that K is working with, & also of the basic philosophical moves that he makes, then the terminology can be fairly easily acquired against the backdrop of that synoptic grasp.

Or otherwise put, once we have the Big Picture of what K is trying to argue, then all the little pictures will fall into place.

--CR *versus* CE: shared assumptions
 basic disagreements

	CR	CE
1) rep turn = primacy of consc mental reps = "the 'idea'-idea"	x	x
2) kinds of truths	2	2
3) basic objects of truths	SNs	EOs
4) basic knowl of truths	a priori	a posteriori
5) basic cognitive faculties	reason	sense

rep turn = *the representational turn* = instead of focusing on objects in the world, focus on how we consciously represent or cognize that world (NB. CR & CE both share this particular assumption with each other & with Kant)

SNs = simple natures, real essences

EOs = empirical objects

K's doctrine of the limits of reason & the limits of sense can be understood as a dual critique of CR & CE which consists, first, in rejecting 3 shared false assumptions about cognition:

(a) *the single source thesis* = cognition is derived from a single source only

(b) *2 pronged forkism* (a.k.a. Hume's Fork) = there are 2 & only 2 types of truths

(c) *the passivity thesis* = the mind passively conforms to its objects

What I will call *Kant's mitigated rationalism* then consists in developing a positive view that is neither CR nor CE yet also combines elements of both:

(i) *the dual source thesis*: cognitive faculty innateness (vs. cognitive content innateness) + sense experience as triggering input & raw data source (versus sense experience as determining source)

(ii) *3 pronged forkism* (a.k.a. *Kant's pitchfork*) = 3 kinds of truth, including 2 irreducibly distinct kinds of a priori nec truth: purely conceptual nec truth (analytic truth = logically necessary truth) *versus* substantive or world-based nec truth (synthetic nec truth = non-logically necessary truth = "strongly" metaphysically necessary truth)

(iii) *the activity thesis* = the mind is essentially an innate capacity for spontaneously operating on & transforming sensory inputs & for rational agency

(iv) *a new conception of the a priori* = apriority as underdetermination by sense experience, not exclusion of sense experience: all our cognition begins in sensory experience but it is *not* the case that our cognition is wholly derived from sensory experience

NB. CPR's Transcendental Project in a nutshell, as a question: **how are synthetic a priori truths possible?** (subsidiary issue: **how is knowledge of synthetic a priori truths possible?**)

K's answer in a nutshell: **because transcendental idealism is true.**

Transcendental idealism = transcendentalism + idealism.

(v) *transcendentalism* = all the forms or structures of cognitions are imposed a priori by our innate spontaneous cognitive capacities (= cognitive faculties, cognitive powers)

(vi) *idealism* = all the proper objects of cognition are nothing but appearances or phenomena (mind-dependent, sensory/experiential, spatiotemporal objects constituted by intrinsic relational properties, esp. including causal powers), and never things-in-themselves (mind-independent, non-sensible, non-spatiotemporal, real essences constituted by intrinsic non-relational properties, esp. including causal powers)

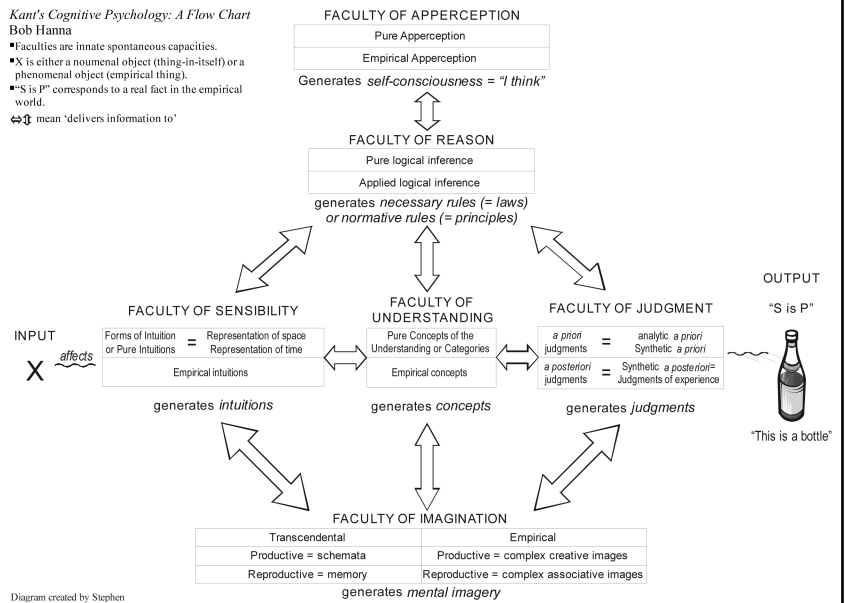
(vii) K's "*copernican revolution*" = the hypothesis that objects conform to our innate spontaneous cognitive capacities, instead of our cognitions conforming to the objects

(viii) K's *solution to the problem of the possibility of synthetic a priori truths* = these truths directly express the contributions of our innate spontaneous cognitive capacities to the content of cognition, and idealism guarantees their truth (solution to the subsidiary problem = cognition has direct reflective cognitive access to its own forms/structures)

Endnotes

1. I also write books and papers on Kant's metaphysics and ethics that are intended to relate directly to contemporary philosophy, and conversely I write books and papers in contemporary philosophy of mind and ethics that are intended to relate directly to Kant's philosophy. See, e.g., R. Hanna and M. Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Action* (Oxford: OUP, forthcoming); R. Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon/OUP, 2001); R. Hanna, "Kant and Nonconceptual Content," *European Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2005): 247-290; R. Hanna, "Kantian Non-Conceptualism," *Philosophical Studies* 137 (2008): 41-64; R. Hanna, *Kant, Science, and Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon/OUP, 2006); R. Hanna and E. Thompson, "Neurophenomenology and the Spontaneity of Consciousness," in E. Thompson (ed.), *The Problem of Consciousness* (Calgary, AL: University of Alberta Press, 2005), pp. 133-162; R. Hanna, "Rationality and the Ethics of Logic," *Journal of Philosophy* 103 (2006): 67-100; and R. Hanna, *Rationality and Logic* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).
2. See O. Liebmann, *Kant und die Epigonen* (Canstatt: Emil Geiger, 1865).
3. See R. Hanna, "Kant in the Twentieth Century," in D. Moran (ed.), *Routledge Companion to Twentieth-Century Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 149-203.
4. See Hanna, "Kant in the Twentieth Century"; and R. Hanna, "Kant, Wittgenstein, and the Fate of Analysis," in M. Beaney (ed.), *The Analytic Turn* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 145-167.

Table 1: Kant's Transcendental Cognitive Psychology



Translating the Critique of Pure Reason for Undergraduate Students*

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I have gone to the trouble of translating nearly half of the second edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* into English. The translation is available at <http://www.philosophy.leeds.ac.uk/GMR/hmp/texts/modern/kant/kttextindex.html>. You may wonder why I have done this, given that there are at least four translations available in print: those by Meiklejohn (1855), Kemp Smith (1929), Pluhar (1996), and Guyer & Wood (1998). In order to explain my reasons for doing the translation, I need to give some background information about my approach to teaching the history of philosophy.

I have always held that courses in the history of philosophy should require students to read primary texts. An exception might be overview courses of which the purpose is to give students a historical framework within which they can locate selected authors studied in greater detail later. I myself attended such an overview course in my first year as an undergraduate at Cambridge, England—given by the Kantian scholar A.C. Ewing. While I appreciate the broad grounding it gave me, I have always felt uncomfortable about giving overview courses myself. This is because I have spent the whole of my career teaching at universities which do not have the luxury of the tutorial system. At Oxford and Cambridge, students' independent work is allocated and assessed by a generalist tutor from their college, and lecture courses are treated as a stand-alone and almost voluntary extra, only loosely connected with formal examinations. At the universities of Birmingham and Leeds, where I have taught (and indeed at every other UK university), all the students' learning is determined by the tutors of individual courses. I consider it unacceptable that students should be given any academic credit for merely passively absorbing a lecturer's summary of the views of a range of philosophers, and regurgitating them in class papers or at examinations. A proper

course must require students to be actively engaged in their own independent learning outside class contact hours.

In the history of philosophy, the two main skills students need to acquire are, first, the skill of extracting an interpretation from a primary text, and marshalling arguments in favor of *that* interpretation as opposed to other possible interpretations; and, second, the skill of marshalling arguments for and against the philosopher's position as so interpreted. These are high-level skills, which are challenging even for final-year undergraduates, but which are essential for making a university education an intellectually transformative experience.

Courses on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* will inevitably include the primary text on the reading list, along with a mass of secondary literature. The trouble is that much of the secondary literature will have been written with the aim of making Kant's ideas as understandable as possible for university undergraduates. Faced with the choice between ploughing through Kant's turgid text and student-friendly summaries, students will opt for the latter, and merely pretend to have read the text through selective quotations and page references. This tendency is further reinforced if the main mode of tuition is through lectures in which teachers tell students what *they* have got from reading the text, and expect the students to become clones of themselves. Students, like all other human beings, tend to obey the law of least effort, and they have a natural assumption that they will get better grades if they ape their teachers rather than thinking for themselves. It is actually quite a challenge to subvert student learning strategies, while at the same time giving them enough help for independent learning to be possible. This is especially true in the case of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is far more impenetrable to an undergraduate than, say, Descartes' *Meditations*, Berkeley's *Principles*, or Hume's *Enquiries*.

If you are to force students to read the primary text itself, there are three things you must *not* do. The first is that you must not push them in the direction of secondary literature, since they will be tempted to use it as a substitute for reading the text itself. Obviously you can't prevent students from reading secondary literature, but you can tell them that they will get no credit for paraphrasing or quoting the writings of recent authors, when the purpose of the exercise is for them to display their skill at interpreting a difficult historical text. Students can give evidence of their independent thinking by setting one secondary source against another in relation to the text; but in my view, only the most able undergraduates are capable of this, and it is more the sort of skill we expect of Ph.D. students. At undergraduate level, the focus should be on addressing the text itself, rather than on the meta-skill of assessing how others have addressed the text.

The second thing you must not do is to set students assignments which can be answered by copying or paraphrasing publicly available material. Assignments must be set in such a way that students cannot pass unless they give evidence of having worked through the text and thought independently about it. Incidentally, this is also a key strategy for preventing students from plagiarizing.

The third thing you must not do is to tell students, whether in handouts or in lectures, what your own interpretation is. This is difficult to avoid completely, but it is important that students should have a free space within which to develop their own ideas, without worrying about being marked down because they disagree with their teacher. I actually tell my students that disagreeing with me is one of my criteria for a top mark. I give the analogy of a school of martial arts—if, after three years of teaching, my students could never throw me, I would regard myself as a failure as a teacher. To convince them that I mean what I say, I have placed on my website examples of

excellent essays from previous years, some of which do just this (<http://www.philosophy.leeds.ac.uk/GMR/hmp/modules/kant/assessment/assindex.html>).

In fact, I have stopped giving lectures and have replaced them with seminar discussions and short individual tutorials at which I discuss students' written work. However, because students are so unconfident of their understanding of Kant, it is difficult to get students to talk (and in any case British students are significantly more reticent than American ones). Although I have various techniques for encouraging participation, there is a regrettable tendency for me to do too much of the talking, and give my interpretation of the text under discussion.

Obviously it is wholly unreasonable to expect students to be able to interpret and criticize the *Critique* without any help at all. Some time ago, I embarked on a running commentary, in which I attempted to give students enough help to be able to come to an understanding, provided they also put significant mental effort in coming to grips with the text itself. Unlike the standard kind of textbook, which can be read without reference to the text, the commentary makes little sense without the text it accompanies. In order to emphasize the symbiotic nature of text and commentary, and also to make cross-referencing easier, in other courses I have made both available electronically, with the text in one frame and the commentary in another, and hyperlinks enabling the one to be refreshed from the other. Unfortunately I haven't yet had time to do this with my Kant translation.

At the time, I was using the Kemp Smith translation, which was then the best available. However, it has a number of quite serious mistranslations, and it is difficult for students to understand—not least because Kemp Smith doesn't translate the many Latin expressions. But the biggest problem was that the publisher, Macmillan, frequently let it go out of print, and I had great difficulty ensuring that there were enough copies for classes sometimes numbering as many as sixty. Interestingly, we were told that the reason why it went out of print was because there was insufficient demand, the only places where significant numbers were bought being Cambridge and Leeds. This is evidence that, whatever philosophy departments in the English-speaking world were telling students about the need to buy the text, most students were not doing so.

I was therefore relieved when Guyer & Wood's new translation came out, because I assumed (correctly) that supplies would be more reliable, and (incorrectly) that it would be an improvement on Kemp Smith. The first thing I had to do was to radically rewrite my running commentary because so much was specific to Kemp Smith's wording. As I did so, I found that I was spending an inordinate amount of time on *language* issues in the Guyer & Wood translation, rather than on supplying historical and other information enabling students to engage with the text philosophically. The sort of thing I was doing was to correct mistranslations, explain terminology, disambiguate sentences, and break up long sentences into manageable portions. Understandably, students found this rather tedious as well as sapping their confidence in the translation. And it wouldn't be necessary if these considerations were taken care of in the translation itself, leaving the commentary for purely philosophical material. So I decided to bite the bullet and do my own translation—which had the knock-on effect that I also had to rewrite my commentary yet again (a task I have not yet completed).

To be fair to Guyer & Wood, their translation was not intended for the undergraduate market, but for scholars with insufficient knowledge of German to be able to read Kant in the original. Apart from some actual mistranslations, their work is fit for purpose in that it largely achieves what it sets out to

achieve. However, it is another matter whether the purpose is an appropriate one: in my view, if people are going to write about Kant, they should learn enough German to be able to refer to the original. Anyway, the main characteristics of their translation are that it:

- preserves Kant's sentence lengths;
- preserves Kant's paragraphing;
- imitates Kant's sentence structures as closely as possible;
- always uses the same English word to translate the same German word;
- always uses different English words where Kant uses different German words (except where this is impossible, as with *Gegenstand/Objekt*);
- avoids disambiguating what is ambiguous in the German;
- distinguishes between italic and bold.

The trouble is that the more they succeed in making their translation as close to the German original as is possible in English, the more they reproduce the difficulty of the text. I'm sure we have all heard stories of Germans who have used Kemp Smith's translation because it is easier to understand. I personally think this is just an urban myth, but the point remains that Kemp Smith wanted his translation to be as intelligible as possible and to be used by undergraduates, and he went a good way towards making it genuinely user-friendly.

My translation goes further than Kemp Smith, but in the same direction. It is not intended as a crib, and anyone who wants the closest possible reproduction should use Guyer & Wood, or (preferably) learn German. Since it is intended for undergraduates, I am blithely unconcerned about losing some subtleties of the original. It is quite unrealistic to expect all but the very best undergraduates to have more than a broad understanding of Kant's philosophy, and there is no point in trying to preserve subtleties if they interfere with the intelligibility of the text. Kant is difficult enough to understand without introducing unnecessary obstacles.

So, the principles I have adopted are:

- to shorten any sentence more than two or three lines long;
- to shorten paragraphs to not much more than half a dozen lines (and I have numbered them for ease of cross referencing with the running commentary);
- to alter the structure of sentences so that they flow naturally in English;
- to translate the same German word with a different English word when there is a clear difference of meaning;
- not to bother if a single English word has to cover for two German words (for example, although not all *Objekte* are *Gegenstände*, I don't think there is any significant loss of meaning if they are both translated as "object");
- to disambiguate the German as much as possible, even if it means silently preferring one interpretation to another;
- to avoid introducing ambiguities where there are none in German (especially where the gender of nouns and pronouns indicate what is referred to);
- to keep the text as uncluttered as possible (avoiding footnotes, and not having bold as well as italic).

While I was working on the translation, students had both my (incomplete) translation and Guyer & Wood. Course evaluation questionnaires showed that all students found my translation much easier to understand. I also asked whether they felt more distanced from Kant using my translation, and the consensus was that they felt closer to Kant with mine because they could actually understand what he was saying.

In conclusion, I believe that my decision to translate Kant in accordance with principles which are the exact opposite of those adopted by Guyer & Wood has been entirely vindicated by the better understanding of the text itself by my students. My translation is not intended for use by fellow academics in their research, even though I flatter myself that there are places where my translation captures Kant's meaning better than other translations do. Researchers should read Kant in German.

Finally, I should say that my translation is open source, and anyone is welcome to use it in their teaching, provided that they acknowledge my intellectual property rights. I would be delighted to receive any comments about its usefulness in comparison with other available translations.

* The author originally delivered this paper at the APA session on *Teaching Kant to Undergraduate Students*, Chicago, 18 April 2008, a session held under the auspices of the American Association for Philosophy Teachers. The editors subsequently invited the author to submit this paper for publication in the *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy*.

Teaching Kant to Undergraduate Students: Is it Worth the Effort?*

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In the *Gay Science*, Friedrich Nietzsche observes that Kant's secret joke is his desire to prove, in a manner ordinary people find irritating and incomprehensible, that ordinary people are correct. According to Nietzsche, Kant wrote against the learned in support of the people, but his writings were for the learned and not for the people.¹ I think that Nietzsche has a point: ordinary people are indeed frustrated when they try to read Kant—even though Kant tried to provide a defense of ordinary morality and ordinary religious beliefs. This raises an interesting question. The intellectual abilities of the average undergraduate student are, generally speaking, very similar to the intellectual abilities of ordinary people. It seems to follow, therefore, that the average undergraduate student is bound to get as much out of reading Kant as the average man on the street: namely, nothing. Although I believe (as will become obvious soon) that this argument is fallacious, the argument nevertheless suggests a concern: Should we even bother to teach Kant's writings in undergraduate classes even if undergraduate students will be frustrated and irritated by this? Would it not be better to save our energies for more philosophically trained graduate students and to spare undergraduate students from the challenge and frustrations of reading Kant?²

In the following, I shall provide a defense of undergraduate courses that require students to deal directly with Kant's writings. I shall focus on teaching the *Critique of Pure Reason* since this is the text I use in my own Kant classes, but my focus on the *Critique of Pure Reason* is less significant than it might seem since many of my observations are equally applicable to the teaching of other Kantian texts. My defense falls into two parts: First, I want to show that there are good reasons for teaching Kant's writings to undergraduate students and that Kant classes should be an important element in the standard

undergraduate curriculum. Second, I want to describe various ways in which my own teaching of Kant has become more effective over the years. It is my hope that some of the things I have learned might be of interest to others who are teaching Kant to undergraduate students.

Let me start by addressing the first issue: Are there good reasons for teaching undergraduate classes dedicated predominately to the study of Kant's writings? I would like to argue that there are indeed such reasons. First, were we to eliminate classes that require a close reading of Kant's writings in the undergraduate curriculum, we would still have to make sure that undergraduate students develop some familiarity with the outlines of Kant's philosophy. And that would leave us only the option of teaching Kant as part of a modern philosophy survey course. Such modern philosophy survey courses typically start with the British Empiricists such as John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume, and end with a brief overview of Kant's philosophy. Although teaching Kant's philosophy in such a survey setting is perfectly fine, there are good reasons for thinking that undergraduate students who learn about Kant exclusively in such survey classes will walk away with a distorted image of his philosophy. Such survey courses are bound to stress the connection between Kant and prior developments in modern philosophy with Kant's philosophy (most often) presented as occupying a middle ground between rationalism and empiricism. There are, of course, some good grounds for presenting Kant in this way but undergraduate students who learn about Kant in this way—and only in this way—will be tempted to understand Kant predominately as a philosophical endpoint, that is, as a philosopher who provided answers to longstanding metaphysical and epistemological controversies in modern philosophy. Kant himself might, of course, be happy with such an understanding of his philosophy, but it seems to me that undergraduate students are not well served by this view and would do better to see that Kant's philosophy presents not an endpoint but a rather decisive new beginning in modern philosophy. Transcendental Idealism presents a radically new orientation in the history of Western philosophy that provides the foundation and impetus for such subsequent philosophical developments as German Idealism, Marxism, Phenomenology, and (indirectly) even Analytic Philosophy. If we want students to grasp that Kant's philosophy is the beginning of a new era in modern philosophy, we cannot be satisfied to teach it as the last segment of a modern survey course. Students will only appreciate the radical beginning represented by Kant's philosophy if they have the opportunity to spend sufficient time reading Kant's writings on their own. It is only then that they can come to understand how influential Kant's philosophy is for all subsequent developments in Western Philosophy.

Second, taking a Kant course provides a transformative educational experience for many students. It is not uncommon to meet undergraduate philosophy students who describe their reading of Kant as an important milestone in their intellectual development. The reasons for this are multifaceted, but I would like to focus on one specific reason why the reading of Kant provides many undergraduate students with an essential intellectual enrichment that is not easily provided by other classes. Many good students are able to anticipate various philosophical positions prior to having read anything about these positions. For example, Cartesian skepticism about the external world does not strike many students as a radically new idea even if they have never read a word of Descartes' *Meditations*. Anybody with a love of thinking has wondered at some point whether the world might not be radically different from the way we think it is. The same is true for many other philosophical positions: They are familiar to us even if we have not read the philosopher who first developed those positions in detail. But

the same cannot be said about Kant's transcendental idealism. Students recognize that transcendental idealism presents a logical possibility of how we are located in the world which they themselves did not anticipate in their own thinking. This has a beneficial effect on the intellectual character of undergraduate students. Since they recognize that Kant's philosophy cannot be anticipated in their own thinking, they come to value the reading of Kant's writings as an intellectual journey to a destination they could have never reached on their own and so start to value reading Kant as a bridge to a new intellectual world. Of course, it is not only in Kant classes where students come to see that reading and struggling with a difficult text can be rewarding and fruitful. But it seems to me that this realization happens more often in Kant classes since Kant offers an intellectual world that cannot be anticipated in the student's own thinking. For this reason, the difficulty and challenge of Kant's writings should not be regarded as a reason to eliminate Kant from the undergraduate curriculum. On the contrary, the difficulty and challenge of these writings provides students with unique learning opportunities.

Finally, giving students the opportunity to read a book such as the *Critique of Pure Reason* closely over several weeks provides excellent training and exposure in mastering basic philosophical vocabulary. Even if a student should be utterly confused by the transcendental deduction of the categories, the student who struggles through the *Critique of Pure Reason* is bound to develop greater mastery of philosophical terms such as 'a priori/a posteriori', 'analytic/synthetic', 'causality/modality/substance' and the like. I have found that students' mastery of these terms is better facilitated by reading the *Critique of Pure Reason* than by taking a class in philosophical logic. Reading and discussing Kant provides one of the best training lessons in fundamental philosophical terminology.

In the section above, I have given three reasons why, despite its inherent challenges, teaching Kant's writings to undergraduate students is a good idea and so should not be avoided. Let me now turn to the second point of the paper. Suppose that I am right and that Kant classes ought to be part of the undergraduate curriculum, how then ought we to teach these classes? Are there some teaching strategies which can help students to get more out of Kant? In the following, I will present some insights about teaching that have emerged from my own teaching of Kant. Since I have spent a good deal of my career teaching the *Critique of Pure Reason*, my reflections will be most applicable to those who teach the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but some of these reflections will be applicable as well to those who teach Kant's other writings.

The biggest challenge in teaching a demanding philosophical text such as the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to make sure that students read the text at all. Upon reading a few pages of the *Critique*, the average undergraduate student is likely to conclude that she cannot understand a word, and must wait for class lectures to make sense of it. Indeed, most of my own students have tried to use my class lectures as the primary way to learn about Kant's philosophy and so avoid reading on their own. The key challenge of teaching Kant's writings is thus to create a class structure that makes reading the text a critical component of taking the class. This is easier said than done. Here are a few things I do as a teacher that have helped me to create a learning atmosphere that makes it more likely that students will actually do some reading on their own.

First, beginnings matter. If students develop the habit of reading on their own early on, they are much more likely to keep on reading. So, in the first few class meetings it is important to establish a pattern for student behavior that students will continue to follow in the later stages of the class. To help initiate

good reading habits I start my class by providing what I call an “Intellectual Big Picture View.” I start with a brief discussion of the role that reason plays in the Enlightenment and then proceed to cover some of the concerns about the use of reason that began to emerge at the end of the Enlightenment period: for example, the concern over whether reason leads to atheism, to anarchy, or to skepticism. I present Kant as providing answers to these fundamental questions about the purpose and role of reason in human life and so provide students with intellectual motivation to read the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

I return to this “big-picture” intellectual view regularly throughout the semester so that students see that the fundamental questions about the role of reason that were raised during the Enlightenment era are as pressing today as they were two hundred years ago. Their appreciation of this sustains their motivation with respect to the reading of the *Critique*.

In terms of readings: I start the class with a very close reading of the Introduction. (I have found that the Introduction works much better as a first reading assignment than the Second Edition Preface.) To provide students with the incentive to read the Introduction with close attention, I give them detailed study questions that they should be able to answer after having done the reading on their own. One question, for example, is: “Why does Kant think that mathematical judgments are synthetic *a priori*?” At the beginning of the next class session I have the students form groups to discuss their individual answers to the study questions with other members in their group. We then proceed to a full-class discussion of their answers. I find that the study questions thus serve a dual purpose: they encourage students to do the reading on their own and they form a basis for students to talk to each other about how they understand the text.

Unfortunately, as valuable as it is, exploration of the text via student-group discussions at every session interferes with my goal of the class reading the entire *Critique* in one semester. So, after a few such sessions, I start providing students with more traditional instructor-centered lectures. However, in order to provide students with continuing incentives to do the reading on their own, I give them daily reading and comprehension quizzes. All these quizzes involve multiple-choice questions. At first, I was reluctant to give advanced undergraduate students multiple-choice questions about the readings but I find that they actually work well. Multiple-choice questions provide me with the opportunity to ask relatively easy questions which can only be answered if the students have done the reading for the relevant class session. For example, the question “How many different categories are there?” though trivial, can be answered only if students have looked at the table of categories prior to the class meeting. (I have found that students appreciate the opportunity to show that they have done the reading even if the questions are trivial.) In addition to asking more or less simple questions about the text, I also ask them more sophisticated questions that deal with topics of the last class lecture. This allows students to demonstrate that they have understood past class discussions. Moreover, if they have difficulties with the multiple choice quizzes, it gives them a chance to ask a question about past class materials. Students who have difficulties often times do not know what they fail to understand. After having missed a question on the multiple choice quiz, students are better able to ask questions about the class material. The multiple-choice quizzes are graded right away in class by another student, so that students receive immediate feedback about their performance on the quiz.³ This interactive quiz grading makes the beginning of each class session very interactive. Preparing these daily quizzes is, however, a relatively time-consuming affair. Nevertheless, I have found that it is worth my time since

students are more directly engaged with the readings as a result of having to complete these quizzes.

A further teaching tool I have found to work very well is the assignment of short (250 words) comprehension papers. Comprehension papers require students to answer a relatively straightforward question, for example: “What does Kant have to say about the nature of space?” As a general rule, I do not allow students to use secondary sources in their comprehension papers.⁴ Moreover, they also have to provide textual support from the *Critique of Pure Reason* for any claim they make about Kant’s philosophy. I have found that these comprehension papers serve a twofold purpose. They allow students to provide an overview of large sections of the work and it requires them to engage with the text directly. I assign between four and six of these short comprehension papers, and I have found them to be a very effective way to make students reread and think about the text on their own.

My final teaching recommendation concerns class organization. I have found that there is a natural tendency for teachers to “get stuck” in the Analytic. There can be no doubt that there is enough philosophical material in the Analytic to last for several semesters. For undergraduate classes, the key is to move through the Analytic in no more than three weeks. The way I accomplish this is to stick to a very strict time line. Even if the argument and structure of the second analogy, for example, has not become entirely clear, I force myself to move on and start the Dialectic on time. I have found that the Dialectic—especially the Antinomies—are much more accessible for undergraduate students and that undergraduate students enjoy the Dialectic more than any other section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I therefore try to organize the class such that there is more than a month of time to explore the Dialectic.

Even if I follow my own teaching recommendations, I cannot say that teaching the *Critique of Pure Reason* is ever easy. I find that I spend more time preparing for this class than for any of my other undergraduate courses. However, the effort is always worthwhile and philosophically rewarding. Becoming a philosophy major without having read the *Critique of Pure Reason* is like learning how to swim without entering the water. It is convenient, but ultimately a fake and phony accomplishment.

* The author originally delivered this paper at the APA session on *Teaching Kant to Undergraduate Students*, Chicago, 18 April 2008, a session held under the auspices of the American Association for Philosophy Teachers. The editors subsequently invited the author to submit this paper for publication in the *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy*.

Endnotes

1. Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Gay Science*. Aphorism #193. Aphorism 193 reads in German as follows: “Kant’s Witz. - Kant wollte auf eine ‘alle Welt’ vor den Kopf stossende Art beweisen, dass ‘alle Welt’ Recht habe: - das war der heimliche Witz dieser Seele. Er schrieb gegen die Gelehrten zu Gunsten des Volks-Vorurtheils, aber für Gelehrte und nicht für das Volk.” I would like to thank Eugene Kelly for pointing out to me that the Walter Kaufman translation of this aphorism, which I was originally using, is slightly misleading. Moreover, I also want to thank him for all his help in developing a better translation.
2. In larger departments these questions might seem ridiculous. If a department actually has a faculty member whose area of specialty is Kant, it is clear that this department member will also teach undergraduate courses that are focused on Kant’s writings. In such a situation, nobody would ever suggest eliminating undergraduate courses that concentrate on the reading of Kant. However, many smaller departments do not have such a faculty member and these departments have the real option of eliminating undergraduate classes that

are focused on the reading of Kant. For example, in my own department we currently have an undergraduate course that is required for all majors and which concentrates on a close reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is not clear that this course will remain a feature of our program. Our department has discussed replacing this course with a survey course that deals with Kant, but whose primary focus will not be *The Critique of Pure Reason*.

3. Allowing students to grade each other's reading quizzes raises obvious concerns about privacy. I try to acknowledge these concerns by allowing students to opt out of this activity if they do not want other students to grade their work. However, none of my students has ever taken this option.
4. Since the papers are done at home there is a risk that students will nevertheless use secondary sources. However, I have found that it is relatively easy to spot the use of secondary sources in these types of assignments. Papers that were written with the help of secondary sources often contain sentences or paragraphs that are written with more sophistication than the students themselves are capable of. I have found that most students follow my instructions and write the comprehension papers without use of secondary sources—especially after they have found out that it is relatively easy to spot the use of secondary sources.

Between Realism and Pluralism: A Review of Scott Soames, Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century: Vol. 1: The Dawn of Analysis & Vol. 2: The Age of Meaning

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In this two-volume history of the philosophical movement inspired by Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein—unfortunately, Frege is omitted from separate consideration¹—and continued in the works of such luminaries as Carnap and Quine, Grice and Strawson, Davidson and Kripke, many of the philosophical virtues extolled by that movement are richly exemplified. The volumes supply a clear, comprehensive, and informative account of complex philosophical theories while being highly critical of most of them in the same analytic spirit developed within the theories it examines. Its clarity is of the kind found in such classics of introductory philosophy as Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*, or Jonathan Bennett's *Kant's Analytic*.² Terms are precisely defined, concepts are analyzed to their basic components, claims are clarified and clearly stated, and arguments are carefully laid out and examined. Throughout, a narrative is built which takes the reader through a particular historical period of philosophizing that yields a detailed picture of the period. The reader will emerge from these bulky volumes (more than 800 pages, combined) with knowledge and understanding of one of the more professional, scientifically competent, and technical schools of modern philosophy, and with tools for understanding complex issues of philosophical analysis. Despite this, the volumes are themselves mostly non-technical. Some chapters, for example, the chapter on Russell, require mastery of logical symbols (such as truth functional connectives and quantifiers) but no more than what any first year course in Logic would provide. *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* is designed primarily for philosophy majors and graduate students but it could also serve a broader section of the student population. Together with alternative histories of roughly the same period (for example, P.M.S. Hacker's *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy*,³ which paints a very different picture), philosophers will find it

useful for a variety of courses in analytic philosophy. A useful feature for teaching purposes is the appeal to comparisons. On page 258 of the first volume, for example, the reader will find a table comparing "Ayer's Logical Positivism" with "Early to Middle Russell" and "Early Wittgenstein." Students will love it.

Though entitled *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century*, Soames's volumes are, in fact, a history of just one school of philosophical analysis in the twentieth century, namely, the school that goes by the name "Analytic Philosophy." It has little to say about such twentieth-century forms of philosophical analysis as 'phenomenology', 'existentialism', 'critical theory', 'structuralism', and 'post-structuralism'. Given that there is certainly no absence of analysis in these other twentieth-century traditions, Soames's title misleads in a way that some will view as reflective of analytic philosophers' failure to give due credit to "non-analytic" or "Continental" forms of philosophical analysis. Of course, the term "analysis" refers to a cognitive function that need not be subordinated to a single philosophical perspective, or to any particular set of techniques. A history of twentieth-century analysis might have told us whether what goes by the name of "deconstruction," for example, is a form of analysis and, if so, whether it is a good form. Some developments in analytic philosophy that Soames does not consider (for example, Rorty's neo-pragmatism or Cavell's account of Wittgenstein) do lead in that direction, namely, towards engagement with non-"analytic" forms of philosophical analysis. As we shall see, though Soames's book itself ends on a pluralistic note regarding philosophy that might be taken to question the exclusionary focus on analytic philosophy as the whole of twentieth-century analysis, for the most part the perspective in these volumes is more limited in scope. A more appropriate title for these volumes would perhaps have been "Logical (or Linguistic) Analysis in Twentieth Century Philosophy" as that would have made Soames's exclusions explicit.

Philosophical analysis is as old as the hills, or at least as old as philosophy is. Even Thales must have resorted to some conceptual analysis of "water" when he proclaimed that everything is water (if that is, indeed, what he proclaimed). In the history of philosophy, analysis and synthesis have often been inseparably intertwined. The conception of philosophy as consisting entirely of logical or linguistic analysis to the exclusion of synthesis and metaphysical speculation is a rather late development beginning in the twentieth century (with Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein). Soames's volumes are a history of that philosophical school written—ironically—from a perspective that no longer shares this founding insight, namely, that all necessity stems from language and that consequently metaphysical speculation is a misunderstanding. Indeed, Soames's "whiggishness" as an historian extends not merely to 'non-analytic' forms of philosophical analysis, but also to those forms of twentieth-century analysis he does recognize as falling within the fold. His is a history of 'progress' in analytic philosophy as seen from a present perspective: a history of the tree from the vantage point of one of its (younger) branches. As such, it is a skewed history, keen on detecting the errors of previous or concurrent schools of analysis, but unsympathetic to the different aims and perspectives of these other schools.

Analytic philosophy sprang into existence from the works of Frege and Russell in logic and the foundations of mathematics, from Moore and Russell's 'revolt' against the idealism of their teachers and contemporaries, and from the phenomenalist philosophy of science of Mach and his Viennese followers. Other contributions came from British empiricism, the school of "common sense" realism, American pragmatism, and the continuing developments in logic (including Tarski's theory of

truth, Gödel's incompleteness theorems, and Kripke's model-theoretic semantics for modal logic). These various movements shared a disdain for metaphysical speculation, a naturalist spirit, and the desire to emulate scientific rationality and employ it in philosophy. Many of these strands were brought together in Wittgenstein's early work, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (TLP), which proclaimed the end of traditional philosophy by subjecting its problems to logical analysis: philosophical problems were thought to arise through a misunderstanding of the logic of language, and were to be completely resolved, or dissolved, upon clarification and analysis.

Wittgenstein's dissolution of philosophical problems was joined by both the logical atomism of Russell and his followers and the logical positivism of the Vienna circle. Despite their important differences, these schools shared a conception of necessity as rooted in logic and a view of factual knowledge as confined to what could be confirmed by empirical science, both of which supported a deflationist, anti-metaphysical view of philosophy as mere conceptual analysis. The school of logical positivism, in particular, distilled these insights into an empiricist "criterion of meaning" according to which statements were cognitively meaningful just in case they were conclusively verifiable on an empirical basis—that is, reducible to statements pertaining to sense data alone. Otherwise, they were "analytic," that is, true by virtue of meanings alone, without reference to factual reality. In mid-century, the logical positivist school became predominant in Anglo-American philosophy, as its European founders—Carnap, Hempel, Tarski, Neurath, Waismann, Reichenbach, and others—fled Nazi persecution into British and American universities.

But serpents were soon spotted in this positivistic Eden. Later generations of analytic philosophers—Wittgenstein himself in his later incarnation, as well as students of Russell, Moore, and the logical positivists—found plenty of metaphysical speculation still lurking in the analytic works of their predecessors. Wittgenstein turned against the metaphysics implicit in his earlier "picture theory" of meaning on which the logical analysis of language was supposed to rest; Quine turned against the analytic/synthetic distinction upon which the empiricist criterion of meaning was supposed to rest; and Kripke turned against the assimilation of metaphysical necessity to epistemic and logical necessity. Soon, the school of twentieth-century analytic philosophy was no longer a single school.

Having uncovered metaphysical residues in the analytic theories and tools of their predecessors, later analytic philosophers were faced with a choice: Should they abide by the anti-metaphysical stance of these predecessors—their deflationism with regard to philosophy—even at the cost of abandoning the analytic theories and tools that were developed for these anti-metaphysical purposes? Or should they preserve and expand those analytic theories and tools while modifying, or even abandoning, the deflationist, anti-metaphysical stance that inspired them? Wittgenstein and Quine may be seen as taking the first of these lines (with Wittgenstein abandoning philosophy as a theoretical endeavor altogether and Quine abandoning it as a *separate* theoretical endeavor, while incorporating much of it into the natural sciences). Kripke, the early Putnam, and Grice may be seen as taking the alternative road, preserving and developing such theoretical distinctions as that between extensional and intensional logics, and rehabilitating metaphysical realism, metaphysical necessity, externalism in the philosophy of mind (and much else). Since the 1970s, this split in analytic philosophy has become prominent, with followers of Wittgenstein and Quine bemoaning the 'loss' of hard-won insights to a new reign of metaphysical speculation and followers of Kripke and the new realism claiming the

almost complete irrelevance to their present concerns of past analytic philosophy.

Soames's book is a refinement of the latter attitude. In his "Introduction to the Two Volumes," Soames spells out what he considers to be "the two most important achievements" emerging from twentieth-century analytic philosophy. The first is anti-foundationalism in philosophy: "the recognition that philosophical speculation must be grounded in pre-philosophical thought." The second is a realism with regard to (metaphysical) necessity: separating from one another the "methodological" concepts of "logical consequence, logical truth, necessary truth, and apriori truth" (Vol. 1, pp. xi-xii). The first of these points is one on which Soames can find broad agreement among mid-century analytic philosophers. Austin's "linguistic phenomenology," Quine's confirmation holism, Wittgenstein's *Lebensformen*, Kuhn's paradigms, and Davidson's rejection of the scheme/content distinction are all forms of such philosophical anti-foundationalism. Indeed, this point separates mid-century analytic philosophy from much that was going on before it. Russell's insistence on analysis, that is, on replacing inferred entities with logical constructions, Wittgenstein's Tractarian "method" in philosophy (TLP # 6.53), and the logical positivists' criterion of cognitive significance were all attempts to subordinate all pre-philosophical convictions to philosophical theorizing.

By contrast, the second point is one that separates Soames and the school to which he adheres from almost everything else that went before them—most especially before Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* and Putnam's "The Meaning of 'Meaning'."⁴ Early and late analytic philosophers resisted Kant's notion of synthetic-apriori truths, admitted only logical necessity, and insisted on the conceptual or analytic basis of all such necessity. Indeed, these assimilations of the necessary and the apriori with the merely conceptual constituted some of the sharpest tools in the analytic tool-kit. Even Quine's famous rejection of the analytic/synthetic distinction did not challenge the assimilation of the necessary and the apriori with the analytic; it just served as a basis for rejecting both necessity and apriority. However, with Kripke and Putnam there emerged a disposition to separate the assimilated truth categories—particularly necessity and apriority—and allow the then unheard-of combinations 'aposteriori necessity' and 'contingent apriority' as bases for independent non-deflationary metaphysical claims. For example, particular and theoretical identities such as "L. Wittgenstein's father was K. Wittgenstein," or "This table is a collection of molecules" were found to be necessarily true but aposteriori; replacing the father, or the molecules, would not leave us with the same individual, or table, which could not be different in these respects. In combination with the first point, metaphysical speculation about necessity could now be made to rest on pre-philosophical convictions, admitting of neither further analysis nor elimination. Thus, the two fundamental achievements of the analytic tradition are also, on Soames's story, the two kernels upon which its most fundamental starting points could be rejected as philosophical errors and falsehoods. And this, indeed, is what Soames's book is designed to show. He reads one or the other of these philosophical errors into the works of earlier philosophers, praising them (where he can) for leading the way towards one or another aspect of the truth later achieved.

In doing this, however, he flattens some of the more interesting divergences and debates within the tradition. For the distinction between philosophers who sacrifice philosophical theorizing to maintain an anti-metaphysical stance and those who renew metaphysical speculation by renewing certain "methodological" theories is not just a difference between those

who “get it right” and those who don’t, where the “it” refers to a technical point of analysis (for example, whether proper names are rigid designators or descriptive devices). Rather, it is a meta-philosophical difference, a difference in the self-understanding of philosophers vis-à-vis their own intellectual role—a difference in the value they assign to philosophy and in the point even of “doing philosophy.” These are differences to which Soames turns a blind eye. Despite his view that there is no single conceptual basis upon which philosophical problems arise, a view he derives from the failure of conceptual analysis to account for necessity and apriority, Soames continues to practice philosophy as if there were just one philosophical theory that is right. He does not countenance the possibility of practicing philosophy without making this assumption, or of recognizing the possibility and legitimacy of other perspectives.

Here are a few examples. On page 60 of the second volume Soames sums up his case against Wittgenstein’s anti-metaphysical views in the *Philosophical Investigations*.⁵ The gist of his claim is that Wittgenstein’s “deflationary” attitude towards philosophy—the view that there are no philosophical theses—is a consequence of some positive philosophical theories that Wittgenstein held, albeit implicitly. That is, Wittgenstein’s deflationary view is seen by Soames as a conclusion from an argument whose premises are these theoretical views and that once these philosophical theories are found to be questionable or misguided, the deflationary attitude will be seen to lack support. Unsurprisingly, the positive philosophical theory that Soames finds in Wittgenstein’s *Investigations* is the ‘mistaken’ identification of necessary truths with apriori and analytic truths, uncovered by Kripke in the work of other philosophical theoreticians (particularly Russell, Frege, and Quine).

On Soames’s account, Wittgenstein derives the view that there are no philosophical theses by assuming (presupposing) that philosophical theses, being unempirical, i.e., apriori or necessary, would have to be rooted in logical analysis. This, however, requires a foundationalist view of logic that Wittgenstein debunks—a view of logic as lying “at the bottom of all the science,” as exploring “the nature of all things,” and as constituting “an urge to understand the basis, the essence of everything empirical” (indeed, the Tractarian view). So philosophical theses can be removed along with the tendency to view logic as “something sublime” (*P.I.* 89). But this late Wittgensteinian analysis leaves out the possibility, favored by Soames, that philosophical theses should rest on contingent-apriori truths or aposteriori-necessary truths that have no logical or analytic basis. It also remains foundationalist in spirit, since it requires a foundation for philosophy in logic, even as it undermines the possibility of such a foundation. In this way, Soames presents Wittgenstein’s deflationary, anti-metaphysical views as still indebted to philosophical theses of the kind he debunks, and that, in fact, are not true.

In Soames’s words: “Genuinely philosophical truths, if there should be any, can only be necessary and apriori, and so true in virtue of meaning. But how are the analytic truths of interest to a philosopher to be established, if they are not to be translated into the formulas of a logical calculus, and demonstrated by... logical proofs?” (Vol. 2, p. 29) Wittgenstein’s deflationism is thus undermined by the undermining of the connection between the necessary, the apriori, and the analytic. If analytic status is not required for either apriority or necessity and, in particular, if it is not required to account for the possibility of such distinctions in truth-category, then the argument for deflationism—if such is Wittgenstein’s argument—is unsound.

Does this reconstruction do justice to the deflationary, anti-theoretical stance of Wittgenstein’s *Investigations*? On its own terms, Soames’s argument can show only that such deflationism

is insufficiently supported (since the assumptions leading to it are false), but not that it is mistaken in and of itself. It is true, of course, that Wittgenstein does not, as do Kripke and his followers, employ modal arguments in the *Investigations*; nor does he attempt, as they do, to reconstruct a metaphysically realist philosophical theory on the basis of accepting modal claims at face value. It is fair to say, then, that the *Investigations* does not anticipate all the different ways in which philosophy and metaphysics could reassert themselves as non-deflationary theoretical endeavors. However, when Wittgenstein says things such as: “Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language” (*P.I.* 109) he is not to be taken as deriving “deflationism” from the assimilation of the necessary with the apriori and the analytic. Rather than justifying his turn to the ordinary on the grounds of general and abstract philosophical premises (such as the assimilation of the truth categories noted above), Wittgenstein is opposing theoretical philosophy, or metaphysics, by placing his trust in the ordinary, by “leaving everything as it is” (124), and by having philosophical problems “completely disappear” (133). What he is complaining against is a misdirection of thought from practicalities to abstractions, but he is not resting his case against philosophical abstractions by drawing on other, equally abstract, philosophical theses. These Wittgensteinian moves are, of course, heavily evaluative, particularly with respect to “the language of everyday” (120), but it is questionable whether Wittgenstein can be understood without taking his intellectual values into account.

As I see it, Soames assimilates Wittgenstein’s views to views more familiar to him so as to employ a familiar pattern of argument against him. The pattern of argument is the one derived from Kripke (against the assimilation of the apriori and the necessary to the analytic, and one to the other)—a pattern that Soames distinguishes as the latest advance of the whole tradition of analytic philosophy.

Soames’s critique of Quine—arguably, the central figure of mid-century analytic philosophy, whose importance, Soames believes, is eclipsed only by that of Kripke—is more trenchant, but similarly marred by lack of empathy regarding Quine’s larger project of incorporating empiricism into the scientific project. Soames devotes a chapter of the first volume to refuting Quine’s arguments in the seminal “Two Dogmas of Empiricism,”⁶ and a chapter of the second volume to an argument against the naturalism of Quine’s later work, especially the thesis of the indeterminacy of translation as laid out in *Word and Object*.⁷ Here I shall focus on the earlier critique, namely, that of Quine’s “Two Dogmas.” As with his critique of Wittgenstein, here too Soames’s philosophical point of departure is the separation of necessity, apriority, and analyticity as distinct categories of truth, knowledge, and meaning. Quine’s rejection of analyticity, so it is argued, is flawed for it is based on failing to recognize that separation.

Quine’s main argument against the analytic/synthetic distinction in the early sections of “Two Dogmas” focuses on the circularity of various attempts to define the distinction. Soames examines one such argument in detail, namely, the argument against the attempt to define “analytic” in terms of synonymy (where “synonymy” is defined in terms of substitution in all linguistic contexts *salva veritate*). This definition, Quine argues, is circular. Substitution of terms *salva veritate* in a purely extensional language does not guarantee synonymy—“creature with a heart” and “creature with kidneys” are extensionally substitutable but not synonymous. By contrast, substitution of terms *salva veritate* in non-extensional languages, that is, languages in which substitution of co-referential terms is not truth-preserving, may be sufficient for defining “synonymy,” but

only by presupposing a prior understanding of non-extensional terms such as “necessity.” (Soames himself thinks that the context of “necessity” would not be sufficient for synonymy.) Quine, however, stands in a long empiricist/positivist/analytic tradition which holds both that necessary and apriori statements are analytic and that only in terms of analyticity can there be any account of necessity and apriority. For him, an account of “analytic” in terms of synonymy, and of synonymy in terms of necessity is a circular account as necessity can only be accounted for in terms of analyticity itself.

Soames’s objection to this argument is to point out again, with Kripke, that necessity, apriority, and analyticity are different categories, and that, consequently, the argument for circularity is unsound, in so far as it rests on assimilating them, or on accounting for one in terms of the other. However, Quine’s circularity argument is more general than Soames admits. For Quine, it is not just necessity, but any non-extensional concept (such as knowledge, belief, meaning, etc.) that—used to define synonymy and analyticity—would lead to a similar circularity. However, this leads Quine to abandon not just the notions of “analytic” and “synonymous” but also the very notion of “meaning” (as pointed out by Grice and Strawson in their early critique of “Two Dogmas”) as well as (among others) the notions of “translation,” “intention,” and “belief.” Not only does Quine embrace all these conclusions, he argues forcefully for them. But Soames takes all this to be absurd. So the argument (of which, admittedly, only a small part has been described here) leads to a stalemate. One philosopher rejects analyticity, necessity, apriority, meaning, belief, and intension on the strength of an “empiricism without the dogmas” while the other sees these rejections as greater absurdities than the admission of necessity as an independent metaphysical concern. This difference in perspective is a fundamental difference in worldview that cannot be settled by mere analysis of the concepts of necessity or analyticity.

Underlying these moves is a more fundamental cleavage. Should philosophy be incorporated into the natural sciences, as Quine’s epistemology suggests (thereby serving to reject necessity and intentionality as cognitively insignificant)? Or should philosophy remain independent of the empirical sciences, as Kripke and Soames suggest, allowing ordinary language to prevail as the ultimate court of (cognitive) appeal? Soames does an admirable job in articulating the consequences of taking Quine’s view, but one may expect an historian of philosophical ideas to look at the views he opposes from within, that is, in terms of what motivates them and how they may still be defended. This is especially true in a non-foundationalist setting such as Soames defends where no claim is made to an analytic or conceptual basis upon which philosophical views are to be conclusively established.

Soames concludes the epilogue of his book with an uncharacteristic appeal to philosophical pluralism:

Though facts about the meanings of our words and the information semantically encoded by our sentences are...real and important, we have no privileged epistemological access to them.

If this is right it means that, as philosophers, we have no privileged and secure linguistic starting point of the sort imagined by so many of our analytic predecessors. Meaning is neither the source of all philosophical problems, nor the key to solving them all...there is no one way that philosophical problems arise. ...There is no one way they are solved. ...If the picture I have sketched is accurate, then what seems to be the fragmentation in philosophy found at the end of the twentieth century may be due to more

than institutional imperatives of specialization and professionalization. It may be inherent in the subject itself. (Vol. 2, p. 476)

This is a surprising conclusion for a book that canvassed the errors of all previous schools of analytic philosophy to proclaim one such school, the latest, as holding the key to philosophical enlightenment. Indeed, if there is no one way philosophical problems are solved, maybe some of them can be solved by questioning, with Wittgenstein, the theoretical status of philosophy. If fragmentation is inherent (and legitimate) in philosophy, maybe the fragmentation between different schools regarding necessity or the prospects for an autonomous science of intension, is also more than a difference between error and truth. Maybe analytic philosophy, too, can flourish in more than one theoretical setting, or perhaps even in an anti-theoretical setting. Soames derives his pluralism in philosophy from the claim that we have no privileged access to meaning, and he derives this view from the doctrine that we have no privileged epistemological access to necessity and the apparatus of possible worlds by which meaning is sometimes analyzed. The metaphysics of necessity and meaning can, Soames believes, have no conceptual or linguistic basis, nor, in his view, does it need any. But this view of his is at odds with his own narrative of philosophical progress.

The problem is as follows: By separating necessity from apriority, and both from analyticity, Soames acknowledges, among other things, that claims about necessity and apriority cannot receive an analytic or conceptual foundation. Indeed, this point connects the two theses that he describes as the two “achievements” of contemporary analytic philosophy, namely, realism with respect to necessity and non-foundationalism. However, it follows that philosophical theses regarding necessity and apriority cannot receive an analytic, or conceptual, foundation either, from which, in turn, follows his point about philosophical pluralism, quoted above. But if philosophical pluralism is correct, then Soames’s own philosophical theses regarding necessity and apriority, including his thesis of realism with regard to necessity, cannot claim exclusive justification either. They remain optional in the sense that, lacking a conceptual foundation, they must rest on other substantive philosophical views that may have equally viable alternatives. Such alternative philosophical options—for example, Quine’s naturalism or Wittgenstein’s recoil from metaphysics—are not so much refuted by Soames’s favored doctrines as they are clarified by their challenge. Thus, Soames’s triumphalism with respect to earlier analytic schools is at odds with the limited basis he can give to the philosophical views he advocates. Perhaps there is more enlightenment to be had by applying Soames’s concluding pluralism to various philosophical options that he himself appears to foreclose.

Endnotes

1. Frege is omitted on two grounds. First, his work was mostly accomplished in the nineteenth century rather than the twentieth and, secondly, the author plans to incorporate an account of Frege in another book on the history of logic. In terms of this book, however, this is rather unfortunate. Without doubt, Frege was the founder and originator not just of modern logic, but also of the very fields of philosophical logic, the philosophy of mathematics, and the philosophy of language—all of which are so central for future developments in analytic philosophy. Beginning a survey of twentieth-century philosophy without reference to Frege is a little like beginning a survey of early modern philosophy without reference to Descartes.
2. Bertrand Russell. *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912); Jonathan Bennett. *Kant’s Analytic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

3. P.M.S. Hacker. *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford UK & Cambridge, Mass. USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).
4. Saul. A. Kripke. *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972); Hilary Putnam. "The Meaning of 'Meaning'." In *Mind, Language, and Reality: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
5. Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New-York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1953).
6. W.V. Quine. "Two Dogmas of Empiricism." In *Quine, From a Logical Point of View* (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1953).
7. W.V. Quine. *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1960).

A Blind Devotion to Fair Grading

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Like many professors, I teach courses ranging from introductory to advanced. I grade (or supervise assistants who grade) papers and examinations. How is this grading different from most other grading? Like justice, it is blind. My students put their names only on pages that the grader looks at after determining the grades.

Blind grading can be a boon for students who have reason to fear bias. The fashionable forms of this fear involve race and gender. Decades of blind grading have shown me that race and gender bear no relation to the quality of my students' work. But this scarcely makes me free of bias. What teacher lacks bias based on a student's past performance? When a student has already turned in two mediocre papers, it is hardly unreasonable to expect a similar third one. Yet the student is entitled to have his third paper considered independently of his prior bad acts. Teachers can try to compensate for such bias but may compensate too little or too much.

Many professional journals evaluate submissions blindly, but most of my students tell me I am their only teacher who grades this way. Why don't all teachers do it? Why don't students and parents demand it? Here are some answers I have heard.

"Blind grading does not eliminate all bias." Who claimed it did? Whenever I get a paper with an opening sentence like "Humankind has long pondered the question: What is real?" I am aware that blind grading cannot bypass my "Eek!" reaction. Such writing should affect grades in English composition but not in philosophy courses, where I aim to grade only on clarity and philosophical merit. Blind grading also does not eliminate ideological bias or bias in cases where a student's writing is recognizable. Blind grading does not eliminate all bias any more than flu shots prevent all influenza. Should doctors stop giving flu shots?

"Blind grading is unnecessary for multiple-choice tests and impossible for class participation." Again, limitations hardly make a practice useless.

"Blind grading of written work may lead students to avoid class participation or censor their writing if they fear overlap." I urge my students to express their ideas both in class and in writing. If this makes what they write recognizable, so be it. The risk is small, since, as I assure them, when I think I can tell whose written work I am grading, I usually turn out to be wrong.

"Blind grading necessitates that students avoid discussing their papers with the teacher in advance." There are various ways around this problem. If I have an assistant who grades the papers, students may discuss them in advance with me. If I grade the papers myself, students may still discuss them in advance with me—by e-mail using addresses that mask their identities. Teachers whose students lack access to e-mail can designate a place for students to drop off anonymous written questions about papers in progress and pick up written replies.

"Blind grading is so impersonal." That helps make it fair.

"Irrelevant considerations never influence me; so I don't need to use blind grading." I hope teachers with this flattering self-assessment will try blind grading and see whether it makes a difference.

"I've worked hard all along in this course, and I think whoever grades my written work should take my past performance into account." This sort of objection illustrates how bias has beneficiaries as well as victims. Some students may want the benefit of a halo effect, but that does not mean they should get it. Halos are for angels.

BOOK REVIEWS

Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary

Jens Timmermann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007). xxxi + 192 pp., \$96.00.

Reviewed by Thomas D. Kennedy
Berry College

For just over sixty years, students of Kant's moral philosophy have been guided through Kant's *Groundwork* by H.J. Paton's translation and commentary, *The Moral Law*. Other commentaries have come along in the decades since, most notably W.D. Ross's *Kant's Ethical Theory* (1954), and two fine commentaries in the 1970s from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst: Robert Paul Wolff's *The Autonomy of Reason* (1973) and Bruce Aune's *Kant's Theory of Morals* (1979). In addition, there are now a couple of rich and substantial introductions that appear in recent translations of the *Groundwork*: Thomas Hill's introduction to Arnulf Zweig's translation in the 'Oxford Philosophical Texts' series and Christine Korsgaard's introduction to Mary Gregor's translation in the 'Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy' series. Add to these some recent works that, though too long to be introductions, are not (and are not intended as) detailed commentaries, such as Paul Guyer's recent "reader's guide" to the *Groundwork* (Continuum, 2007). Excellent secondary resources for students of the *Groundwork* have been, thus, if not plentiful, at least adequate. Still, Paton has remained the standard.

But now there is the new H.J. Paton, Jens Timmermann's commentary on the *Groundwork*.

Well, not exactly. For Cambridge University Press's hefty price for Timmermann's book pretty much puts one on notice that this is not primarily a work for students, as Paton's was. This is a work for scholars and for academic libraries. It is also a commentary without the "frills" and "user-friendly" aides of a text aimed at students (even advanced ones) at the undergraduate level.

Timmermann's text moves from a brief but clear and helpful introduction to the *Groundwork* to a brief synopsis of the argument and then on to the commentary proper. Following this are six short appendices in which Timmermann engages figures ranging from Schiller and Reinhold to Sidgwick, Brentano, and R.M. Hare. The book concludes with a short glossary of "key terms of Kant's project that most stand in need of explanation," clarifying Kant's understanding of autonomy and heteronomy, ends and purposes, happiness, maxims, motivation, necessity and necessitation, reverence, and volition and choice.

As a commentary for academics with an interest in the *Groundwork*, this work will remain the standard for some time. Timmermann's prose is lucid, if not dynamic, and his explanation of Kant is usually clear despite the difficult material with which he is working. Timmermann does engage some contemporary scholars in both the commentary proper and the appendix, but the work is strongest in its discussion of Kant's historical context though, surprisingly, there is less historical material in the introduction than one would expect. Allen Wood and Thomas Hill are fairly frequent interlocutors, Christine Korsgaard and Barbara Herman are not.

In the Introduction and in his final appendix Timmermann is especially helpful in discussing what the *Groundwork* really sets out to do and how Kant understood the comprehensive project of a 'metaphysics of morals'. The purpose of the *Groundwork*, Timmermann argues compellingly, is merely "to identify and firmly to establish the highest principle of moral volition" (xii); what a complete metaphysics of morals is is much trickier. There is, of course, a great deal of tension between Kant's intention that the categorical imperative be used as a criterion for moral permissibility and his confidence that a complete metaphysics of morals is "capable of a great degree of popularity and suitability for the common understanding" (p. 169). Kant's understanding of a metaphysics of morals developed considerably from the mid-1760s and the *Metaphysics of Morals* of 1797 is not, as Timmermann persuasively maintains, the book promised in the preface of the *Groundwork*.

Scholars will find the appendices very interesting and insightful, but although they will find their appetites whetted, they will not come away from the appendices sated. Take, for example, the three-page essay on "Kantian Consequentialism." "Kant was not, and could not have been, a consequentialist," Timmermann writes (p. 161). I think Timmermann is right. But having successfully dismissed this argument, Timmermann might have turned to the more plausible (and more difficult) claim of Barbara Herman in *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (1993) that, in fact, in Kant's writing it is a form of teleology that grounds autonomy. How helpful a systematic discussion of teleology would have been!

H.J. Paton's *The Moral Law* remains the text to which teachers will direct their students for commentary on the *Groundwork*, though Paul Guyer's reader's guide would in fact be more helpful. But even with its shortcomings—primarily in the relative paucity of its engagement with contemporary Kant scholarship—Jens Timmermann's commentary will be the book to which scholars first turn in trying better to understand Kant's *Groundwork*. And it is not easy to see how a better commentary on this work is likely to come along. This is, in short, a superb piece of scholarship, a rich gift to the philosophical community.

Early Buddhist Discourses

John J. Holder (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006). \$37.95 (cloth); \$12.95 (paper)

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John J. Holder's *Early Buddhist Discourses* is an elegant and concise presentation of the basic principles of Buddhist philosophy, or at least of the way these principles are commonly conceived of in the West. Holder focuses on the original Buddhist scriptures which represent the word of the Buddha, and thus achieves a double aim: he introduces the reader to the fundamentals of Buddhist thought, while at the same time bringing him or her into touch with the world in which Buddhist thought was studied, developed, and revered. Holder's emphasis on the texts facilitates appreciation of Buddhist philosophical insight. Moreover, it drives home a central point advocated by all Buddhist thinkers: philosophy is not an abstract analysis of being but rather a flesh and blood enterprise, conducted in real place and time, grounded in experience and necessarily transformative.

The heart of *Early Buddhist Discourses* is indeed the discourses. Holder has selected twenty such texts—"suttas" (literally "well-said"s), which are stories of actual events in which the Buddha expounded his teachings. Holder provides a short introduction to each sutta that marks its significance for the philosophy student. Prior to the selection of suttas appears a general introduction which summarizes the central concepts of Buddhist thought. The translations are both readable and reliable. Although one could always argue with certain choices of terms and phrases (for example, "permanent self" for *anatta*, p. 83), Holder does an admirable job in conveying the spirit of the texts.

The book has one major shortcoming. Simply put, Holder's presentation of Buddhist thought is deeply situated in the conventionalities of the modern Western gloss on the Buddha's teaching. In treating the Buddha as an empirically minded and pragmatic thinker who was doing no more than boldly looking at the nature of his mind and proceeding to define what he observed, Holder participates in the maintenance of the modern myth of the Buddha. Also, in stating and restating that Buddhists traditionally regard the Buddha as no more than a human being who achieved perfection, Holder ignores some of the most fundamental aspects of the traditional Buddhist representation of the Buddha. For Buddhists, the Buddha was not only a philosopher but also a religious teacher who was regarded, more often than not, as a super-human with traits more characteristic of a god than of a human. Of no lesser importance is the fact that even granting that Buddhist philosophy inclines toward empirical observation and careful psychological analysis, the Buddhist vision of reality possesses evident metaphysical currents as well.

I will expand on this last important point regarding metaphysics by referring to Holder's discussion of the Buddhist "Kalama Sutta" ("Discourse to the Kalamas"). This discourse is strategically positioned by Holder as the second in his presentation of the discourses, immediately following the one in which the Buddha relates the story of his enlightenment. Thus the "Kalama Sutta" serves as the doorway to Holder's take on Buddhist philosophy, and as his definition for its most basic inclinations.

The “Kalama Sutta” has long been regarded as a cogent example of the Buddha’s empirical vision. As far back as 1959, Walpola Rahula opened his well known *What the Buddha Taught* by discussing this text. Rahula used the text as an example of the Buddha’s instruction to rely on nothing but personal experience and understanding while defining one’s beliefs and insights. Half a century later, Holder understands the text in exactly the same way. Quite dramatically, he writes that in this text, “...the Buddha demonstrates his empiricism and balanced teaching methods,” and no less than “stands out (perhaps, even alone) among religious teachers for his anti-dogmatic treatment of religious doctrines” (p. 19). The discourse opens with the people of Kalama presenting a troubling question to the Buddha: How can they possibly discern which religious teacher they are best to follow and which philosophical doctrine is most reliable and true? The Buddha’s answer appears at first to be straightforward and anti-dogmatic. He suggests that the Kalamas should not follow anything or anybody just because of superficial fondness for them, or due to other people’s feigned authority. The Buddha proceeds to formulate what seems like a very reasonable and pragmatic position: “But when you know for yourselves: ‘These things are unwholesome, blameworthy, reproached by the wise, when undertaken and performed lead to harm and suffering—these you should reject’” (p. 21). The Buddha will further state that one should accept a doctrine only once he “knows for himself” that it is “wholesome” and that it will lead to happiness.

What follows, supposedly continuing the empirical line of inquiry, is quite reminiscent of Plato’s *Meno*, for, just as with *Meno*, one is never fully convinced that the Kalamas are truly thinking for themselves. The Buddha seems to believe, and also wishes the people of Kalama to believe, that the observations he will proceed to offer regarding human nature and existence are not just true, but are the essence of truth itself. The Buddha asks the Kalamas to elaborate on what Buddhism defines as the three major emotional afflictions which trouble humanity: greed, hate, and delusion. The Kalamas agree that possessing these afflictions are to one’s detriment, and answer in the affirmative when the Buddha poses the following question: “So, Kalamas, does this greedy/hateful/deluded person, being overpowered by greed/hate/delusion and having lost control over his mind, kill living beings, take what is not given, go with another’s wife, tell lies, and encourage others to do the same, *which things are to his detriment and suffering for a long time?*” (emphasis mine).

Many questions could be raised regarding the foregoing passage and its implications. The even-minded reader may wonder whether greed, hate, and delusion necessarily move one to act immorally, and specifically to commit the offences the Buddha delineates in the passage. Such a reader may also doubt whether such “afflictions,” especially if they result in clear acts of aggression and transgression of the social moral code, are in fact so central to the day-to-day reality of the human species. More importantly, a careful reading of this well-known passage should question the Buddha’s insistence that such actions are necessarily “to one’s detriment” and will inevitably produce “suffering for a long time.” I remain unconvinced that an empirical and pragmatic take on the power of action would *necessarily* lead to the conclusion that Robin Hood’s acts of theft cause him to “lose his mind,” are “to his detriment,” and produce “suffering for a long time.” Neither should lying *necessarily* be thought of as bringing *only* calamities upon oneself, as the Kalamas, in seeming agreement with the Buddha, claim that it does.

What underlies the Buddha’s formulation of doctrine here is his vision of *karma*. In his short reference to this most central Buddhist concept, Holder rightly denies its common understanding as “fate” or “destiny” (p. xiv). Holder points out that *Karma* literally means “action,” and emphasizes that the moral quality of an action determines the nature of that same action’s result. This is obviously a metaphysical doctrine, one that goes beyond what can be empirically observed. The metaphysics of this doctrine becomes especially striking when we take into account that when the Buddha speaks of “suffering for a long time,” he means first and foremost “suffering in future lives.” This point can be clearly evidenced by a great number of early Buddhist discourses, all of which are conspicuously absent from Holder’s selection of texts.

This short example should not be taken to imply that the Buddha’s teachings do not possess a true empirical tendency. It should be noted that the Buddha *is* talking about experience and attempting to describe the natural workings of the mind. But just as others’ words may reflect their own metaphysical commitments, so do the Buddha’s, couched in the philosophical and religious inclinations of his day. In fact, it is worth pondering whether the subtle metaphysics of Buddhist doctrine may hold messages no less valuable for the modern philosopher than the analytic and empirical trends of Buddhist thought emphasized by Holder.

I believe that in portraying the Buddha as a philosopher with important messages for modern philosophical discourse, Holder provides a valuable service and is, in this regard, basically right. But his discussion of Buddhist philosophy is helpful only as a first step in its study. Although Holder’s selection and presentation of materials could be beneficial to both students and teachers of introductions to Buddhist thought, and his book could be of some assistance to those wishing to pick up on the “feel” of early Buddhist philosophizing (with an index that adds to its attractiveness), the book will be of little help to students wishing to deepen their understanding and to go beyond the conventional presentation of Buddhist thinking. In his introductions, Holder offers few clues for those wishing, for example, to explore what the Buddha actually meant to Buddhists, and what his metaphysics is about. The bibliography Holder provides is also rather short and in some respects outdated. Nonetheless, Holder’s creditable and pleasing translations could be considered as a good place to begin the pursuit of further insights.

In sum, John Holder’s *Early Buddhist Discourses* is a convenient collection of Buddhist philosophical discourses. Its basic accessibility, affordable price, and clarity of style offer the novice, as well as the slightly more advanced student, a good opportunity to further their study. These students should be advised, though, to view this book for what it is—a representation of Buddhist philosophy in line with a widespread modern take on it. This should not be thought of as the whole of what Buddhist philosophy is about.

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