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Naturalism, Transcendentalism
and Therapy

The type of naturalism I'd like to explore here today is a broadly methodological variety I call 'Second Philosophy'.¹ The leading theme of methodological naturalism, at least of the sort I'm after, is roughly that science is the best way we have of finding out about the world. If we could define 'science', this rough version would be enough -- trust only the methods of science, or something like that -- but we can't definitively circumscribe the methods of science, and it seems contrary to the ever-evolving, ever-improving character of that practice even to attempt this. In place of direct definition, then, my plan is to introduce an idealized inquirer called the Second Philosopher and to illuminate her character by comparing and contrasting her ways of proceeding with those of more familiar thinkers.

As my title suggests, the central foils today will be transcendentalism -- represented primarily by Kant -- and

¹ The intended contrast is with ontological forms of naturalism. For more on Second Philosophy, see [2007].

therapeutic philosophies -- including but not starting or ending with Wittgenstein. My favored diagnostic instrument will be radical skepticism about the external world; the compare-and-contrast will focus on reactions to this familiar epistemological worry. I begin by sketching the character of the Second Philosopher and the relevant sense of First Philosophy. With this background in place, we take up the compare-and-contrast with Kant and the therapeutic philosopher in turn. I promise no startling theses by the end, but do hope that this round-about discussion will at least bring the outlines of Second Philosophy into sharper focus.

I. The Character of the Second Philosopher

The Second Philosopher is actually a quite mundane and familiar figure. She begins her investigations of the world with perception and common sense, gradually refines her observations, devises experiments, formulates and tests theories, always striving to improve her beliefs and her methods as she goes along; at some points in her investigation of the world, she addresses (her versions of) traditional philosophical questions; and the result is Second Philosophy. Unlike some near relatives, the Second Philosopher is simply born native to her particular point of view; she doesn't begin somewhere else, with certain apparently extra-scientific questions, and then turn to science

for one reason or another,² a route that would seem to require a developed sense of what counts as 'science' and why it's to be preferred. Also, though the Second Philosopher obviously recognizes that there are people who employ methods different from hers that purport to get at what the world is like, she feels no temptation toward relativism: she straightforwardly explains why those alternative methods are ineffective.³ In short, she believes as she does on grounds of the evidence, not because 'science' tells her so.

Employing our diagnostic, let's now ask how our Second Philosopher reacts to radical skepticism, in particular, to Barry Stroud's version of skepticism about the external world.⁴ In aerial overview, this skeptic argues that I can't know I have hands unless I can know I'm not dreaming, and that I can't know I'm not dreaming because any test I might perform in an attempt to settle the question could itself be dreamt. The Second Philosopher might well hesitate over the subtleties of the notion

² Cf. Quine [1975], p. 72: 'One [source of naturalism] is despair of being able to define theoretical terms generally in terms of phenomena'. See also Fine [1996], p. 174: his goal 'is to situate humanistic concerns about the sciences within the context of ongoing scientific concerns, to reach out with our questions and interests to the scientist's questions and interests -- and to pursue inquiry as a common endeavor'.

³ Putnam thinks the naturalist is either a relativist or imperialist. In this terminology, the Second Philosopher is an imperialist. (See *Second Philosophy*, §I.7, for discussion and references.)

⁴ See Stroud [1984], [2000]. For more on what follows, see [2007], §I.2.

of 'knowledge',⁵ but setting these aside, if the skeptic has shown that it's no more reasonable than not for her to believe she has hands, this is a serious challenge to her understanding of her cognitive abilities. She surely agrees that dream beliefs are generally unreliable, so the question is whether or not she has good reason now to believe that she's not dreaming, whether or not any test she could now perform would necessarily be useless.

The Second Philosopher's responses to questions like these may seem so pedestrian as not to count as proper entries in a serious philosophical debate. She will point out that dreams are never as continuous and coherent as her current experience, that she's now able to carry out a deliberate and sustained train of thought which she cannot do while dreaming, that she's familiar with a great body of anecdotal and experimental information about the nature of dreaming that informs her current opinion that she is awake. She reminds us that, with effort and training, people can successfully run tests while dreaming to confirm that they are in fact dreaming, in other words, that it isn't true that dreaming life and waking life are indistinguishable.⁶ In a properly philosophical context, observations like these are

⁵ E.g., does it require certainty of some kind? Does it have a performative, non-cognitive element? is it determinate enough for these questions to have answers? Etc.

⁶ Common tests include looking at one's watch, especially more than once (for whatever reason, clock faces tend to look odd and the time they show doesn't stay constant), trying to jump (for whatever reason, jumping in dreams is exaggerated, like low-gravity jumping); attempting to put one's hand through an apparently solid object (for whatever reasons, this is usually possible in a dream).

shrugged off with the suggestion that all of this -- the Second Philosopher's conviction that she's not dreaming, her sense of the continuity of her current state with her memory of the past and her intentions for the future, the very contrast she's been drawing between (apparent) dreaming and (apparent) waking -- all this might be part of one much larger dream. At this point, the possibility being entertained isn't that I might be dreaming in the ordinary sense, but that I might be dreaming in an extraordinary sense that's the functional equivalent of the Evil Demon or the Brain in the Vat.

Fanciful hypotheses like these the Second Philosopher recognizes as colorful ways of posing a different kind of challenge. They're expressly designed to undercut all the ordinary evidence the Second Philosopher has been citing, all the ordinary methods she has for finding out about what the world is like, which means that the challenge isn't just to show that it's more reasonable than not to believe she has hands, but to show this 'from scratch' so to speak, that is, to show it without using any of her tried-and-true methods for showing things. This she doesn't know how to do, though she doesn't rule out in principle that there may be a way she hasn't thought of. The question, then, is whether or not her inability to meet this challenge implies that her belief in her hands, a belief based on her ordinary methods, is not reasonable after all. To put it another way: does her inability to defend her methods 'from scratch' show she can't reasonably believe them to be reliable?

The answer to this question appears to hinge on whether or not the 'from scratch' challenge arises inevitably from within the Second Philosopher's own ways of finding out about the world. The alternative would be that it arises only when one poses a peculiarly philosophical question about our knowledge of the world, when we feel the pull of a 'human aspiration ... to get outside [our] knowledge and [our] condition' and to explain from this external perspective how 'any knowledge of an independent world' is gained on any occasion.⁷ The Second Philosopher can sympathize with this aspiration without holding that all claim to reasonable belief depends on its being satisfied. But if careful application of her very own methods leads to the conclusion that unless she can meet the 'from scratch' challenge, it's no more reasonable than not to believe she has hands -- this would be a serious problem she couldn't safely set aside.

In fact, it would be the very problem once faced by the naturalistic Hume: he sets out to be the Newton of the Science of Man,⁸ to found an 'experimental philosophy' of human nature based on 'experience' and 'a cautious observation of human life', but by the time he reaches the end of the first book of his *Treatise*, he finds himself 'ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and ... look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another'; he is 'reduce[d] almost to despair ...

⁷ The quotations are from Stroud [2000], pp. 138, 132.

⁸ See Stroud [1977], p. 5. For more, with references, see [2007], §I.3.

resolve[d] to perish' on this 'barren rock'.⁹ Commentators continue to ponder how Hume managed to carry on his investigations after this disaster, but the Second Philosopher is puzzled by something else: wouldn't the natural response to such a ship-wreck be a re-examination of the methods that led him there? And wouldn't such a re-examination suggest that something had gone wrong in his analysis of perception, perhaps in his argument to the conclusion that all we ever really or directly perceive are percepts, not external objects? If the Second Philosopher's own methods in fact led her to a similar ship-wreck, she would diligently re-examine them, to figure out where she herself had gone astray.

Moore's famous appeal to common sense presents a contrast of a different kind. Moore purports to establish the existence of the external world by noting that 'here's a hand' and 'here's another'.¹⁰ This is obviously no answer to the 'from scratch' question, because it appeals to our ordinary knowledge of our hands; in that respect, it resembles the Second Philosopher's first effort to respond to the dream argument, by citing various pedestrian facts. But we now understand the point of the Second Philosopher's insistence on ordinary dreaming: she's suggesting that the route to the 'from scratch' challenge in fact runs through extra-ordinary dreaming, that it doesn't arise directly

⁹ Hume [1739], Introduction, 7, 10; 1.4.7, 8, 1.

¹⁰ See Moore [1939]. At least this is one reasonable interpretation of what Moore is up to (see Stroud [1984], chapter III). Baldwin [1990], chapter IX, presents an opposing view.

from her familiar methods of finding out about the world, that those methods only require her to rule out that she isn't dreaming in the ordinary sense, something it's not particularly difficult to do. The contrast here is that Moore, at least in his 'Proof of an external world', doesn't feel the need to think about the skeptic's actual argumentation at all. In other places, he suggests that it needn't concern him because it begins from premises less certain than his belief in his hands.¹¹ This may well be so; in any case, the Second Philosopher wouldn't dispute it. She takes interest in the dream argument not because she doubts she has hands, but because a cogent argument from her ordinary methods to the 'from scratch' challenge would mandate a critical re-examination of those ordinary methods. Moore is apparently unconcerned with this possibility.

Finally, what about Descartes himself?¹² Contrary to his popular image, Descartes continues to regard ordinary beliefs as 'highly probable opinions ... still much more reasonable to believe than to deny' (Descartes [1641], p. 22), even after strong grounds for doubt have been introduced. He resorts to the Evil Demon hypothesis only as an aid to

turn my will in completely the opposite direction ... by pretending for a time that these former opinions are utterly false and imaginary ... (Descartes [1641], p. 22)

¹¹ See Moore [1919], pp. 227-8, [1940], p. 226. Moore [1941] is an exception -- there he takes on the dream argument directly -- but Moore was dissatisfied with this piece (see Moore [1959], p. 13) and even it ends with a comparative judgment that his starting point is 'at least as good' as the skeptic's (p. 251).

¹² See [2007], §I.1, for more.

-- in other words, in order to implement his overarching Method of Doubt. The plan is that this Method will allow us to uncover absolutely certain truths on the basis of which we can then rebuild, in a more dependable way, the edifice of science. What's worth noting is that the Second Philosopher has no reason to object to this procedure: Descartes is out to improve his ways of finding out about the world; he has a new method that he proposes for doing this. The Second Philosopher has no reason to think her current methods are all the reliable methods there are, so she's willing to give Descartes's proposal a try. Her disagreement with him comes only in the execution of this program; she thinks he doesn't give good evidence for some of the principles he employs there.

What's important for our purposes is that the Second Philosopher doesn't dismiss Descartes's project as 'unscientific', as some of her near relatives might. She understands him as engaging in a serious attempt to find out about the world, just as she is; the disagreement between them has the character of an intra-mural squabble about which methods are effective and which aren't, and ultimately about concrete matters of fact. So if we're to identify a sharp contrast class of First Philosophers, odd as it may seem, Descartes doesn't qualify.¹³ As an example of someone who does qualify, let's consider the Constructive Empiricism of Bas van Fraassen.¹⁴

¹³ Despite the nearly overwhelming historical and rhetorical factors in favor of counting Descartes as the paradigm of a First Philosopher (to

Van Fraassen holds that no evidence whatsoever could ever confirm the existence of unobservable entities. This isn't to say that we should banish them from our theories; the idea is rather that those theories aren't attempts to describe the world but attempts at empirical adequacy; that is, we don't aim for our theories to be true, but only for what they say about observable things to be true. Of course this won't sound right to the Second Philosopher, who's out to describe the world in the small as well as the large, and who thinks that the standard evidence, beginning with experiments on Brownian motion in the early 1900s, has established the existence of atoms; if van Fraassen maintains otherwise, she's eager to hear why he thinks this evidence is less than conclusive. Van Fraassen's surprising reply is that the Second Philosopher's evidence is just fine, that for her purposes it *is* conclusive, but that there are other purposes, philosophical or epistemological purposes, for which no evidence will do. On van Fraassen's picture, our investigation of what the world is like takes place at two distinct levels: the ordinary scientific level where the Second Philosopher resides and atoms are rightly said to exist; and the epistemic level where we step outside science and recognize that no evidence whatsoever could establish that atoms *really* exist.

which I succumbed at the end of §I.1 and elsewhere in [2007]), it now seems to me better terminology (closer to 'the joints') to use the term to mark the stark methodological contrast described here (and in [2007], pp. 61-2, 76, 85, and 308). I'm grateful to Stroud [2009] for prompting me to rethink this.

¹⁴ For more on this topic, with references, see [2007], §IV.1.

From the Second Philosopher's perspective, this is simply baffling. She hasn't been told what's wrong with her evidence, but she is being encouraged to recognize that no evidence of this sort could ever confirm what she thinks it confirms, that in some sense or other, all of what she considers to be evidence is simply irrelevant to real question of the existence of atoms. Here the similarity to the radical skeptic's 'from scratch' challenge is clear -- the Second Philosopher is being asked to justify her belief in atoms without using any of the methods she has for justifying such things -- except that the skeptic's challenge is relevant to the Second Philosopher, potentially casting doubt on the reliability of her methods, while van Fraassen's challenge is utterly irrelevant; it leaves her methods and beliefs entirely untouched. His sole complaint is that any methods within her grasp are only effective 'for the purposes of science', not 'for purposes of epistemology'. She will naturally wonder what the 'purposes of epistemology' are, and what methods are appropriate for those purposes, but nothing van Fraassen has to say about this is likely to convince her that a legitimate inquiry is involved. I reserve the term 'First Philosophy' for two-level views of this type.¹⁵

¹⁵ Notice that the ill-chosen terminology of [2007] invites the concern that the Second Philosopher can't both understand the skeptic and not understand the First Philosopher. The solution, obviously, is that the 'from scratch' challenge isn't a piece of First Philosophy (in the sense adopted here); if the Second Philosopher's contention that it doesn't arise directly from her methods can't be sustained, it poses a serious problem for her.

II. Kant's transcendentalism

With this rough sketch of First and Second Philosophy in place, let's now turn to Kant and begin by deploying our familiar diagnostic, the response to the skeptic. Kant's explicit treatment of the topic appears under odd terminology in the 'Refutation of Idealism':¹⁶

Idealism ... is the theory that declares the existence of objects in space outside us to be either merely doubtful and **indemonstrable**, or else false and **impossible**. (B274)

The second of these -- 'dogmatic idealism' as Kant calls it -- is meant to characterize Berkeley:

who declares space, together with all the things to which it is attached as an inseparable condition, to be something that is impossible in itself, and who therefore also declares things in space to be merely imaginary. (B274)

This position is not the subject of the 'Refutation', however, as the ground for this idealism ... has been undercut by us in the Transcendental Aesthetic. (B274)

The 'Refutation' is addressed instead to the first, to 'problematic idealism',

which ... professes ... our incapacity ... for proving an existence outside us ... by means of immediate experience. (B275)

This is the familiar external world skepticism we've been considering; Kant associates it with Descartes himself.¹⁷

¹⁶ B274-279, as supplemented by the long footnote in the B preface (Bxxxix-Bxli).

¹⁷ One might wonder how Kant could have dealt with Berkeley's dogmatic idealism in the Aesthetic -- presumably by establishing the empirical reality of space? -- without having dealt with Descartes's problematic idealism at the same time. I take up this point below.

The argument of the 'Refutation' is breathtakingly simple on its surface: Kant claims that 'even our inner experience ... is possible only under the presupposition of outer experience' (B275); in other words, based on facts about the nature of our immediate experience, we're to conclude that we know an external world. We have here the prototype of what's often called a 'transcendental argument'; P. F. Strawson famously attempted to reconstruct just such a line of thought.¹⁸ Barry Stroud, in a sustained effort to assess arguments of this form, continues to 'cast doubt' on their prospects, 'especially when they are severed from the idealism that their success seems to depend on in Kant'.¹⁹ This conclusion dovetails with the findings of leading interpreters of Kant, such as Henry Allison and Sebastian Gardner, according to whom Kant's Refutation presupposes his Transcendental Idealism.²⁰

From this general perspective, then, if we're to trace Kant's reply to the external world skeptic to its source, we must look to his case for Transcendental Idealism. This returns us to the Transcendental Aesthetic, where Kant intends to establish

¹⁸ See Strawson [1959] and [1966].

¹⁹ See chapters 2 (1968), 6 (1977), 11 (1994), 13 (1999), and 14 (1999) of Stroud [2000]. The quotation comes from the Introduction, p. xii.

²⁰ See Allison [2004], pp. 300-303, Gardner [1999], pp. 179-196. At the crucial turn in the Refutation, Kant has shown that we must represent a thing outside us and concludes that this must be 'a **thing** outside me and not ... the mere **representation** of a thing outside me' (B275). Gardner ([1999], pp. 185-6) explains: 'this inference cannot go through without some further assumption. "X exists" can be inferred from "X is a necessity of representation" ... only ... on the basis that X is a kind of thing the existence of which is tied to (a function of) necessities of representation.'

that space and time are merely forms of our intuition, and thus transcendently ideal and empirically real.^{21,22} This short section of the *Critique* has inspired a tremendous literature over the centuries, but for present purposes, I hope it will suffice to divide these many subtle and diverse readings into two rough schools of thought.

Interpreters in the first of these schools see the argument for Transcendental Idealism as beginning in the Transcendental Exposition, from a premise concerning our knowledge of geometry: for example, Paul Guyer sees Kant as presupposing the necessity of our geometric knowledge; Waldemar Rohloff argues that the relevant premise is actually the a priority of applied geometry.²³ On this general style of interpretation -- however the role of geometric knowledge is parsed in detail -- Kant regards mathematics and pure science as part of our best theorizing about

²¹ The X of the previous footnote is a thing outside me, and thus a thing whose connection to the necessities of representation is established in the Aesthetic.

²² It might be argued that there is an entirely independent case for Transcendental Idealism in the Transcendental Analytic, based on the role of the categories rather than the forms of intuition, and that this case is all that's needed for the Refutation. Such an independent argument is hard to find (see Gardner [1999], pp. 118, 120-125, 190-193), and even its conclusion is contentious (see Watkins [2002] and Bristow [2002] for relevant discussions). Fortunately, this topic can be set aside here: even if there is such an independent defense of Transcendental Idealism in the Analytic, the sketch in the two previous footnotes indicates that the Refutation rests at least in part on the ideality of space in particular, as argued in the Aesthetic. On the same grounds, I also set aside the possibility of what Ameriks [1992] calls 'a short argument' for Transcendental Idealism, that is, an argument that 'passes over Kant's own "long" and complex argument to idealism and its appeal to the specifics features of our pure intuitions (p. 330).

²³ See Guyer [1987], chapter 16, Rohloff [200?].

the world, as the most reasonable place to begin inquiry. If this is where the argument for Transcendental Idealism starts, and if Transcendental Idealism is presupposed in the Refutation of Idealism, then the Refutation isn't addressed to what we've been calling the skeptic's 'from scratch' challenge. Instead Kant is illustrating, within the context of the Transcendental Idealism he recommends, how the skeptic goes astray, namely by assuming he can rely on his inner experience without presupposing outer experience.

The second school of interpreters traces the origins of the argument for Transcendental Idealism to the Metaphysical Exposition, where Kant argues that we have an a priori intuition of space. For example, Lisa Shabel argues that Kant first establishes his theory of space as an a priori intuition (in the Metaphysical Exposition), then shows how our geometric knowledge is based on that a priori intuition (in the Transcendental Exposition), and finally uses our geometric knowledge to build his case for Transcendental Idealism (in the Conclusions from the Above Concepts).²⁴ Given the mathematical and scientific developments since Kant, Allison prefers to skip the argument from geometry altogether, taking the line of thought to run directly from the a priori intuition of space (in the Metaphysical Exposition) to Transcendental Idealism (in the Conclusions) without the detour through the nature of our

²⁴ See Shabel [2004].

geometric knowledge (in the Transcendental Exposition).²⁵ Either way, these interpreters take the premises of the case for Transcendental Idealism to be the premises of the Metaphysical Exposition.

So, if we are to understand the structure of Kant's anti-skeptical line of thought on this second reading of the argument for Transcendental Idealism in the Aesthetic, we need to inquire into the presuppositions of the Metaphysical Exposition. Kant describes his starting point this way:

By means of outer sense ... we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all as in space. (A22/B37)

His plan is to 'expound the concept of space', which is to uncover 'that which belongs to' the concept (A23/B38), and this procedure is supposed to reveal its 'original representation' as an a priori intuition (A25/B40). So, for example, he argues that our representation of space cannot be acquired from experience, because

In order for certain sensations to be related to something outside me ... the representation of space must already be their ground. Thus the representation of space cannot be obtained from the relations of outer appearance through experience. (A23/B38)

Given the way Kant has set up the available options, this can be seen as an argument against Leibniz, for one.²⁶ It's a complex question to determine whether it weighs against Berkeley's account of how we come to construct spatial notions from our

²⁵ See Allison [2004], chapter 5.

²⁶ See, e.g., Allison [2004], pp. 101-103.

ideas,²⁷ but we needn't pursue this here; our concern isn't with Berkeley's empiricism, but with his subjective idealism.

As we've seen, the Berkelean view that concerns Kant in the 'Refutation' is his so-called 'dogmatic idealism'; this is the position Kant claims to have dealt with in the Aesthetic. What Kant seems to have in mind here is perhaps his own version of Berkeley, a figure for whom bodies are 'congeries of ... ideas'²⁸ and therefore 'merely imaginary' (B274).²⁹ So it's natural to ask whether Berkeley (so understood) would accept the premise to the Metaphysical Exposition, that 'we represent to ourselves objects as outside us', in space. Presumably he *would* agree to this, *would* agree that we single out various batches of ideas as constituting objects other than ourselves, and indeed, as objects existing in space. More to the point for our purposes, Stroud's skeptic would easily agree to the same premise, that we represent objects as outside us in space. Are we to understand the argument of the Aesthetic as aiming to convince this skeptic of Transcendental Idealism, and hence to disprove, as in the 'Refutation', his problematic idealism? Or, to come at the

²⁷ See, e.g., Hatfield [1990], chapter 3, Falkenstein [1995], pp. 174-5, and the references cited there.

²⁸ Berkeley [1713], p. 249.

²⁹ This ignores Berkeley's own claim to 'speak with the vulgar' (Berkeley [1710], §51) and to 'vindicate common sense' (Berkeley [1713], p. 244), as when Philonous remarks, 'I am of a vulgar cast, simple enough to believe my senses, and leave things as I find them. To be plain, it is my opinion, that the real things are those very things I see and feel, and perceive by my senses' (Berkeley [1713], p. 229). Margaret Wilson ([1971], e.g., p. 468) describes Berkeley as laying claim to empirical realism.

matter more directly, does the Aesthetic aim to convince the skeptic that bodies don't just 'seem to exist outside me' (B69), that they are not 'mere illusion' (ibid.), that space is empirically real?³⁰

Here I think we need to revisit the premise all have agreed to and ask if all have agreed to it in the same sense. Berkeley can say that 'we represent objects as outside us in space', but at least as Kant understands him, the sense in which he means this amounts to mere seeming. Similarly, the skeptic only affirms an apparent externality. If the premise is understood in a weak sense that Berkeley or the skeptic would accept, then presumably the a priori intuition established at the conclusion of the Metaphysical Exposition would be of a purportedly external space, not of actually external space.³¹ For Kantians in our second school of thought, like Allison and Shabel, the output of the Metaphysical Exposition feeds into a later argument for Transcendental Idealism, so we should ask whether the weaker output is sufficient to drive the later argument.

In Allison's version, the later argument in the Conclusions aims 'to determine what [an a priori intuition] could contain or present to the mind' (Allison [2004], p. 123); the goal is to understand the nature of the thing intuited, that is, the nature

³⁰ Again (as in footnote 17), if the Aesthetic eliminates Berkeley's dogmatic idealism, shouldn't it also eliminate Descartes's problematic idealism?

³¹ Nothing in the argumentation would appear to signal a major shift of the sort that would be required otherwise.

of space itself. For Shabel, the later argument of the Transcendental Exposition assumes that 'geometry is the science of space' and aims to answer the question

how does our representation of space [that is, the a priori intuition guaranteed by the Metaphysical Exposition] manage to afford us those cognitions that are the unique domain of the science of geometry? (Shabel [2004], pp. 202-203)

Either way, Kant takes the output of the Metaphysical Exposition to be an a priori intuition of real externality, not the bogus externality of the dogmatic idealist or the apparent-but-possibly-deceptive externality of the problematic idealist. Thus the argument must begin from a stronger premise than either idealist would allow. That the argument begins by assuming that our representations involve a robust externality is unproblematic if Kant's targets are (as he suggests)³² Newton and Leibniz, who would both agree to this, but for our purposes, it is significant.

Still, we're left with an interpretive puzzle: if the Metaphysical Exposition begins from a strong version of the premise that we represent objects outside us in space, a version that Kant's Berkeley would not accept, why does Kant claim to have dealt with Berkeley in the Aesthetic?³³ Gardner offers a persuasive answer (Gardner [1999], pp. 187-8). In the 'Refutation', Kant doesn't claim to have refuted dogmatic skepticism, but to have 'undercut' the 'ground' for it (B274).

³² A23/B37-38. See Allison [2004], chapter 5.

³³ Finally, the topic postponed in footnotes 17 and 30.

What is this ground? It is the notion that space is, that it must be, 'encountered in things in themselves', what's often called 'transcendental realism' about space.³⁴ With striking sympathy, Kant writes:

If one regards space and time as properties that, as far as their possibility is concerned, must be encountered in things in themselves, and reflects on the absurdities in which one then becomes entangled ... then one cannot well blame the good Berkeley if he demotes bodies to mere illusion. (B70-71)

Once the possibility that space could be both transcendently ideal and empirically real has been introduced, the sole motivation for Berkeley's empirical idealism is removed.

But our question here concerns Kant and the skeptic. We've traced the anti-skeptical argument of the 'Refutation' back to the argument for Transcendental Idealism in the Aesthetic, and there we've found that even wildly divergent interpretations agree on a very general point: Kant begins with some store of common sense (we represent objects in space) and/or natural science (geometry describes the world). In this he roughly resembles Hume, Moore and the Second Philosopher -- none of these begin by addressing the 'from scratch' skeptic. Unlike Hume, Kant doesn't think his naturalistic starting point leads him to a skeptical outcome. Unlike Moore, he feels the needs to address the skeptical argumentation, though he apparently isn't worried about the reliability of his initial beliefs:

³⁴ See Allison [2004], chapter 2.

Geometry ... follows its secure course ... without having to beg philosophy for any certification of the pure and lawful pedigree of its fundamental concept of space. (B120)

In mathematics and physics skepticism does not occur.
(Kant [1800], p. 84)

If he's so confident on these matters, why does he bother with the 'Refutation' at all? One plausible answer would be: because he wants to show that the 'from scratch' challenge doesn't arise if inquiry is pursued along his lines (in particular, that his methods don't undermine themselves by requiring an inference from inner to outer). In all this, then, Kant's approach to skepticism runs structurally parallel to the Second Philosopher's.

But Kant is anything but a Second Philosopher, and it's worth rehearsing why not.³⁵ When he examines his common sense/scientific starting point, what strikes Kant is that some of this ordinary knowledge of the world is *a priori*. This aspect becomes his focus:

I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*. A **system** of such concepts would be called **transcendental philosophy**. ... This investigation ... is to supply the touchstone of the worth or worthlessness of all cognitions *a priori*. (A11-12/B25-26)

Of course, Kant doesn't regard his *a priori* cognitions as worthless. His explanation of their worth leads to the core of his philosophy: the Copernican Revolution --

Let us once try whether we do not get farther ... by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would

³⁵ Cf. [2007], §I.4.

agree better with the requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us. This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest. (Bxvi)

-- and from there to the crucial separation of the empirical from the transcendental:

Our expositions ... teach the **reality** ... of space in regard to everything that can come before us externally as an object, but at the same time the **ideality** of space in regard to things when they are considered in themselves ... We therefore assert the **empirical reality** of space ... though to be sure its **transcendental ideality**. (A27-8/B44)

At the empirical level of inquiry, we investigate an objective world of external, spatiotemporal objects, even inferring the existence of things we can't perceive on grounds of their causal connection to things we do perceive. At the transcendental level, we explore the conditions of our *a priori* cognition to explain our *a priori* knowledge of the empirical world. Ordinary empirical psychology could at best tell us how we cognize objects, not how they necessarily are; this transcendental inquiry is to tell us how we must cognize objects, and thus how the empirical world necessarily is.

Here the Second Philosopher remains firmly lodged at the empirical level. If Kant tells her that space is in some sense ideal, she will want to hear more about this, but Kant replies that for her purposes, for empirical purposes, space is real, just as she thinks it is -- much as van Fraassen assured her that for her purposes, for scientific purposes, atoms are real, just

as she thinks they are. And just as she once wondered what van Fraassen's epistemic purposes were and how they were to be achieved, she now wonders what Kant's transcendental purposes are and how they are to be achieved. This profile qualifies Kant as a true First Philosopher, in the sense used here. Indeed, Kant was perhaps the first First Philosopher,³⁶ the originator of the two-level idea and the inspiration, direct or indirect, for many of its later-day incarnations.

One salient difference between Kant and van Fraassen is that Kant gives a more substantive answer to the Second Philosopher's question of motivation than van Fraassen did: transcendental inquiry is to provide an explanation for our a priori knowledge of the world. Unfortunately, the Second Philosopher isn't much moved by this: she doesn't think physical geometry is a priori, and if there are things we know independently of experience, her first thought will be to seek an explanation in the structure of our cognitive apparatus and how it came to be as it is. For her, any question of a priority is an ordinary question about how human beings know the world; transcendental inquiry remains unmotivated, not to mention that it's by no means clear what sort of inquiry it would be and what methods would be appropriate and reliable for its pursuit.³⁷

³⁶ I know of no earlier examples, but would be grateful to be corrected.

³⁷ To be fair to Kant, another important motivation for the transcendental level comes from his practical philosophy. The complete Second Philosopher would owe an account of morality and value.

III. Therapeutic philosophy

At this point, let's set the Aesthetic and the Analytic aside, and consider for a moment what goes on in the Transcendental Dialectic, where Kant examines our natural temptation toward transcendental illusion.³⁸ This isn't ordinary empirical illusion, as in optical illusions, but rather

Transcendental illusion, which influences principles whose use is not ever meant for experience ... but which instead, contrary to all the warnings of criticism, carries us away beyond the empirical use of the categories, and holds out to us the semblance of extending the **pure understanding** ... to lay claim to a wholly new territory. (A295-6/B352)

What causes this special type of illusion?

In our reason ... there lie fundamental rules and maxims for its use, which look entirely like objective principles ... the subjective necessity of a certain connection of our concepts ... is taken for an objective necessity, the determination of things in themselves. (A297/B353)

This sort of illusion can't be removed entirely, any more than

The astronomer can prevent the rising moon from appearing larger to him, even when he is not deceived by this illusion. (A297/B354)

Kant's goal, then, will be to 'uncover ... the illusion ... while at the same time protecting us from being deceived by it'

(A297/B354), but he recognizes that

even after we have exposed the mirage it will not cease to lead our reason on with false hopes, continually propelling it into momentary aberrations that always need to be removed. (A298/B354-5)

³⁸ Here I follow Gardner [1999], chapter 7, and Allison [2004], chapters 11, 13 and 15.

The patient won't be cured, but armed with the means to treat flare-ups of the chronic condition as they occur.

To see how this works, consider the idea of the spatio-temporal world.³⁹ As Kant sees it, the present moment is conditioned by the one before and the one before that, a region of space is conditioned by the space that bounds it and the space that bounds that; each of these generates a series of conditions for which our reason posits an absolute unconditioned: the spatiotemporal world as a whole (A411-413/B438-440). This unconditioned might be thought of as an endpoint to the series -- the beginning of time, the limit of space -- or as the whole series itself -- the whole of time, the extent of space -- which 'is always unconditioned, because outside it there are no more conditions regarding which it could be conditioned' (A417/B445). On the first picture, the world has a beginning in time and is bounded in space; on the second, the world has no temporal beginning and is spatially unbounded. In the First Antinomy, Kant presents metaphysical arguments that purport to show both options -- thesis and antithesis -- to be self-contradictory (A426-433/B454-461).

Presumably this is enough to show that we've encountered some kind of illusion, but what is the diagnosis and what is the treatment? The source of the trouble, according to Kant, is the

³⁹ This may sound like precisely what the Second Philosopher regards as the subject of her inquiries, but Kant's concern is with speculative metaphysics, not with empirical investigations like hers.

very idea of the world as a spatiotemporal whole.⁴⁰ Empirically, we recognize the relevant progressions from conditioned to condition, but reason adds to this the idea of the completion of the series. This idea of the spatiotemporal world as a whole is

either **too big** or **too small** for every **concept of the understanding**. ... For **if it is infinite** and unbounded, then it is **too big** for every possible empirical concept. **If it is finite** and bounded, then you can still rightfully ask: What determines this boundary? ... Thus a **bounded** world is **too small** for your concept. (A486-7/B514-5)⁴¹

The fault lies with this idea of reason -- the absolute unconditioned -- which goes beyond experience:

With all possible perceptions, you always remain caught up among **conditions**, whether in space or in time, and you never get to the unconditioned, so as to make out whether this unconditioned is to be posited in an absolute beginning of the synthesis or in the absolute totality of the series without a beginning. ... The absolute whole ... the world-whole ... has nothing to do with any possible experience. (A483/B511)

In attempting to make judgments about the world-whole, we are, as advertised, attempting to apply the understanding beyond its proper use.

⁴⁰ Cf. A490/B518: 'Thus we have been brought at least to the well-grounded suspicion that the [world-idea], and all the sophisticated assertions about [it] that have come into conflict with one another, are perhaps grounded on an empty and merely imagined concept of the way the object of [this idea] is given to us; and this suspicion may already have put us on the right track for exposing the semblance that has long misled us.'

⁴¹ See A486-7/B514-5 for the corresponding passage on time: '[If] **the world has no beginning**; then it is **too big** for your concept; for this concept, which consists in a successive regress, can never reach the whole eternity that has elapsed. [If] **it has a beginning**, then ... it is **too small** for your concept of understanding in the necessary empirical regress. For since the beginning always presupposes a preceding time, it still not unconditioned, and the law of the empirical use of the understanding obliges you to ask for a still higher temporal condition, and the world is obviously too small for this law.'

The arguments of the antinomy depend on the implicit and seemingly unassailable assumption that the world is, spatially and temporally, either infinite or finite. But what if the very idea of the world is 'an empty and merely imagined concept' (A490/B518)? Then the argument dissolves:

If one regards the two propositions, 'The world is infinite in magnitude', 'The world is finite in magnitude' as contradictory opposites, then one assumes that the world ... is a thing in itself. ... But if I take away this presupposition, or rather this transcendental illusion, and deny that it is a thing in itself, then the contradictory conflict between the two assertions is transformed ... because the world does not exist at all ... It is only in the empirical regress of the series of appearances ... it is never wholly given, and the world is thus not an unconditioned whole, and thus does not exist as such a whole, either with infinite or finite magnitude. (A504-5/B532-3)

Here Transcendental Idealism is the key to resolving the antinomy.

Thus the diagnosis: reason is ever tempted to extend the conditioned to an absolute unconditioned, and to imagine it has thus constituted an object of cognition. If this is right, why the constant temptation? The final piece to the puzzle is that this tendency of reason has its beneficial aspect:

The transcendental ideas are never of constitutive use, so that the concepts of certain objects would thereby be given, and in case one so understands them, they are merely sophisticated ... however, they have an excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use, namely that of directing the understanding to a certain goal. (A644/B672)

This goal is the illusory one set by the unconditioned. Though we can never cognize the world-whole, we can keep it before us as a '*focus imaginarius*'

i.e., a point from which the concepts of the understanding do not really proceed, since it lies entirely outside the bounds of possible experience [but which] nonetheless still serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension. (A644/B672)

The empty idea of the world-whole serves to regulate inquiry, to encourage us to ever-broader understanding of the empirical world in space and time. These very 'fundamental rules and maxims' (A297/B353, cited above) are what generate 'transcendental illusion' when they are erroneously taken for objective principles. Kant insists that this 'indispensably necessary' illusion 'can be prevented from deceiving' when we understand how an empty goal serves a valuable regulatory function (A644-5/B672-3). The illusion will never leave us -- we will continue to pursue 'false hopes' and to suffer from 'momentary aberrations' -- but Kant's treatment arms us when they 'need to be removed' (A298/B355, cited above).

I've used here the language of diagnosis and treatment because this aspect of Kant's philosophy can be seen as an early example of what's now called 'therapeutic philosophy':⁴² rather than arguing for a particular position in the controversy over the extent of space and time, Kant turns his attention to the participants in that controversy; he diagnoses them as subject to

⁴² Kant sometimes uses this language himself, e.g.: '*The Critique of Pure Reason* is a preservative against a malady which has its source in our rational nature. The malady is the opposite of the love of home (the home-sickness) which binds us to our fatherland. It is a longing to pass out beyond our immediate confines and relate ourselves to other worlds' (Reflexion 5073 (1776-8, Ak 18:79), as translated by Kemp Smith [1923], p. lv). I'm grateful to Jeremy Heis for calling this passage to my attention.

a certain kind of illusion, which he then traces to its sources; he suggests that a clear understanding of how the illusion arises, combined with proper vigilance, will liberate these philosophers from their empty and unproductive squabble. Kant intends to show that the very question they're out to answer is a bad one, however tempting it may be.

With Kant's example in mind, let's return to the topic of skepticism, and in particular, to a more recent therapeutic approach that appears in Carnap's 'Empiricism, semantics and ontology'.⁴³ Here Carnap encourages the skeptic and his opponent to be 'tolerant in permitting linguistic forms' (Carnap [1950], p. 257). The idea is that questions of reality can only be posed and answered inside a linguistic framework, that a choice between linguistic frameworks isn't a matter of truth or falsity but of efficiency and fecundity. The debate over our knowledge of the external world concerns just such a choice: the skeptic advocates a linguistic framework with evidential rules too weak for the existence of his hands to be confirmed; his opponent advocates a framework with stronger evidential rules that do allow him to confirm the existence of his hands; both imagine that the question of which rules are correct has an objective answer. But, Carnap insists, there is no fact of the matter about which framework is correct -- there are no framework-independent facts -- the issue is just which framework is more effective for the purposes at hand. If the purposes are those of

⁴³ Carnap [1950].

scientific inquiry, presumably the language with the stronger rules is pragmatically preferable, but this isn't to say that it's 'true' in any sense.⁴⁴ If the leading purpose is to avoid error at all costs, then the skeptic's language is preferable. Once it becomes clear that the question at issue is ill-posed,⁴⁵ the conflict will dissolve at long last and the combatants will be free to move on to more productive pursuits.

Like the Second Philosopher, Carnap's philosophical therapist doesn't claim to have refuted the skeptic, to have located a false premise or an error of reasoning in the skeptic's bleak assessment of the prospects for meeting the 'from scratch' challenge. Instead, both find ways to set the skeptical question aside without answering it. This parallel is what I hope to explore; I wonder if Second Philosophy and therapeutic philosophy can co-exist in mutually beneficial ways. Unfortunately, in the particular case of Carnapian therapy, I'm afraid the answer is clearly no. As with Kant's therapy, the Carnapian variety only works if we first accept a body of controversial theses: that

⁴⁴ See Carnap [1950], p. 244: 'The thing language in the customary form [i.e., a language whose rules allow us to settle questions like 'is there a white piece of paper on my desk?'] in the affirmative by looking] works indeed with a high degree of efficiency for the purposes of everyday life. This is a matter of fact, based on the content of our experiences. However, it would be wrong to describe this situation by saying: "The fact of the efficiency of the thing language is confirming evidence for the reality of the thing world"; we should rather say instead: "The fact makes it advisable to accept the thing language".'

⁴⁵ It is what Carnap calls an 'external question', in this case the question '... of the reality of the thing world itself. ... this question ... cannot be solved because it is framed in a wrong way. To be real ... means to be an element of the system; hence this concept cannot be meaningfully applied to the system itself' (Carnap [1950], p. 243).

there are no facts, no truths, no evidential relations outside of linguistic frameworks; that the choice between such frameworks is purely pragmatic. The Second Philosopher and the skeptic might well object that what counts as good evidence for what isn't a matter of conventional choice in this way; they might agree that adopting Carnap's tolerant attitude is an attempt, an ultimately ineffective attempt, to take a range of entirely legitimate questions off the table.⁴⁶ As therapists, both Carnap and Kant prescribe a considerable course of bitter medicine before any benefits can be gained, medicine the Second Philosopher at least will find unpalatable. Our hope is for a brand of therapy consistent with Second Philosophy, for a pure therapy that works without relying on such objectionable doctrines.

Of course the whole idea of therapeutic philosophy is primarily associated with the writings of Wittgenstein, so this is a natural place to look. I'd like to side-step the current lively debate over 'therapeutic' readings of the *Tractatus*, and

⁴⁶ Cf. Richardson [1994], p. 80: 'Tolerance has a hidden agenda: to remove objections to the strongest possible systems of mathematics', and Ricketts [2007], pp. 219-220: 'In advocating Tolerance, Carnap urges that the proponent of a strong logic for science need not answer the objections of constructively minded mathematicians. Carnap's philosophy of mathematics does not justify his own logical preference [i.e., classical mathematics]; it does, however, as Alan Richardson has noted, remove objections to it. There is a parallel in Carnap's final attitude to the realism-idealism debate [i.e., the debate between the external world skeptic and his opponent]. Carnap thinks there is no well-defined question here; what is at issue is the choice of the form for an observation language in the language of science. In the protocol language debate, Carnap comes to favor use of a realistic observation language, one that speaks of observationally detectible qualities and relations of material bodies. His understanding of the realism-idealism debate removes idealistic [i.e., skeptical] objections to this choice.'

begin by reviewing the brand of therapy presented in the *Philosophical Investigations*. This will set the stage for *On Certainty*, where skepticism is addressed most directly.

In well-known passages from the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes

Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of our language. (PI §109)

The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of *depth*. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language. (PI §111)

The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work. (PI §132)

The goal of philosophy, then, is to remove these confusions, bewitchments and disquietudes:

The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy ... the one that gives philosophy peace ... There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies. (PI §133)

The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness. (PI §255)

This isn't an empirical or theoretical inquiry of any kind:

Our considerations could not be scientific ones. ... we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems. ... they are solved ... by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in despite of* an urge to misunderstand them. (PI §109)

Here we have the promise of a pure form of therapy, one that doesn't depend on any problematic theorizing, but simply frees us from the various mental cramps brought on by misunderstandings of

how our language actually works: 'the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear' (PI §133).

Much of what Wittgenstein says outside these self-consciously methodological passages can then be seen, to a first approximation, as analogous to the sort of thing the psychoanalyst says to the patient during their therapeutic sessions: not as assertions or even questions of the usual sort, but as provocations designed to induce the desired state of disengagement from philosophical perplexity. This suggests that it would be inappropriate to subject these utterances to the usual techniques of philosophical analysis and critique; Wittgenstein is merely 'assembling reminders' (PI §127) of 'what we have always known' (PI §109). But, as Brian Rogers has observed,⁴⁷ this doesn't exempt Wittgenstein from all critical analysis: the practice of a given form of therapy often rests on substantial theoretical underpinnings (think of Freud!); one doesn't assert these theses in the course of treatment, but they inform the choice of what one does say. The second-philosophically troublesome theorizing in Kantian and Carnapian therapy is overt, but we must be alert to the possibility that even apparently pure therapy might harbor controversial theorizing within its motivating assumptions.

So here's the worry: does Wittgenstein's therapeutic practice rest on a debatable meta-philosophical theory of what constitutes a philosophical problem? If so, might this meta-

⁴⁷ See Rogers [TWST].

theory artificially block investigation of legitimate, important matters? Consider, for example, the question: what is the nature of logical truth? The Second Philosopher has addressed this question, or at least, questions nearby -- if it's either red or green, and it's not red, why *must* it be green? -- and she produces an ordinary, contingent empirical theory about the structure of the world and the facts of human cognition in her attempt to answer it.⁴⁸ But, given Wittgenstein's interests in the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*, the nature of logical truth might seem a paradigm of the type of question he hopes to cure us of asking. Is the Second Philosopher attempting to dig beneath the bedrock?⁴⁹ Does Wittgenstein covertly presuppose a theory according to which she is doing so, a theory that would inform his approach to diagnosing and treating this purported illness of hers?

I think there's at least one strand of Wittgensteinian thought that allows us to answer this question in the negative.⁵⁰ The nature of logic is in fact a recurring example in the meta-philosophical sections of the *Investigations* (PI, §§89-133), but it appears in a particular guise; he writes

⁴⁸ See [2007], Part III.

⁴⁹ See PI, §217: 'If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say, "this is simply what I do"'.

⁵⁰ I'm grateful to Rogers for many conversations over the years on the general topic of Wittgenstein's attitude toward scientific investigations (of which the Second Philosopher's study of logical truth is one example). I think the line in the text matches the general outlines of what he's been urging on me for some time.

In what sense is logic something sublime? (PI, §89)

Thought is surrounded by a halo. -- Its essence, logic, presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world. ... It must ... be of the purest crystal. (PI, §97)

Wittgenstein presents us with two inquirers

One person might say 'A proposition in the most ordinary thing in the world' and another: 'A proposition -- that's something very queer'. (PI, §93)

This second attitude is 'in germ the subliming of our whole account of logic' (PI, §94); it leaves us 'unable simply to look and see how propositions really work' (PI, §93). Now I take it that the Second Philosopher, unencumbered by any preconception about what logic must be like, is able to do just this -- look and see -- while the encumbered inquirer 'is directed not toward phenomena, but ... toward the "possibilities" of phenomena' (PI, §90), directed toward some elusive essence. For this enquirer, no empirical investigation is to the point:

The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a *result of investigation*: it was a requirement.) (PI, §107)

This is the person Wittgenstein aims to cure:

We have got onto slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground! (PI, §107)

The Second Philosopher never left rough ground in the first place, so her investigation of logic is unproblematic; she stands in need of no cure.

Thus we needn't see the therapeutic Wittgenstein as holding that certain questions are themselves wrong-headed, as long as they are asked in the right spirit. His goal is simply to treat those he finds, empirically, in a certain kind of predicament: he probes to discover if their inability to find the answers they seek may spring from their having set unexamined preconditions that keep the ordinary, empirical answers from satisfying them; if so, he then invites direct examination of those preconditions in the hope that they will dissolve in the patient's hands.

With this general understanding of the nature of Wittgensteinian therapy, let's turn to his extended discussion of skepticism in *On Certainty*. Many straightforwardly theoretical readings of the book have been given, mostly focused on the idea of indubitable hinge propositions.⁵¹ Even therapeutic readings often tend toward overtly theoretical varieties of therapy.⁵² The usual difficulties of interpreting Wittgenstein's writings are compounded in this case by the fact that these are first-draft notes; Wittgenstein died before he could rework and reassemble them into the sort of rich tapestry of interacting voices we find in the *Investigations*. Fortunately our interest here is localized: we want to explore the idea of a purely therapeutic

⁵¹ See Moyal-Sharrock and Brenner [2005] for a selection.

⁵² See, e.g., McGinn [2003], where Wittgensteinian therapy seems to involve getting us to understand the show/say distinction. In Williams [2004], the therapy involves coming to see, among other things, that 'there are physical objects' is nonsense.

response to the skeptic, so as to compare-and-contrast such therapy with Second Philosophy.

With this in mind, one immediately striking feature of *On Certainty* is that the patient most obviously up for treatment of this sort isn't the skeptic at all, but G. E. Moore!⁵³ One prominent thread in this discussion starts early on:

'I know' often means: I have the proper grounds for my statement. So if the other person is acquainted with the language-game, he would admit that I know. (OC, §18) The statement 'I know that here is a hand' may then be continued: 'for it's *my* hand that I'm looking at'. Then a reasonable man will not doubt that I know. -- Nor will the [skeptic⁵⁴]; rather he will say that he was not dealing with the practical doubt which is being dismissed, but there is a further doubt *behind* that one. -- That this is an *illusion* has to be shewn in a different way. (OC, §19)

This Doubt behind the doubt can't be answered by straightforward appeal to what we ordinarily take ourselves to know; what's at issue here is the distinction between an ordinary question and the skeptic's 'from scratch' question.⁵⁵ If Moore is the patient, the therapist is pointing out to him that his removal of any 'practical doubt' isn't going to satisfy someone who's bothered by another sort of Doubt entirely:

⁵³ Rogers [WPM] suggests this is because there aren't actual skeptics around to treat, but there are people, like Moore, who attempt to refute the skeptic (though see footnote 10). The most conspicuous theme in the discussion of Moore arises from Malcolm's contention that Moore has misused the word 'know' (see Malcolm [1949]). The evolution of this line of thought in Malcolm, Wittgenstein and elsewhere, is fascinating, but beside the point here.

⁵⁴ Wittgenstein writes 'idealist' here, but this is apparently the figure we've been calling the 'skeptic'.

⁵⁵ De Pierris ([1996], p. 181) argues that the distinction between 'philosophical and non-philosophical standpoints' is 'the most important theme of *OC* whereas scepticism is the vehicle that takes us through the journey'.

If I don't know whether someone has two hands (say, whether they have been amputated or not) I shall believe his assurance that he has two hands, if he is trustworthy. And if he says he *knows* it, that can only signify to me that he has been able to make sure, and hence that his arms are e.g. not still concealed by coverings and bandages, etc. etc. My believing the trustworthy man stems from my admitting that it is possible for him to make sure. But someone who says that perhaps there are no physical objects makes no such admission. (OC, §23; see also §259)

There's no denying that Moore does sometimes seem strangely unresponsive to the skeptic's real concerns. The Wittgensteinian therapist's first step then is to get him to appreciate the nature of the question.⁵⁶

But isn't there something odd about this? If Wittgenstein's goal is to free Moore from a philosophical perplexity, it's hard to see why he should begin by taking pains to induce that very perplexity. If Moore's temperament leaves him somehow immune to the skeptic's worries, if he feels content to offer ordinary answers to what's intended as an extra-ordinary question, then isn't he simply failing to feel the perplexity in the first place -- and if so, why does he need any therapy at all? We might say the same of the Second Philosopher, who grasps the distinctive character of the 'from scratch' question, but

⁵⁶ In later sections of the book, written during a period when Wittgenstein met regularly with Moore, Wittgenstein seems convinced that Moore understands the skeptic's challenge and is pitching his response in the same register: 'When Moore says "I know that that's ..." I want to reply "you don't know anything!" -- and yet I would not say that to anyone who was speaking without philosophical intention. That is, I feel (rightly?) that these two mean to say something different' (OC, §407). 'When one hears Moore say "I know that's a tree", one suddenly understands those who think that that has by no means been settled' (OC, §481). 'It is as if "I know" did not tolerate a metaphysical emphasis' (OC, §482). Though it's well worth asking what Moore was really up to (cf. footnote 10), I won't address that question here.

doesn't see her inability to answer it as jeopardizing her ordinary beliefs. Using the case of logical truth as our guide, we might expect that the need for therapy arises when a thinker sets some precondition on what an answer to his question must look like, in this case, perhaps the requirement that a satisfactory answer to 'do you know?' must remove even the most hyperbolic doubt, must proceed, as we've described it, 'from scratch'. Given that neither Moore nor the Second Philosopher subscribes to this preconception, they would seem to be perfectly healthy to begin with, safely left to themselves.

One possible solution to this puzzle comes from Moore's understanding of his own philosophical project. In a well-known autobiographical passage, he writes:

I do not think that the world or the sciences would ever have suggested to me any philosophical problems. What has suggested philosophical problems to me is things which other philosophers have said about the world or the sciences. (Moore [1942], p. 14)

This is born out in his characterization of the problem he's addressing in 'Proof of an external world'. He begins by quoting Kant's 'scandal to philosophy' that the skeptic has not been answered, and announces in his own voice that

There seems to me to be no doubt whatever that [this scandal] is a matter of some importance and also a matter which falls properly within the province of philosophy. (Moore [1939], p. 127)

Here Moore differs from the Second Philosopher, who draws no distinction between philosophical and scientific questions. She thinks it remains more reasonable than not to believe she has hands despite her inability to meet the 'from scratch' challenge,

because that challenge doesn't arise in such a way as to undermine her ordinary methods; on these grounds, she explicitly rejects the relevant precondition, and thus needs no therapy. Moore, in contrast, isn't concerned with ordinary or scientific matters; he explicitly aims to address the philosopher's question. The trouble is that Moore, unlike the Second Philosopher, somehow fails to recognize or acknowledge the 'from scratch' character of the problem he undertakes to solve. On this reading, then, the therapist first needs to get him to see the true nature of that question.⁵⁷

Once Moore has been brought to share the skeptic's perplexity, we might then expect the Wittgensteinian therapist to

⁵⁷ This may be the sort of thing Wittgenstein has in mind in his [1935], pp. 108-109: 'As in the case of every philosophical problem, this puzzle arises from an obsession. Philosophy may start from common sense but it cannot remain common sense. As a matter of fact philosophy cannot start from common sense because the business of philosophy is to rid one of those puzzles which do not arise for common sense. No philosopher lacks common sense in ordinary life. So philosophers should not attempt to present the idealistic or solipsistic positions, for example, as though they were absurd -- by pointing out to a person who puts forward these positions that he does not really wonder whether the beef is real or whether it is an idea in his mind, whether his wife is real or whether only he is real. Of course he does not, and it is not a proper objection. You must not try to avoid a philosophical problem by appealing to common sense; instead, present it as it arises with most power. You must allow yourself to be dragged into the mire, and get out of it. Philosophy can be said to consist of three activities: to see the commonsense answer, to get yourself so deeply into the problem that the commonsense answer is unbearable, and to get from that situation back to the commonsense answer. But the commonsense answer in itself is no solution; everyone knows it. One must not in philosophy attempt to short-circuit problems.' See also Wittgenstein [1958], pp. 58-59: 'There is no commonsense answer to a philosophical problem. One can defend common sense against the attacks of philosophers only by solving their puzzles, i.e., by curing them of the temptation to attack common sense; not by restating the views of common sense.' I'm grateful to Curtis Sommerlatte and Brian Rogers, respectively, for calling these passages to my attention.

isolate and dissolve the precondition that produces it. Perhaps this precondition is, as suggested, that a defense of our knowledge (or reasonable belief) must begin by answering the 'from scratch' challenge. The Second Philosopher has rejected this precondition on the grounds that the 'from scratch' challenge doesn't arise from straightforward application of her methods, but Wittgenstein's therapeutic philosopher would apparently attempt the more ambitious task of arranging for the patient to conclude that the precondition itself somehow dissolves on examination. (If the therapy is to remain pure, this must be accomplished without appeal to any controversial theorizing.) Here the Second Philosopher, lacking Moore's peculiarly 'philosophical' ambitions, will see little point in inducing false perplexity, and though she rejects the precondition in question, she doesn't see that there's anything incoherent about it, that it is in any sense an 'illusion'.⁵⁸ If this is the form of pure therapy Wittgenstein brings to the topic of skepticism, it appears to offer little of use to the Second Philosopher.

Still, the general idea that dissatisfaction with ordinary answers might spring from an unnoticed or unexamined precondition

⁵⁸ This may not be fair to Wittgenstein. I've characterized the 'from scratch' challenge in completely general terms -- to justify belief in your hands without using any of your usual means of justification -- and maintained that it's perfectly coherent. However, one might take the skeptic's challenge to be more specific than this -- in particular, to require that the justification take the form of a cogent inference from knowledge of your inner states to knowledge of the external world -- and there may be something incoherent about this (cf. Stroud [200?]).

is a powerful one that the Second Philosopher might usefully deploy on suitable occasions -- that is, when confronted with evidence that her fellow inquirers or even she herself is so encumbered. One example is the recent tendency towards a kind of ontological nihilism: given that the straightforward Quinean method of evaluating ontology has proved too simple, some recent philosophers conclude, on various grounds, that there is no objective way of settling ontological questions.⁵⁹ In contrast, the Second Philosopher believes her ordinary methods have established, for example, the existence of atoms. Why does this apparently respectable sort of ontological claim seem unacceptable to these philosophers? The answer, I've suggested, is that they're assuming, perhaps without having noticed, that the only proper way to judge ontology is by applying a certain kind of general criterion, a criterion in essential ways like Quine's, which they and the Second Philosopher agree is not likely to be forthcoming. Once this precondition is brought into the open, it simply lacks motivation and the Second Philosopher's piecemeal version of metaphysics naturalized appears entirely reasonable and viable.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ See [2007], §IV.5, for more.

⁶⁰ Stroud [2009] worries that the Second Philosopher would have no motivation to undertake the sort of therapy described here (and thus that I, the author of [2007], §IV.5, am not a Second Philosopher). But mightn't a Second Philosopher want to encourage her fellow enquirers to address the important questions as she sees them? Wouldn't she be motivated to remove any obstacles to their joining with her in a cooperative effort?

In any case, to return one last time to skepticism, I think we can find a more promising and straightforward brand of pure therapy in Austin's discussion of the Argument from Illusion in *Sense and Sensibilia*.⁶¹ In the first five lectures,⁶² Austin considers this familiar case for the philosopher's claim that we never directly perceive material objects, but only something else (sense data, percepts, ideas, impressions, ...). He explicitly doesn't argue for a position of his own on perception;⁶³ he doesn't argue directly that one of the philosopher's premises is false or even meaningless in any theoretically loaded sense. Rather, his procedure is

A matter of unpicking, one by one, a mass of seductive (mainly verbal) fallacies, of exposing a wide variety of concealed motives -- an operation which leaves us, in a sense, just where we began. (Austin [1962], pp. 4-5)

If there is a positive residue, it isn't a new philosophical thesis,

⁶¹ Austin [1962]. I should mention that in Austin [1946], he confronts the skeptic more directly, with observations about the actual use of 'know' that appear to undercut his concerns. Though the degree of linguistic subtlety is considerably higher, this approach is akin to Malcolm and Wittgenstein's worries over Moore's use of the word. Grice later observed (see his [1989]) that inferences from facts of usage to the nature of knowledge have to be evaluated with some care, because a usage can be abnormal by violating conversational convention, without being false or meaningless (cf. Stroud's response to this part of Austin in his [1984], chapter II). Wittgenstein clearly senses Grice's point in OC, §§464, 552, and Grice ([1989], pp. 12-13) points out Austin's display of discomfort in the same vicinity (see also Austin [1940], p. 64). (This is part of the history set aside in footnote 53.)

⁶² In lectures VI-IX, Austin discusses Ayer's linguistic understanding of sense-data; X-XI take up the question of incorrigibility.

⁶³ See Austin [1962], pp. 3-4: 'I am *not*, then -- and this is a point to be clear about from the beginning -- going to maintain ... that we *do* perceive material things (objects). This doctrine would be no less scholastic and erroneous than its antithesis.'

But we may hope to learn something ... in the way of a technique for dissolving philosophical worries (*some* kinds of philosophical worry, not the whole of philosophy). Austin [1962], p. 5)

The central job is to unmask 'a certain special, happy style of blinkering philosophical English' (Austin [1962], p. 4).⁶⁴

Anyone who's ever read this book will realize that I can't begin to summarize the wealth of observation and argumentation contained there, but I can give a quick listing to illustrate the kinds of warnings Austin sounds: looking for *the* kind of thing we perceive is already odd, given that we in fact perceive many different kinds of things (pp. 4, 7-8); the term 'material object' isn't an ordinary term but an undefined piece of jargon, introduced 'as a foil' for the equally undefined 'sense data' (pp. 4, 7-8); not perceiving 'moderate-sized specimens of dry goods' (p. 8) isn't the same as being deceived by one's senses (pp. 8-9); 'directly' in 'directly perceive' is used in some non-standard way that isn't specified (pp. 15-19); illusions are different from delusions, and conflating them facilitates the introduction of sense data (pp. 22-25); many commonly used examples are incompletely or outright mis-described (pp. 28-32);

⁶⁴ See Fischer [2005] for a somewhat different take on Austin [1962] as therapeutic. Because Ayer, the target of the lectures, doesn't truly believe the Argument from Illusion, Fischer sees 'exposing ... concealed motives' as the leading method of the entire work. In contrast, it seems to me that the 'exposing' only begins when the issue of incorrigibility is raised (at the end of lecture IX), that the earlier discussion is aimed at undermining the appeal of the Argument from Illusion, and that 'unpicking ... fallacies' is the method employed there. (I ignore the later parts because the philosopher I have in mind is Hume -- see below -- and whatever may have been the case with Ayer, I doubt Hume had any concealed motives.) In any case, Fischer's paper contains revealing analyses of some of Austin's 'unpicking', whether or not it's all done in the service of 'exposing'.

various 'delusive' experiences aren't in fact 'qualitatively indistinguishable' from ordinary experiences (pp. 48-50); things of quite different kinds can be 'qualitatively' similar (pp. 50-51); and so on. In general categories, Austin is counseling that we attend to how ordinary words are actually used, which is often considerably more subtle than we suppose; that we clearly define any new technical term, or new technical use of an ordinary term, and that we take care not to play illicitly on the ordinary meaning; that we guard against false dichotomies; that we look closely at the examples we use, to guard against oversimplifications; and so on. Here Austin isn't mounting a direct case against the Argument from Illusion; he's assembling an ever-growing tally of ignored complexities and problematic unclarities with the hope that we will gradually be released from the argument's grip, that its persuasiveness will slowly evaporate.

Now dissolving one argument commonly encountered on the road to the skeptical challenge obviously isn't enough to defeat that challenge completely, but given the particular roots of Hume's despair, for example, a course of Austinian therapy might well have done him a world of good! Perhaps the 'mainly verbal fallacies' that surround the theory of ideas and the Argument from Illusion are so 'seductive' -- in both the thesis and the anti-thesis -- that only concerted treatment is enough to root them out. And notice, also, that the illness here isn't a peculiarly philosophical strain, as it was for Wittgenstein and

Moore; Hume is engaged in a straightforward empirical study of perception and human knowledge when he runs aground.

So now let's ask: is this therapy pure, or does it rely one way or another on theoretical presuppositions repugnant to Hume or the Second Philosopher? None of Austin's observations or general recommendations just canvassed appear to rest on overt theorizing of any kind, but perhaps they are informed by some covert theoretical assumptions. Here I think some would attribute to Austin the idea that the study of the ins and outs of ordinary language is somehow all there is to philosophy, that the dictates of ordinary language are sacrosanct. Whatever might have been true of other so-called 'ordinary language philosophers',⁶⁵ this was not Austin's position. He clearly thinks that 'examining *what we should say when ... [is] at least ... one philosophical method*' and that 'evidently, there is gold in them thar hills' (Austin [1956], p. 181), but he equally clearly insists that 'certainly ordinary language has no claim to be the last word', adding in his characteristic way 'if there is such a thing' (Austin [1956], p. 185).

So what is Austin's method? It begins from a plain empirical claim:

Our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth marking, in the lifetimes of many generations: these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound,

⁶⁵ As an example, Malcolm [1942] argues that a philosophical statement is refuted by showing that it 'goes against ordinary language' (p. 349). (Malcolm is attributing this position to Moore as well as endorsing it himself.)

since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any that you or I are likely to think up in our arm-chairs of an afternoon -- the most favored alternative method. (Austin [1956], p. 182)

This last, obviously, is a dig at the philosopher's tendency to coin new terms, or to use old terms in new ways, without sufficient care. In *Sense and Sensibilia*, Austin writes:

Tampering with words in what we take to be one little corner of the field is always *liable* to have unforeseen repercussions in the adjoining territory. Tampering, in fact, is not so easy as is often supposed ... and is often thought to be necessary just because what we've got already has been misrepresented. And we must always be particularly wary of the philosophical habit of dismissing some of (if not all) the ordinary uses of a word as 'unimportant', a habit which makes distortion practically unavoidable. For instance, if we are going to talk about 'real', we must not dismiss as beneath contempt such humble but familiar expressions as 'not real cream'; this may save us from saying, for example, or seeming to say that what is not real cream must be a fleeting product of our cerebral processes. (Austin [1962], pp. 63-4)

This isn't to say that technical terms shouldn't be introduced, only that this needs to be done with care. The concern is that all too often, an ordinary term is being used in an extraordinary way (e.g., 'direct', 'real') that remains unspecified because the word itself is a familiar one.

Suppose, then, that we've managed to catalog ordinary usage in our chosen domain and perhaps to have introduced some judicious and well-specified descriptive jargon; is this the end of the story? Not at all:

Ordinary language ... embodies ... the inherited experience and acumen of many generations of men. But then, that acumen has been concentrated primarily upon the practical business of life. If a distinction works well for practical purposes in ordinary life (no mean feat, for even ordinary

life is full of hard cases), then there is sure to be something in it, it will not mark nothing: yet this is likely enough not to be the best way of arranging things if our interests are more extensive or intellectual than the ordinary. (Austin [1956], p. 185)⁶⁶

In particular, Austin recognizes that

[this inherited experience] has been derived only from the sources available to ordinary men throughout most of civilized history: it has not been fed from the resources of the microscope and its successors. (Austin [1956], p. 185)

Presumably, if we wish to understand the physical constitution of matter, or the nature of biological processes, or the best way to build a bridge, we must go beyond the wisdom contained in ordinary language to the resources of scientific inquiry.⁶⁷

Indeed Austin notes that the study of ordinary language alone is most likely to be useful in cases where it is

rich and subtle, as it is in the pressingly practical matter of Excuses, but certainly is not in the matter, say, of Time ... In ordinary life we dismiss the puzzles that crop up about time, but we cannot do that indefinitely in physics. (Austin [1956], pp. 182, 186)

⁶⁶ See also Austin [1956], p. 185 -- 'ordinary language ... in principle ... can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded' -- and [1962], p. 63 -- 'Certainly, when we have discovered how a word is in fact used, that may not be the end of the matter; there is certainly no reason why, in general, things should be left exactly as we find them; we may wish to tidy the situation up a bit, revise the map here and there, draw the boundaries and distinctions rather differently.'

⁶⁷ In a biographical sketch, Warnock ([1969], p. 4) notes Austin's background as 'a classical scholar and linguist', and continues: 'That this was his own training was, as he knew, significant for him; but he was very far from assuming, for that reason, that it was the best sort of training to have. It is possible that he himself would have preferred to be a scientist, and certain that he would have wished to know a great deal more about the sciences. ... his exacting habits of thought led him to question the value of the educational method by which he had acquired them, and he was sometimes inclined to think that he had wasted a great deal of time.' Cf. Urmson [1965], p. 83, quoting from Austin's notes: 'brought up on classics: no quarrel with maths etc., just ignorant'.

So one corrective to ordinary language is ordinary science. In his favored case of Excuses, he lists several 'systematic aids': the dictionary,⁶⁸ the law, and psychology, anthropology and animal behavior.⁶⁹

If we follow Austin, then, if we apply the modes of inquiry he recommends and avoid the common pitfalls he warns against, what is the intended result? In the larger compass of Austin's work, the goal of these practices is straightforward -- we're out to better understand the world:

Words are not (except in their own little corner) facts or things: we need therefore to prise them off the world, to hold them apart from and against it, so that we can realize their inadequacies and arbitrariness, and can re-look at the world without blinkers. ... When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking again not *merely* at the words (or 'meanings', whatever they may be) but also at the realities we use the words to talk about: we are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as the final arbiter of, the phenomena. (Austin [1956], p. 182)

In the special case of the Argument from Illusion, this quest for better understanding takes a more therapeutic form: the cumulative effect of Austin's observations is aimed get us over a certain mental tick.

⁶⁸ Cf. Urmson [1965], p. 79: 'Austin, who must have read through the *Little Oxford Dictionary* very many times, frequently insisted that this did not take so long as one would expect.'

⁶⁹ Austin [1956], pp. 186-189. It's worth noting that Austin foresees efforts like his, in cooperation with those of grammarians and others, as eventually producing a true 'science of language' (Austin [1956a], pp. 231-2).

Which brings us back to our question: does Austin's therapeutic treatment of the philosopher under the spell of the Argument from Illusion rest on any covert theorizing that the Second Philosopher would find problematic? It seems to me that the answer is no. The underlying belief that ordinary language often tracks real-world connections and distinctions is empirical; the approach to the study of ordinary language is empirical; the correctives imagined to the wisdom of ordinary language are empirical; even the test of the effectiveness of the therapy is presumably empirical.⁷⁰ If this is right, then we have here another example of pure therapy, albeit applied to only one portion of the skeptical problem. And as far as I can see, Austin's therapy is entirely congenial to the Second Philosopher; she might well have used it herself, faced with poor, despairing Hume (again a much more pressing case, from her perspective, than the peculiarly philosophical illness Wittgenstein diagnoses in Moore). Indeed, the whole of Austin's method seems to me to showcase a distinctive tool in the second-philosophical toolbox, one especially well-suited to the areas of inquiry he takes up.^{71, 72}

⁷⁰ Cf. Urmson [1969], p. 25: 'Austin regarded this method as empirical and scientific, one that could lead to definitely established results, but he admitted that "like most sciences, it is an art", and that a suitably fertile imagination was all important for success'.

⁷¹ E.g., excuses, if and cans, performatives, etc. Cf. footnote 37.

⁷² Wilson [2006] might be thought of as an application of Austin's method, with special attention to scientific terms like 'hardness'. Indeed Wilson writes: 'I will be flattered if the work is regarded as a worthy continuation of the school of tempered common sense pioneered by Thomas Reid and J. L. Austin' (p. xviii; see also pp. 17-18).

Let me stop here. As predicted, I have no overarching conclusions to offer, but I hope to have clarified the character of Second Philosophy in a number of complementary ways, by sketching the Second Philosopher's response to radical skepticism and comparing it with the those of Hume and Moore, and by specifying the relevant sense of First Philosophy. I've also suggested that Kant's 'refutation' of skepticism has more in common with the Second Philosopher's response than one might expect, despite his being perhaps the original First Philosopher, and I've indicated how and why the Second Philosopher remains unmoved by his motivations for transcendentalism. In the realm of therapeutic philosophies, we've seen how Wittgenstein aims to expose and dissolve the sort of unnoticed preconditions that can block our acceptance of ordinary answers to our questions; though the Second Philosopher may well doubt that all traditional philosophical problems take this form, she can welcome and practice this sort of therapy in appropriate cases. Finally, Austin's subtle approach to examining what-we-should-say-when promises a more direct, broadly applicable, down-to-earth form of therapy -- and a new second-philosophical method for certain

Ironically, when Wilson takes exception with Austin (p. 89, and especially pp. 472-3), he seems to have missed what comes directly after the quotation above about 'the resources of the microscope', i.e., 'it must be added too, that superstition and error and fantasy of all kinds do become incorporated in ordinary language and even sometimes stand up to the survival test (only, when they do, why should we not detect it?)' (Austin [1956], p. 185). Also, Wilson is a philosopher of language, intent on understanding how language correlates with the world; Austin, as we've seen, sees the study of language at least in part as a means of finding out about the world.

kinds of positive investigations as well. If, in all this, Second Philosophy has been clarified and perhaps some small further interest sparked in its nature and practice, I confess that would be conclusion enough for me.⁷³

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