

THE SHAPE OF THE CONCEPTUAL

The human intellect and senses are, indeed, *inherently* fallible and delusive, but not by any means *inveterately* so. ... Being aware that you may be mistaken doesn't mean merely being aware that you are a fallible human being. (J. L. Austin, "Other Minds" (1946), p. 98)

Kant raised a problem for philosophy. It may be part of someone seeing something—part of what it would be for it to be *seeing* we are discussing—that someone *sees* only what comes before his eyes. But that there is such a thing as seeing so conceived—that for someone to see (or even not see) something is, so conceived, a way for things to be—can admit of, and then need, showing. There is room for *showing* our concepts, or forms of thought, to fit the world (what there is to think about)—though Kant did not quite see just *what* such room there is. So, it can seem, that we see (some of but) only what comes before our eyes cannot follow merely from what seeing is to be supposed to be. Kant's plan for showing our concepts to fit the world cannot work. Frege, and early Wittgenstein, worked to show how no such proof is needed. But their plan for showing this does not work either. Which has made some despair of there being such things as truths which follow merely from which concepts are in question. Such despair would be a draconian way with thought itself. It is Putnam who showed us the true nature and significance of the worries Kant saw room for; and who thus was able to find the right way with those problems Kant could not solve and Frege and early Wittgenstein could not dissolve. This is a synopsis of a story I will now begin to tell.

1. Preliminaries: Kant aimed to make philosophy (or metaphysics) respectable. He faced a problem about the credentials of what we can see (or seem to see) of the conceptual. We can frame the problem in terms of a posture towards the world which Kant, and Frege, called *judging* (*urteilen*). On this usage judging is a posture for *one* to hold towards things (where it is a solecism to ask which ones). It is identified by one central ambition: to be held in a world it would be right for. Where there is such a posture, a world it was right for would be a certain sort of world; there is something it would be for the world to be this. The posture identifies *what* this would be. The posture is for holding in a world which is thus and so. Holding it is thus committing to the world so being; a commitment correct or incorrect (if at all) *solely* by virtue of the *world*

so being, or not. Where there is such a posture, there is, accordingly, a *thought*—that the world is thus and so; a thought true or false according as that posture would be one correctly held. A thought is thus, as per Frege (1918: 60) that which raises some particular question of truth.

What there is to judge depends, for one thing, on how the world is. Had evolution omitted sloths, there would be no such thing as judging that sloths like bananas. Had cuisine omitted *torresmos*, there would be no such thing as judging that *torresmos* are fried. A complementary thought: for any opportunity the world affords for judging, one would need the means to recognise it to be able so to judge. One would need to be suitably endowed. In general, though perhaps not always, a thinker *need* not be so positioned.

A converse thought is: how one is endowed as thinker determines what it is that one can judge; which opportunities, afforded by the world, are open to him. Or, on second thought, it would do that insofar as what it equips one to see as opportunities really are that; really are afforded by the world. And now a worry. If I am able to judge things a certain way—able to hold just that posture—this must be through a co-operation between mind and world. The, or my, mind must equip me for opportunities the world in fact provides. But if, or where, co-operation is genuinely called for, how could we know whether it existed?

This is one version of the most general form of Kant's problem. Another version exploits a distinction which starts from this idea:

A thought always contains something which reaches beyond the particular case, by means of which this is presented to consciousness as falling under something general. (Frege: 1882, *Kernsatz* 4)

A thought—the content of a judgement—fixes when the world *would be* right for the holding of that posture; what is required for it being so. What it thus requires of the world cannot be merely that things be as they are. Such a judgement could only be what would be expressed in answering, 'Thus!' to the question, 'How are things?' It would not be *judging* things to be some way at all. A thought, to be a thought at all, must fix what *matters* to things being as they are according to it; what measure things being as they are comes up to if the thought is true. If the thought is that red meat is on the white rug, it is of a way things might have been had the meat been drier, or from a different

species, had Pia's eyes been green, had Sid not grunted. But not if the rug were bare. The thought represents the particular case, things being as they are, as *one* way, within a range of ways, in which things being as they were would be things being as they are according to it. It *reaches* to a range of what would thus instance it. Such is its intrinsic generality.

What a thought represents as instancing its generality is things being as they are. Things of a sort to instance—fall under—such generality do not themselves have it. There is no *range* reached to by things being as they are; nothing *it* asks for making some posture right. Nothing *else* could instance it.

The generality intrinsic to a thought is shared by other things. If we decompose a thought into parts, we will always, Frege tells us, arrive at some part which has it. What the thought that Sid grunts requires of the world *can* be decomposed into requiring that *Sid* be some way,, and that *being a grunter* be that way. This last demand might be met in a variety of ways—e.g., with or without torn t-shirts—all the ways there are for someone to be a grunter. So this element in a thought reaches to a range of cases just as a thought does. So, too, for that way for someone to be—being a grunter—and so too for a way for things to be, e.g., for Sid to be a grunter. By contrast, Sid's being as he is lacks the reach in just the same way as things being as they now are does. Nothing in the way he is fixes what any given posture asks for being right.

Henceforth, I will call what has this distinctive generality *conceptual*, and what lacks it *nonconceptual*. We might speak of what is conceptual, collectively, as *the* conceptual. If we permit ourselves to think of this collectivity as a domain, we can also think of the conceptual as having a *shape*, formed by all the bearings instancing some bits of it have on instancing others. Bearing *may* be entailing, as (one case) for something to instance being red is *ipso facto* for it to instance being coloured. But it may also take more subtle, less easily formulated, forms. Being red, say, if it does not strictly *entail* not being green; may still be something something such that being red always counts, so far as it goes, against counting as being green. Or perhaps being red (and, in its own way, being a pig) is the sort of thing to be, generally, *visible*. And o on. On the other side of the distinction, the nonconceptual (things being as they are) just is whatever the world supplies by way of it. What instances any bit of the conceptual is none other than whatever the world supplies to do so. So now Kant's problem in a different form. What assurance is there that the world supplies anything to instance (or counter-instance) any bit of the conceptual which our endowment as thinkers—our equipment to think—brings, or seems to bring, into view?

2. Kant: Engagement: Kant thought that where our mental equipment saddles us with thinking in given terms, there needs to be assurance of adequate co-operation between mind and world: a substantive demand is made on the *world*. Demonstrating such cooperation, where the conceptual concerns philosophy, he saw as *crucial* to respectable philosophy. It is not clear how *pressing* he thought the task in general, though if it is pressing where he thinks it is, it *should* be pressing throughout. Kant marks the *crucial* area thus:

Among the manifold concepts which form the highly complicated web of human knowledge, there are some which are marked out for pure *a priori* employment, in complete independence of all experience; and their right to be so employed always demands a deduction. For since empirical proofs do not suffice to justify this kind of employment, we are faced by the problem how these concepts can relate to objects which they yet do not obtain from any experience. (A85/B117)

So begins the 'deduction of the categories'.

Kant has this much right: if assurance is needed that the world permits of being thought of in some given way, such assurance had better come from how the *world* is. Our way of thinking of the world is all right only if the world provides those opportunities for judging one would exploit if judging in so thinking. It is for the *world* to provide the opportunities or not. Kant's plan for showing that it does, in matters which concern him, is to locate some tract of reality necessarily so shaped as to provide the opportunities there would thus have to be. Kant thinks this is the only possible plan.

By 'tract of reality' I mean something on which the truth of a judgement might turn; something a thought might represent as a certain way. Such talk simply prescind from questions of whether Kant needs special *objects* to judge to be ways for *a thing* to be.

The tract Kant wants would permit judgements of *all* the most general shapes ours might take. It would also, while not the only tract, be all *we* ever genuinely *judged* of. For *any* (finite) sentient thinker, he thinks, there would be some tract so shaped. Necessarily, he thinks, there is such a tract if we experience at all. Necessarily, it contains the requisite shapes.

What tract might play the role Kant assigns it: first, to be that which we *judge* to be,

and experience being, thus and so; second to be, by nature, incapable of failing to give those 'pure *a priori*' concepts which concern Kant those employments he sees them as marked out for? How could both these demands be satisfied at once?

Kant's tract consists of what he calls 'appearances'. These "have no independent existence outside our thoughts" (A491/B519). They "do not exist in themselves but only relatively to the subject in which, so far as it has senses, they inhere." (B164) Their career is exhausted by our sensory awareness of them. "Nature" he tells us, our habitat, "is merely an aggregate of appearances, so many presentations of the mind." The trick is to be: those very faculties which saddle us with *judging* things of the forms we do are what enable us to experience appearances (or to experience at all); they thus shape *what* we experience—give it forms exactly corresponding to our forms of judgement. So those general principles which hold, *ipso facto*, of judgements of the forms our mind makes available to us must also hold of that which we experience. Given, but only given, our mind's role in providing these objects of experience, things could not be otherwise in this respect.

The point of Frege's *Kernsatz* 4 applies here. A judgement (or its content) presents the particular case as falling under a certain generality, in bringing it within a certain range of cases. The judgement belongs to the conceptual. It reaches to, and thus is *of*, the nonconceptual. It is things being as they are which is, or is not, things being as judged. So if we take Kant's idea seriously we must see our minds as forming the nonconceptual itself, or that tract of it of which we judge. Those very faculties by which we experience it as we must also work to make *it* just as we thus experience it. (It is difficult, as Frege notes (e.g., 1918: 70-72) to take this idea entirely at face value, which may explain talk of 'transcendental' and 'empirical' things to say.)

Appearances *have* been conceived as what must be as experienced—a conception rife in Kant's time, and still extant. Kant may have *wanted* no part of it (see B275-276), though wanting is not always having. On this notion, appearances are contents of someone's consciousness in Frege's sense: for any given one, there is someone one must be to be aware of, or experience, it; its career is coeval with that awareness of it. Nothing beyond what someone is aware of in experiencing such an appearance bears on whether it is thus and so; for it has no career beyond its experiencing which could make something bear. So one could not *mistakenly* take it to be thus and so. But, as Frege showed (1918) this is because one could not really *take* it to be thus and so at all. For, with a career so attenuated, it would not be an object of *judgement*: it could not, in being as they are, instance *things* being some way they might be judged to be. Such appearances cannot guarantee any concept employments, *a fortiori* not those Kant sees as marked out for those concepts he calls 'categories'. They are useless for Kant's

purpose. They do not provide opportunities for *judgements* of any form, hence not for those of the forms our faculties provide for us. We must hope this is *not* Kant's notion. But I begin with it.

As Frege notes, it is a solecism to speak of *perceiving* (seeing, tasting, etc.) contents of consciousness. (1918: 67) A core idea has driven many philosophers to just this gaffe. Suppose that my experience on an occasion is such that, for a certain way there is for things to be, if things were that way, that experience would provide no means for me to tell that I was not experiencing, or in, the presence of F, but I would not in fact, be experiencing, or in the presence of F, but rather in the presence of, or experiencing, some ringer for that, G. For example, if I were in the presence of a very clever wax lemon, rather than a lemon, I could not tell from my visual, or auditory, or etc., experience on that occasion that this was so. Then, the idea is, I then experience something which I would be experiencing either way—whether in the presence of (or experiencing) F or G. (A possible addition: I *directly* experience at most that. But this goes beyond the present point.)

Call some such thing *H*. Suppose that there are circumstances which, if they obtained, would be ones in which, on the occasion now in question, I would not be experiencing *H*, but such that my (current) experience would provide no means for me to tell this. Then the argument repeats itself: There is something I would then be experiencing whether I were then experiencing *H*, or what I would be in these other circumstances. Call that *J*. Now the rest of the core idea: in experiencing what I do on that occasion—in the presence of F, say—I experience something, call it *K*, for which there are *no* circumstances in which, if they obtained, I would not be experiencing *that*.

Nothing which bore on whether, on that occasion, I was experiencing F rather than G (or vice-versa), and which was not then manifestly (for me) present in my experiencing what I then did bears on whether I am then experiencing *H*. By parallel, *nothing* not then, for me, manifestly (recognisably) present in my experiencing what I then did bears on whether I was then experiencing *K*. Such a terminus for this core idea is one notion of (an) appearance. *Such* a terminus is a content of consciousness in Frege's sense: whenever I perceptually experience *anything*, I experience (visually, aurally, etc.) some content of consciousness: nothing bears on whether *it* is present other than my experience being, for me, manifestly as it is; so it can *have* no career extensive enough to allow for such bearing.

Frege's brief is that where this line of thought terminates, so, too, does any possibility of *judgement*: there is *no way such* appearances might or might not be, and might be judged to be. In *very* brief synopsis, it is part of our ordinary understanding of

truth that what would be what a judgement was true of—what would be things being as they are according to it—is what *one* could see to be this; what bore on, or was borne on by, a judgement's truth is what *one* could see to do this (where bearing always extends beyond our present ken). *One* could not grasp what it would be for a (would-be) judgement about a content of consciousness to be true: for that one would need to see how that 'judgement' reached to relevant cases of the nonconceptual; for a content of consciousness, there is someone one would need to be to do this. So 'true' could apply to such a would-be judgement only on some new understanding of truth. But a new understanding of a concept is an understanding of what it would be *true* of. So there is no means for introducing what is needed here. So there can be no such judgements. (For elaboration see my 2007.)

Appearances as per above thus cannot validate what Kant wants validated. So he had better seek another notion. It needs to be one which makes appearances independent enough of what anyone is aware of in any experience of them to make room for judgement. As Frege put it, judging of an environment is exposing oneself to risk of error. Judging about appearances in the needed sense had better be exposing oneself to risk of error—except, perhaps, in those special cases in which what is judged is just what must be so for those concepts of concern to Kant to have those employments he sees marked out for them. At the same time, it must be that appearances, in this sense, could not be other than they must be for those concepts to have those employments. How is this to work?

To get judgement into the picture at all, a Kantian appearance must be something for *one* to experience (as *one* may experience Sid's sallow appearance) so as to be able to think the conceptual to reach *thusly* to them. They must have careers independent enough of us for them to bear, and be borne on, by things beyond our ken, so that a judgement that they are thus and so may be correct or not independent of our awareness, or acknowledgement, of its so being. If I judge that *this* berry is red, then, for Kant, for things to be as I judge is none other than for appearances to be a certain way. And, he tells us, appearances exist 'only relative to a subject' in whom, thanks to his senses, they 'inhere'. But, however that may *sound*, whether appearances are as I thus judge them is independent of what any, or all, of us is aware of, and of any attitudes we may have towards appearances. Such allows my posture towards (as it were) that berry to be a *judgement*.

But now we come to the second demand. For those concepts which concern Kant to have application to the objects of our experience—for those objects to admit of judgements of the forms we are saddled with—is for certain general temporal, locational, causal, principles to be true. However independent of us appearances'

careers may be, they must not be *so* independent as to leave room for the possibility that *these* principles are false. Now the question is: if they are independent enough of us to leave room for the berry *not* being red, even if everyone insists it is, what stops their independence at just this point?

One answer might be: whether *these* principles hold do not depend in any way on what a world is like. They do not say the world we judge of to be one way rather than another. They would hold no matter what. That would be to deny the antecedent in Kant's good idea. *If* a guarantee were needed that the world we inhabit is one of those admitting of judgements of those forms ours are bound to take, rather than one of those which do not, it would need to be the *world* that supplied that guarantee. But no such guarantee is needed. Frege and Tractarian Wittgenstein had this idea. It is not Kant's. For him it is *only* because we judge only of appearances that there are the guarantees he seeks. These supply the needed guarantee because of the special sort of career they lead. They are the right sort of thing to validate the principles Kant wants validated.

What then? One such principle might be (roughly): everything has a cause. Which entails: that berry's being red has a cause. The career of some appearances (or, if one allows oneself the conceit, of the berry) is independent enough of us to allow for the berry not being red, even though it may seem patent to us that it is. Why is it not independent enough of us to allow for its turning out that the berry's being red lacks a cause? In which case, since its having one follows from the principle, the principle is false. In outline, the story is supposed to go like this. We could not *experience* unless our faculties shaped, organised, our experience in a certain way. So *what* we experience—that on which the truth of our judgements turn—is so shaped. We experience *that* berry as *being red*. We might do that even if that berry were not red. It might just so seem to us. But not if that *object* were not a certain *way* for an object to be.

The idea seems a fundamental mistake. *Perhaps* we could not experience at all without experiencing what we do *as* given objects having given properties, or participating in causal networks, or whatever. It is another thing to say that what we experience *is*, in fact, all that. Those faculties shape *experiencing*. They are thus meant to give form to *what* we experience; just that form which those same faculties impose, ineluctably, on our thought. *Such* a form belongs to the conceptual—membership captured here by that 'as' after experience. The form reaches to a *range* of cases. Recall now *Kernsatz* 4. The form reaches in representing (or here presenting) the *particular* case—something nonconceptual as falling under a certain generality—falling within some particular range of cases. What does that does not provide, nor change, the nonconceptual itself. It merely stands in a particular way towards the nonconceptual anyway provided. What imposes form on a bit of the conceptual—its place within the

conceptual as a whole—imposes nothing on the nonconceptual itself. At best it makes some bit of the conceptual something which the nonconceptual recognisably instances. So if our faculties condemn us to experiencing the nonconceptual—as much of it as we do experience in experiencing Kantian appearances—as though it instanced such-and-such in the conceptual, that is without effect on whether what we thus experience in fact does so—particularly not if what I experience of the nonconceptual on an occasion—things appearing as they then do—is something there is for *one* to experience; if appearances thus belong to things. (Notions of appearance which do not allow this have been dealt with already.) So if there ever was a question as to whether the objects of our experience provide those employments to our (most general) concepts which were marked out for them, it *cannot* be answered by pointing to what shapes our experiencing of them.

Verificationism may seem to offer hope. Since we cannot but experience appearances as just what the categories call for, nothing we could ever learn from experience could count against the (now *thesis*) that appearances *are* just what is called for. But this, as we now know, is simply false. Perhaps no single experience could give evidence that all was not right with the categories. But experiences must all add up. Experiences in one area may show that all is not what it seems in another. Even given Kant's assumption about forms of experience, one may be unable to make experience as a whole coherent without supposing, even when it comes to categories, that what we experience things *as* is not always what they are, no matter how convincing a ringer for it it may be. If there is any way space and time seemed (globally) to be, such has proven so in their case.

So the point remains. A tract of reality is something nonconceptual; some tract of things being as they are. Our engagement with it may rest (necessarily) on capacities which present it to us, visually, aurally, etc., as shaped thus and so (if we can make sense of that idea). If an appearance were, necessarily, coeval with someone's awareness of it, if nothing beyond that could bear on whether the appearance were thus and so—*and* if, for all that, an appearance, in being as it was might, in fact, *be* thus and so, then perhaps the work of such capacities might *per se* force an answer to the question how an appearance really was. But once we give up those ideas, such remarks about the work of our capacities are without force for how things really are.

Those most general principles which must hold of the world we inhabit if there are to be just those opportunities for judgement Kant wants there to be cannot, it seems, be secured in the way Kant thought they could: by the mind's supplying the *nonconceptual* they would apply to. The most general shape of the judgement that Sid grunts makes its truth turn on a certain *object* being a certain *way*. So if there is to be such a thing to

judge, either truly or falsely, then there had better be objects and ways for them to be. If that is for the world to be a particular way, then capacities which bring the world in view cannot guarantee this. A deduction of the categories cannot take this route. There remains what Kant is right about: insofar as, or where, there is space for mind and world to fail to mesh in providing opportunity for judgements, the world we experience must show what opportunities there are. It remains to see what to make of this.

3. Kant: Generality: Kant worries about the most *general* shape of the conceptual on *some* notion of comparative generality. Kant's differs from Frege's. Their questions differ accordingly. A concept, for Kant, is a contribution to the shape thoughts within some particular region of thought take. The concept *grunts*, for example, contributes to the shape of such thoughts as that Sid grunts. It makes the truth of these thoughts turn, somehow, on who grunts. Kant's conception of relative generality is Cartesian. Most general concepts, for him, are most general forms of contribution a concept might make.

Descartes (21 May 1643) saw concepts as forming classes, each marked by a member with the following features: every concept in the class applies to anything this concept applies to; anything which fits any concept in the class fits this one. Here *a fits C* (C applies to *a*) means: it is an (intelligible) thought that *a* is C. So, for example, for Descartes the concept *extension* defines a class of concepts which apply to material bodies (or spatial things). So, for Kant, for example, there are the notions *object* (substance) and *property* (accident). These are, as Kant conceives them, most general ways of playing the role in a thought that the concept *grunts* does in the thought that Sid grunts, or the concept *man* in the thought that some men do. *Object* and *concept* are (for Kant) most general ways of forming that unity found in a certain kind of thought: of (a) particular object(s) that it is/they are such-and-such. They mark, in the Cartesian way, classes to which all less general ways of doing this belong. Most general concepts in this sense are what Kant calls *categories*. Categories thus form thoughts of the same kind (most general shape) as thoughts formed by concepts belonging to the classes they mark.

Frege thought differently about generality. He first gave 'pride of place' to the whole thought. So it is a thought which is more or less general than other thoughts. Starting from the thought that Sid grunts, we reach higher levels of generality by quantifying. There is, say, the thought that someone grunts, then the thought that someone does something, and, perhaps, so on, until eventually there is nothing left over which to quantify. We have then reached a most general thought. Kant lacked a clear notion of quantifying. For him, a thought in which the function performed by the

concept *grunts* was performed in the most general way would still have the same form as one in which that function was performed by the less general concept *grunts*, whereas for Frege a most general thought is of a different form than less general ones. Quantifiers make for that. For Frege, there is the question what most general thoughts 'say', that is, what is so according to them. That is for the next section. Kant does not quite ask that. His focus is on *concepts* rather than thoughts. Despite these differences, Kant and Frege agree on much about the most general.

Kant notices that a most general form of a thought is one some thoughts would have, with or without any given more specific version of that form. If evolution had omitted sloths, there would be no thought that sloths eat leaves. There would still be thoughts to the effect that some object is some way. Conversely, evolution might have graced us with thoughts of that form which, in fact, there are not. Which he takes to mean that whether there are thoughts of this general form can depend in no way on how the world *happens* to be. Further, he supposes, the world could not have taught us that there are such thoughts; nor conferred on us the ability to think them. Nor could it have taught us anything so simply by virtue of there being *some* such thoughts. Nor could the truth of such principles in any way turn on *what* the world provides to make thoughts true or false.

Kant thinks it needs to be shown that these most general forms of the conceptual (or the conceptual our mental equipment saddles us with) actually engage with the nonconceptual the world provides—that there are those opportunities for (forms of) judgement there thus would be. But such proof could not rest on anything that *need* not have been so. It certainly can, and had better, depend on how the world is. That was Kant's correct insight. But then this must be on how the world could not but be. This is what led Kant to look for that tract of reality which, we saw, there could not be. From which it already follows that there is *something* amiss with Kant's conception of the significance of maximal generality.

G. E. Moore noticed something wrong, though in discussing a somewhat different question: what it might be to *prove* there was an 'external world' (a response to a footnote in the *Critique* (B xl). In that context he considers a sample argument, from premises expressed in saying 'Here is a hand' (gesturing), and 'Here is another' (gesturing again) to the conclusion, 'There are (some) hands.' To make his discussion bear on what it might be to prove the 'objective validity' of the categories, we might change the sample, so that it begins from premises expressed in 'This hand is dirty' and 'So is this one' (same gestures) to the conclusion, 'Some hands are dirty.' This bears on a deduction of the categories in the same way Moore's actual sample bears on proving there is an 'external world'. *If* it is a good argument—if it *proves* its conclusion—

then it has been established that some objects have some properties—there are *some* ways things are which consist of some things (objects) being some given ways. So there are true things to think of the form formed by the categories *object* and *property*. Which is just what was to be proved in proving their objective validity.

Is the sample proof good? Again adapting Moore, it certainly is *if* we are entitled to start an argument from its premises—if *they* can be used to prove things. *This*, Moore tells us, is an occasion-sensitive affair. *Sometimes*, that *that* (demonstrated) hand is dirty may need, and then admit, of proof. Sometimes it does neither. All depends on the occasion on which question as to it might (or might not) arise—notably, here, on the occasion on which proving that some hands are dirty might be called for. But, Moore further insists, *if*, on an occasion such a premise cannot be proved—perhaps because it does not then admit of proof, because nothing would count as a proof of it—this does not *per se* mean that we are not entitled to start what would be a perfectly good proof from it.

Kant is explicit that our sample premises could not be ones on which to rest a proof of what he wants proved. (B 118/A 85-86) So, for purposes of giving that proof, we are not entitled to suppose what was stated in that ‘This hand is dirty’, or that ‘So is this one’. Nor is the problem about *those* hands in particular, or about being dirty. We would be equally not entitled to suppose, for these purposes, that that sloth is asleep, or that that crisp is greasy, and so on *ad inf.* Where there was any question of giving the proof that Kant wanted, *nothing* would be to be supposed as to the condition of any object. And/or nothing would be to be supposed as to whether sloths are objects, or crisps are objects, or hands are objects, and so on.

Such strictures, though, face a severe problem. If I am asked to prove that (at least some) crisps are greasy, I might produce an adequate sample of crisps, perhaps distribute them across the pages of your essay, and let you see for yourself. You could see that this, that, and the next, crisp are all greasy. Proof done. But suppose I am not allowed to suppose of any of these things that these are crisps, or of any of the ways they are that *this* is a greasy crisp. Suppose no such ‘assumption’ could, for our purpose, appear in a proof. Such may well rob me of proof. But it also may well leave us wondering just what it would be for something to be a crisp, or greasy—just what our question is a question about. If *this* is not a greasy crisp, what is? Now a parallel thing might be said of Kant’s proof in circumstances that would call for, or permit it. If nothing ‘empirical’ bears (conclusively) on what he wants shown, then just what would it be for there to be objects which were given ways? What Moore saw (however clearly) is that the right answer might be: we no longer know what this would be. At which

point proof is out of the question.

Moore has cast the insight in epistemological form. In that form it is about the occasion-sensitivity of proof., which he expresses in terms like these:

Some people would feel ... not merely that they want a proof of something which I haven't proved, but that they think that, if I cannot give such extra proofs, then the proofs that I have given are not conclusive proofs at all. And this, I think, is a definite mistake. ... Such a view can be shown to be wrong—though shown only by the use of premises which are not known to be true, unless we do know of the existence of external things. I can know things which I cannot prove ... (1939: 148)

What they really want is ... something like a general statement as to how *any* propositions of this sort ['Here is a hand'] may be proved. This, of course, I haven't given, and I do not believe it can be given: if this is what is meant by proof of the existence of external things, I do not believe that any proof of the existence of external things is possible. (1939: 147)

If there is a proof that (some of) Kant's categories have application to the world we experience, it will be on the model of Moore's sample. It will start from premises available as such where it is given, but liable to need proof on other occasions. Kant wants proof to be something else; starting from what does not rely on the right occasion for its status as a legitimate starting point. This, Moore tells us, is Kant's mistake; his misunderstanding of maximal generality. There *are* no such absolutely secure starting points. On the contrary, it is none too easy a thing to raise an intelligible question as to whether there are objects and properties. Moore's point is made in that conditional above. It is fine, for that purpose, if his sample does *not* prove what Kant wanted proved. It is idle, for his purpose, to debate that. Perhaps there is no such thing as a proof of that. Such would be fine by Moore's lights.

The insight, so cast, can strike the hard-nosed as concerning some mere liberal-arts notion of proof. Frege shows how it is far from that. We can start here:

The fundamental logical relation is that of an object falling under a concept; all relations between concepts can be reduced to this. (1892-1895: 25)

In present terms, any bit of the conceptual stands in two sorts of relations. It relates to the rest of the conceptual in given ways; and it relates (reaches) to the nonconceptual in a given way. Being red bears on being green and on being opaque in given ways. One might think of such things as assigning it a location within the conceptual. It also reaches to particular cases in given ways: *this* cabriolet, *this* tomato, are red. Frege's idea, in translation, is: for bits of the conceptual to bear on each other in given ways is for them each to reach in a given way to the nonconceptual.

Relations between bits of the conceptual are intrinsically between things each with a determinate reach to the nonconceptual. Structures independent of those reaches do not by themselves bring *any* bit of the conceptual into view. No bit, or region, of it is identified until enough is given both as to the internal structure of the conceptual and as to the reach of the things so structured. *That* is the deep point behind Moore's insight. That a whole range of related concepts reach to the nonconceptual as they do may constrain significantly just what *red* reaches to. Any fix on the structure of that range which leaves the reach of those other concepts open fixes nothing about the reach of *red*. So we will not have brought any bit of the conceptual into question—there is nothing as to whose features we will be asking—unless enough facts are fixed as to which cases are, or would be, ones to which this, or related, bits of the conceptual in fact reach. This is Wittgenstein's point about rule-following. Putnam makes the same point, cast as about interpreting (oxymoronically) an 'uninterpreted language'. (See (1977: 24), (1999: 14))

The nonconceptual for the conceptual to reach to is just that which the world supplies. So it may crucially to *what* bit of the conceptual we speak of that, e.g., *this* (say, this cherry, or cabriolet, being as it is) is a case of it—of, say, something being *red*. When it comes to proving the objective validity of the categories, Kant deprives us of *so* many such fixed points that we no longer know what is *meant* by a claim that there are objects with properties. Such is Moore's point in a more Fregean context.

Kant's project of showing the 'objective validity' of the categories starts by prising the conceptual off the nonconceptual more than one can while still having any of the conceptual to ask about. To ask Kant's questions, one would have to suppose it up for grabs how being a crisp, being a hand, being a sloth, and so on *ad inf*, reach to the nonconceptual. With that much up for grabs, none of the conceptual is in view. One *cannot* ask the question Kant meant to. That is what Moore says when he tells us there is

no such thing as the sort of proof Kant had in mind. This is not to say that one cannot ask questions about the objective validity of even the most general concepts; questions as to whether they correspond to any genuine opportunities for judging. But those questions will need to come into view differently than as Kant envisaged. Maximal generality does not mean what Kant thought it did. What he did not get right is how the structure of the conceptual bears on how the world bears on the structure of the conceptual. Frege (one again) will help us see just what that problem is.

4. Frege: Autonomy: Assurance of cooperation between the world and a given region of the conceptual with which we find ourselves saddled—that things admit of being thought of in the terms we apply—must appeal to *things*, to what there is to think about. So far, Kant was right. He failed to find anything thus to appeal to. Which *might* seem inevitable. What would provide assurance, it would seem, would need to be that the world is thus and so. That the world is thus and so belongs to the conceptual. If it assures us, then it belongs to the conceptual within our reach. But what we needed assurance of (at the most general level) was that the conceptual within our reach in fact applies to the world. So—it would *seem*—the most we could learn is that it applies if it applies. Which may make one ask anew whether such cooperation actually does need showing, or even whether we can even make sense of that idea. Perhaps no cooperation is called for. Frege thought this of maximally general structure.

The maximally general, for Frege, was a type of *thought*. His focus was on certain true ones: those he saw as unfolding the concept *true* (1918: 59). Quantification in mind, we might amend this to: the concepts *true* and *object*. The question whether the concepts *true* and *object* have ‘objective validity’—whether the most general shapes of the conceptual have application to things—can be cast as ones as to the truth of these thoughts. Frege’s answer to the questions so formulated is:

The question why, and with what right, we acknowledge a law of logic to be true, logic can answer only by reducing it to another law of logic. Where that is not possible, logic can give no answer. If we step away from logic, we may say: we are compelled to make judgements by our own nature and by external circumstances; and if we do so, we cannot reject this law—of Identity, for example; we must acknowledge it unless we wish to reduce our thought to confusion and finally renounce all judgement whatever. ... What is [thus] given is not a reason for something’s being true, but for our

taking it to be true. (1893/1967: 15)

The idea is: the truth of *these* thoughts could turn *only* on the shape of the conceptual itself. Since these thoughts are *most* general bit of the conceptual which *reached* to the nonconceptual—to particular cases—would have no place in them. So it matters not at all to *their* truth what it does or does not reach. So whether the world admits of judgements of the shapes these truths reflect can depend in no way on how things are. So nor can whether the conceptual which *is* so shaped, or contributes to such shapes, reaches (and (or) counter-reaches) all the way to the nonconceptual. Here there is *no such thing* as things being otherwise. So there is no call for (nor could there be) the substantive assurance Kant sought. Such, for Frege, are the fruits of maximal generality.

What is maximal generality? Start with the thought that Sid grunts. Its task is to fix how the world matters to a certain posture towards it. That task can be decomposed into subtasks. On one such decomposition, truth runs on how *Sid* is (in a particular way), and on how *grunting* is distributed. One can use ‘about’ to say this: the thought is about Sid and about grunting. We might now move to a new thought by replacing being about Sid, in this decomposition, with some quantification, moving, say, to the thought that someone grunts. The resulting thought would be more general. Another quantification, deleting another aboutness, might move us to yet higher generality—say, the thought that someone does something. And so on until (on this decomposition) there is no more aboutness to remove.

As Frege insists, a thought is decomposable in many ways; structured only relative to an analysis (1892: 199). Any decomposition of the thought that Sid grunts provides some way of moving to greater generality. A most general thought, by contrast, admits a decomposition which provides *no* route to greater generality. On that decomposition, there is nothing the thought is about, in the way that the thought that Sid grunts is about Sid, or is about grunting. The thought might be, say, that everything is something.

A way a thought is structured out of elements (on some decomposition) is a way its truth depends on how things are. For the thought that Sid grunts to decompose as per above is for its truth to turn on how things stand with Sid. A most general thought, decomposed as only such generality allows, has no elements: no objects, or ways to be it is about. It has only structure; so only this to make it true. How can *structure* do that? To coin a phrase, the structure of each thought reflects the structure of the whole system of thoughts (of the conceptual) from its own point of view. For the thought that Sid grunts to decompose as per above is for it to share something in common with a range of other thoughts—that Sid snores, that Sid drinks, that Sid wears torn t-shirts—and with a

range of thoughts that Ed grunts, that Ted does, etc. Dividing into such ranges is one way the realm of thought is structured (again, on *a* way of decomposing it).

Now the idea is: a thought of maximal generality reflects, through, and solely through, its structure, the most general structure of the realm of thoughts as a whole. In being structured as it is it represents that realm as structured thus and so; it is true just in case that realm *is* so structured. A law of logic, say, is expressible as: *If A&B then A*. Decomposed so as to exhibit its maximal generality, its structure would reflect the conceptual's being so shaped that for any two thoughts there is a (weakest) third, entailed by both and entailing each. Its structure would thus limn certain truth-preserving paths through the conceptual, from certain items to certain others.

(Perhaps thoughts cannot be thought of as forming some one definite totality. A most general thought might then reflect the structure of any large enough totality. Further, if a thought is structured only relative to a decomposition, so, too, in the same sense, for a realm of thoughts. So, too, perhaps, for *what* elements—thoughts—it decomposes into (what differences there are between one thought and another; how thoughts are to be counted as two once, or one twice). Most general thoughts might then be thought of as reflecting a structure a realm of thoughts would have on any decomposition, thinking of that structure as identified independent of what stands at its nodes.)

A law of logic is a most general truth. So its truth turns on nothing other than the conceptual itself being structured as it is. It turns on nothing external to the conceptual, so on nothing as to what nonconceptual there is. Since it depends on no such thing, there is no such thing as the world other than so as for the law to be true. Thus with most general truths in general. Nothing is asked of the world for their truth; so there is thus no such thing as things being other than they state. In Kantian terms, there is nothing the world (the nonconceptual) need do in order to provide opportunities for judgements shaped in the way the law reflects. There is no way for it not to provide such opportunity.

There is a simple way in which maximal generality itself may seem to make for such insulation from the course of events. Take a thought not so insulated—say, the thought that Sid's face is red. Decomposing one way, it is (in shorthand) about Sid's face and about being red. Being red reaches to particular cases (something's being as it is) in a particular way. Its participation in Frege's fundamental relation thus locates it within the conceptual. Conversely, its location there reflects its reach. Does it, in so reaching, reach Sid's face? By this location, the conceptual speaks to how the nonconceptual matters to this. (Other decompositions may speak in other, but harmonious, ways with

this.) Its location in the conceptual speaks equally to how the nonconceptual matters to the truth of a most general thought. Here, though, what it says is that *no* way is a way this matters. So, the thought is, there is no way the nonconceptual *could* matter to the truth of any most general thought. *If* so, Kant was mistaken: we need (and could have) *no* assurance from the *world* that thought's most general shape is fit for representing what we encounter.

We started from the thought that the availability of things for us to judge was a cooperative enterprise: the world provided things of which to judge; our minds equipped (or saddled) us with preparedness to see them—if they but exist. We are such as for our thought about things to take a certain shape; at the most general, a shape it could not but take. *Judgement* can take that shape if, *but only if*, the world cooperates in providing things so shaped to judge. Kant sought assurance that it did. Frege's idea is that, at the most general level, there is no work for the world to do. What of the mind's part of the bargain? Frege's thought is: if the world mattered to the most general shape of the conceptual, the conceptual itself would have to tell us *how* it did; *what* it tells us (and could not but) is, 'In *no* way'; so there is no such thing as the conceptual having any other most general shape than what it does. We may still think of ourselves as saddled, by our design, with thinking of this shape. But now this is a matter of psychology, or design, making us one thing or another only so far as it makes us *thinkers* rather than, say, vegetables. Whatever, if anything, we may thank for being thinkers, as for the most general shape of our thought, there is only *one* thing to be in being that. Such is *one* way of reading this idea:

Anyone who has once acknowledged a law of truth has by the same token acknowledged a law that prescribes the way in which one ought to judge, no matter where, or when, or by whom the judgement is made. (1893/1964: 15)

If Frege is right, Kant's problem about maximal generality disappears. But I will argue that, though Frege is right about much of the above, this last consequence is not right. Neither the world (the nonconceptual) nor our minds cancels out in this way.

5. Having Structure: A most general thought, on our present notion, is so by virtue of the decomposition it admits of. As Frege conceives things, it belongs to a particular structured realm, to which *all* thoughts belong. Its structure reflects a specific structure

in that realm; one permeating every region; part of all things there are to think, no matter what about. Such a thought has nothing but its structure to make it true. So, the idea is, for it to be true is nothing other than for its structure to reflect the most general structure that realm has. So, the thought goes, its truth is hostage to nothing but that structure being the structure that it is. So if it is true, there is no more such a thing as it not being than there is such a thing as that structure being other than the structure that it is. On this way of thinking, one might equally say: for such a thought to be *false* would be for this realm to be structured other than it is; which would just be for it to be a different realm; but such a thought is hostage to no more than the structure of that realm to which it does belong. A thought that if A and B, then A might be such a thought. Call it G. By this line, there is no such thing as things being other than as G represents them.

The thought that Sid grunts occupies this realm. There would have been no such occupant had Sid's parents been stranded on the tarmac rather than conjugally engaged that fateful night. The structure of the realm would then have been different. But, the idea is, its most general structure would remain untouched. It would still have been the realm of all the thoughts there would have been. But, the idea is, no realm without that most general structure could possibly have been the realm of all the thoughts there were, no matter what. Why should this be?

There seems a confusion in the above line of thought. The structure a domain *has*—some structure *for* a domain to have—would not be *that* structure while structuring things differently than it does. There is no such thing as that. Trivially, *if* a domain has a given structure, then no domain structured differently *is* that one. But, as the thought that Sid grunts shows, this is not yet to say that a domain could not have been structured differently (or turn out to be differently structured than we take it to) while, for all that, remaining *that* domain. The domain of all thoughts includes, but might not have, the thought that Sid grunts. This is one way of identifying domains. It is, presumably, the way of interest if the question is what thought could not but have been.

Just what is a most general thought committed to? A Euclidean parallel postulate defines, in part, the structure of Euclidean geometry. There is no such thing as Euclidean geometry being such that that postulate does not hold. The postulate *can* be understood to say something about the geometry of space, or of certain paths present in space. So understood, there is such a thing as it being false. Understood one way, there is no such thing; understood another, there is. Now, to just what is a most general law of thought committed?

We might think of a sub-region of thought as having a most general proprietary

structure. Think of a sub-region as consisting of all thoughts about being one or more of some specified set of ways there are for something to be. (A sub-region may be relative to a way of decomposing thoughts, or may consist of all thoughts decomposable as about these things.) Then the most general proprietary structure of the region would be what was reflected in all thoughts (decomposable as) about nothing other than those specified ways for something to be. Suppose that space just flatly is Euclidean. Then that parallel postulate may reflect the most general proprietary structure of that region of thought—thoughts about paths in space. Now recall the idea that the location of a thought within the conceptual dictates how the world (the nonconceptual) may speak to—what bears on—its truth. For a most general thought, what it says is that there is *no* way. So, too, for most general proprietary thoughts. If the parallel postulate reflects this most general proprietary structure, then its position in the conceptual tells us that nothing in the nonconceptual speaks to its truth. But, we know, the nonconceptual *can* speak to the truth of the postulate, understood as a proposition about paths in space. What we thus need to ask is what the conceptual tells us in telling us that no way is the way the nonconceptual speaks to the truth of some (locally) most general thought.

The conceptual is made up of all ways there are of reaching to the nonconceptual so as to bring the particular case (things, or some thing(s), being as they are) under some particular generality; bringing it within some range of cases. The realm of thoughts is that part of the conceptual made up of things of the form of a thought. For a realm to be the realm of thoughts would be for it to encompass precisely all the things there are to think (if that is a determinate notion). It would encompass all, and no more than, all those opportunities for judging that the world in fact supplies (if there is such a thing as doing that). Kant's worry was whether such-and-such structure for a domain to have was in fact the structure of that realm. Frege's answer is that nothing could qualify as that realm—as what encompassed precisely what that realm would—unless it had that structure (or Frege's reworked version of it). The idea was that Kant's worry should, on reflection, be seen as bogus: there is no substantive question as to whether the relevant realm has the relevant structure. But that what would encompass precisely the above has that structure for a realm to have seems a substantive claim. Nothing so far shows it not to be. So Kant's anxiety has not yet been allayed.

Moreover, we have seen room for a confusion. Whatever the most general structure of the relevant realm would be, it would tell us that there is no way which is the way the nonconceptual bears on whether that *is* the most general structure of that realm. But that cannot mean that there is no such thing as the nonconceptual so bearing. If this seems a paradox (as well it might), that simply means that we have yet to learn how to understand what structure says (or how it speaks).

The *Tractatus*, adapts Frege's idea to particular sub-regions of thought—with the explicit aim of allaying one sort of Kantian anxiety. The exemplary sub-region is mechanics. The adaptation starts from this Kantian theme:

All propositions such as the law of causation, the law of continuity in nature, the law of least expenditure in nature, etc., etc., all these are a priori intuitions of possible forms of the propositions of science. (6.34)

A priori intuitions are what we are saddled with. To be so saddled is to see one's thought as structured in a particular way. Does the world admit of being so thought of? Does it articulate into events such that to be one just *is* to have a cause? Wittgenstein's idea is: there is no such thing as it failing to; nothing it must be so to admit. This just adapts Frege's idea to most general proprietary structures. His aim is to still a Pyrrhonian worry Kant sometimes suffers—as here:

Since we cannot treat the special conditions of sensibility as conditions of the possibility of things, but only of their appearances, we can indeed say that space comprehends all things that appear to us as external, but not all things in themselves, by whatever subject they are intuited, or whether they be intuited or not. For we cannot judge in regard to the intuitions of other thinking beings, whether they are bound by the same conditions as those which limit our intuition and which for us are universally valid. (A27/B43)

Grass *appears* green to us. But who knows, Sextus asks, how it appears to a cow? Best avoid commitment as to its *being* green. The world *appears* to articulate into events, each with a cause. But who knows how it appears to other thinkers? Best avoid commitment as to how it really is (or as to how anything other than appearances really is). Kant's worry, the *Tractatus* tells us, is bogus. No cause to confine commitment to any special tract of reality.

The *Tractatus* views a sub-region of thought as a particular system for describing the world—something which generates a particular range of structurally related descriptions to give of it. Its most general proprietary structure is what gives each of

those descriptions the particular content it has; makes the world matter to its truth in a particular way. What merely reflects the structure of that system has no such content. There is no way the world matters to it. It says nothing about the world.

Wittgenstein offers a comparison. Suppose we stretch a net over a white canvas with black spots on it. We can then describe the canvas by describing what each cell in the net covers either as black or as white. If the net is coarse enough, some cells may be part black, part white. Call them that. A finer net would then allow us more exact descriptions. For some degree of fineness, each cell will be either entirely black or entirely white. Such a net provides a *complete* description of the canvas. (See 6.341.) The cells may be triangular, or square, or hexagonal, or etc. Saying so says nothing about the canvas. The truth of what one *thus* says does not depend on how the canvas is. Similarly, the thoughts which define a system, as above, concern only the shape of that system, say nothing about the world. So there is no such thing as things being other than they represent it.

So Kant's Pyrrhonian moment is defusable. A parochial design for *thinking* makes certain systems of descriptions available. Other thinkers may have different systems available than we do. But any system there is to be endowed with is shaped as it is independent of *anyone's* psychology. So whether *our* systems exploit genuine opportunities for judging does not depend on whether our psychology happens to be benevolent. There is no such thing here as malevolence. So long as some coherent system is available to us, the *only* way of our going wrong in judging is in judging something it generates which, in fact, is just not so.

Now, though, the *Tractatus* story takes a peculiar twist. At 6.34 Wittgenstein calls the law of causation a *proposition*—oddly, since he has just told us (6.32), “The law of causality is not a law but the form of a law” (in a note, “any law of a certain sort.”), and is about to tell us,

If there were a law of causality, it might run: “There are natural laws.”

But that clearly cannot be said: it shows itself. (6.36)

So a law of causality, though an a priori intuition reflecting the most general structure of mechanics, is *not* a relatively most general true thought—since not a thought at all. To adapt *Frege's* idea, Wittgenstein thus shifts to talk of Newtonian mechanics. It is this of

which he says,

Mechanics determines a form of description by saying: All propositions in the description of the world must be obtained in a given way from a number of given propositions—the mechanical axioms. It thus provides the bricks for building the edifice of science, and says: Whatever building you want to build, do it, somehow, with these, and only these, bricks. (6.341)

The fact that it can be described by Newtonian mechanics asserts nothing about the world ... (6.342)

But Newtonian mechanics is a theory, not a region. For it to *contain* a thought is for it to represent things to be as they are according to that thought—to commit. For a *region* to contain a thought is simply for there to be such a thing to think. A region defined by *mass* and *velocity*—mechanics—contains all thoughts, both true and false, about mass and velocity. *It* commits to the truth of none. It is the wrong sort of thing for that. Two different senses of 'contain'. Nothing *could* be Newtonian mechanics which did not commit to what Newtonian mechanics does. No region would have contained the thought that Sid is gaining mass rapidly around the midsection but for that circumstance on that fateful night. Some region would still have been mechanics. That Newtonian mechanics contains a certain law is not enough for that law to be true. Mechanics contains some most general proprietary thoughts. Some of these may count as laws of Newtonian mechanics (which might, after all, count as still expressible, even though *not* true).

For a region to contain a most general thought is not enough for the thought to be true. That thought must, further, reflect the region's most general structure—as the thought G does for the whole realm of thought: its truth reflects certain truth-preserving paths within that realm. Whether a thought reflects a region's most general proprietary structure depends on what that structure is. As we know from the case of Newtonian mechanics, what that structure is *is* liable to depend on how things are. Counter to what the *Tractatus* suggests, that it is such-and-such *does* say something about the world. For the structure of a region to make a thought true is *not* just for that thought to reflect such-and-such structure there is for a region to have. We may share Wittgenstein's sense that Kant's Pyrrhonian worry is bogus. But we have not yet seen how to identify what

makes it so.

So Wittgenstein's adaptation of Frege's idea collapses, as he was soon to realise. Pressing two of Frege's own ideas also yields collapse. The first is that a thought is structured only relative to an analysis. A maximally general thought is one which *admits* of an analysis on which it is not about any object or way for one to be. Such does not exclude it also admitting of analyses on which it *is* about such things. The second is: laws of logic unfold the concept *true*. That concept forms a packet with *judging* and *thought*: truth is success at judging's central aim; a thought a particular way for the world to decide such success or failure. So, for all its maximal generality, a law of logic *can* be seen as about this packet, or its bits. These bits reach to the conceptual in substantive ways. *What* they reach depends on what there *is* for them, or their contraries, to reach to. (The concept) *judging* reaches just that range of cases which would be ones of someone judging such-and-such. For each such case, there is a bit of the conceptual: that which someone thus judged. That this concept thus populates the realm (the conceptual) it itself inhabits is a special feature of it; just that which permits thoughts about it most general status—allows them to be seen as about nothing. But would it, *whatever* there was for it to reach to, thus populate the conceptual with items which gave the whole realm of thoughts that structure reflected in those thoughts we recognise as laws of logic?

Frege sees all propositional logic as contained in a particular aspect of what a posture must be to count as judging: hostage *solely* to things being as they are. The idea is: if one is hostage in that way, there are only two ways for the world to speak. One may *escape* error (the world may *be* one the posture is right for); or one may succumb to it. For any such posture, his idea is, there is another, which would succumb to error just where that first would escape it, escape it just where that first would succumb. And so on through all the truth-functional ways thoughts might relate. Which imposes a structure in the realm of thought which the laws of truth (propositional logic) reflect.

By this idea, if there is the thought that Sid grunts and the thought that Pia snores, then there is a third, true just where each of those two is, entailing both, and entailed by any other with these properties. So if one can be hostage solely to the world in the first way, and can be hostage solely to it in the second, then one can also be hostage to it in the third. Is there simply no such thing as things being otherwise in this respect? Could there not have been (such a thing as) two ways of being hostage to the world such that the one could be (or count as) open to a thinker only where the other was (or counted as) not? As it were, we can think of the world as dividing into the grunTERS and the not, or as dividing into the snorERS and the not; but we cannot make sense of it dividing up both ways at once. Perhaps no such thing could have been. But if not, that cannot be

simply because the laws of truth reflect such-and-such structure *for* a domain to have, nor even *just* because they reflect that structure which, in point of fact, the domain does have.

Frege's tactic thus does not silence Kant's worry. Rather, it calls a new problem to our attention. If Frege's laws of truth do reflect the most general structure of the conceptual—we have no reason to think otherwise—then there is something that structure says as to what might bear on them: no way for the nonconceptual to be is a way which would. But we cannot conclude simply from this that this would have been the most general structure of the conceptual no matter what. To make sense of this situation, we need to turn to Putnam.

6. Putnam's Master Insight: As Kant saw, mind and world *jointly* make judgements available to us. So where assurance was needed that some judgements we *take* to be available—part of the way we think of things—really *are* available, that assurance must come from the world. Kant just did not see what would be the *world's* bearing on this.

Frege saw that the most general structure of the conceptual (or of thoughts) makes no provision for the world (the nonconceptual) to bear on whether the conceptual *has* that structure. It provides no *way* for the nonconceptual to bear on this. For, whatever that structure might be, there are thoughts which are no more than its reflection; which require no more for their truth than that the conceptual be so structured. These, then, would be true no matter which ways for things to be were instanced by things being as they are—insofar as it was open to the nonconceptual either to instance them or not. This just is what it would be for them to *be* most general. A location within the conceptual shows how, if at all, what occupies it depends, for being instanced, on how things are. The structure of the conceptual as a whole, whatever it may be, concedes no bearing of what does so depend on any most general truth. Tractarian Wittgenstein extended this point to most general structures of particular domains of thought—e.g., thoughts about mechanics, or colours.

Frege read his correct point as meaning that the nonconceptual simply could have *no* bearing on whether the conceptual was structured this way or that. Conversely, on this reading, that the conceptual is structured as it is says *nothing* about the world (nothing as to *what* nonconceptual there is). As to the most general structure of the conceptual, as Frege understood the point, there is no such thing as things being otherwise; nothing it ever *could* be for the conceptual not to be so structured. The *Tractatus* extended this understanding to more specialised domains of discourse. Such, if right, would mean there could *never* be call for the kind of assurance Kant sought (nor

any prospect of providing it).

But we need not read Frege's good point that way. Putnam shows why it would be wrong to. He shows, too, how else to read it. To begin, if the conceptual *is* structured thus and so, then for no way there *is* for things to be (or not) does its being so structured turn on whether things *are* that way. So if the world *were* to bear on whether the conceptual is structured *thus* or rather *so*, we would have to look elsewhere to find *how* it thus bears.

We can find a place to look starting with Moore's good idea and developing it as Putnam does. The good idea: there is no conceptual about which you are asking whether it is this way or that—no question being asked at all—unless enough is fixed about the *reach*, as well as the location, of enough of its denizens. Does *being red* have a reach? What way for a thing to be *is* its being red? Generally, one had better be able to answer that with, '*This*, for example.'

Developing this point we can insist, for a start, that here enough is not (usually) *everything*. It is enough for it to be *being red* that is in question that, anyway, it reaches to *these* cases, and (presumably) relates in *these* ways to other ways for a thing to be. (The ways need not just be entailments. Whether something is red *bears* on whether it is green, even I being red does not, absolutely, exclude being green.) Now there is a sort of question one can ask about the conceptual. Given that it is, anyway, such-and-such that is in question—endowed with whatever identifies it as that which is in question—what else would be so of it? How would concepts which, anyway, reached *thus* be located within the conceptual? How would concepts which, anyway, were recognisable as ones of, say, being red, or moving at a certain rate, reach to what emerges as what there is to reach to—to that which there is in fact to *be* things being red, or not red, say? The questions would be ones of what *fit* with what, what else it would be *right* to join with, anyway, reaching, or being located, in such-and-such way.

This much of an idea points already to the deep point Putnam makes as follows:

The distinction between statements necessary relative to a body of knowledge and statements contingent relative to that body of knowledge is an important methodological distinction ... For the difference between statements that can be overthrown by merely conceiving of suitable experiments and statements that can be overthrown only by conceiving of whole new theoretical structures ... is of logical and methodological significance, and not

just of psychological interest. (1962: 248-249)

[In (1962)] I argued that to identify “empirical” and “synthetic” is to lose a useful distinction ... which I proposed to draw ... as follows: call a statement *empirical relative to a body of knowledge B* if [then-] possible observations ... would [then] be *known* to disconfirm the statement ...

If I were writing (1962) today, I would alter the terminology ... Since a “body of knowledge”, in the sense in which I used the term, can contain ... false statements, I would replace “body of knowledge” with “conceptual scheme.” And I would further emphasize the nonpsychological character of the distinction by pointing out that the question is not a *mere* question of what some people can imagine ... it is a question of what, given a conceptual scheme, one *knows* how to ... disconfirm. (1990: 251)

With this we can fill in the Moorean schema. Different occasions provide different opportunities for identifying the conceptual, or regions of it—different ways of doing this. (Just so that the conceptual itself does not provide the wanted guidance here.) Correspondingly, they provide different questions to be raised as to whether what is so identified is, furthermore, thus and so; different thoughts to the effect that it *is*, or is not, so shaped; thus different questions of the general form just sketched, on each of which the world (things being as they *are*) is liable to bear, differently according as the questions differ. With opportunity comes limits. No occasion provides opportunities for raising such questions for *every* feature the conceptual may or may not have. Something must remain fixed in order for there to be possibility for other things to vary (for them to come into question at all).

It is a familiar idea that in order to think of such-and-such that it is thus and so, one needs acquaintance with that of which one thinks this, whatever adequate such acquaintance would be. Our acquaintance with the nonconceptual, on an occasion for thinking of the shape of the conceptual, provides what is thus needed. The nonconceptual reaches, not to *objects*—the participants in Frege’s fundamental relation of falling under—but rather to particular cases of things being as they are, or some thing as it is—to that which is, e.g., Sid’s being a grunter, or that rose’s being red. Our acquaintance with *how* things are in being as they are may vary from occasion to

occasion (usually in a temporally progressive way).

Given such acquaintance brings a particular grasp of what there is *for* the conceptual to reach, or counter-reach, to; thus particular ways of identifying that which *might* reach (or counter-reach) to such-and-such in that; thus particular questions to raise, and thoughts to think, as to what else would belong, by way of reach, or location, to that which is so identified. On different such acquaintance there would be different such thoughts for us to think. Pending suitable acquaintance *these* thoughts are not available to us; pending some such suitable acquaintance, no thoughts to that effect at all. But for that with which we would thus be acquainted, there would be no such thoughts full stop.

Given the nonconceptual we come to see there is, we can ask how what was recognisably a notion of velocity, or mass (or of having velocity V , or mass M) might reach to it; thus how what so reached would be located within the general structure of thought about mechanics; how reach and shape could fit together here. There would not *be* this question but for what we thus see there is for thought to reach. Nor are there any such questions without a nonconceptual which, on suitable acquaintance, would make for them.

For any structure for the conceptual to have, there is a range of thoughts whose truth turns on nothing other than whether the conceptual is so structured. If it is, then their truth does no more than reflect that fact. One way to understand necessity would be such that a proposition is necessary if it merely reflects the structure the conceptual in fact has. For a proposition to have this status is for there to be no other proposition, not itself a mere reflection of that structure, on whose truth its truth turns. So there is no way for things to be, instanced or not according to how things are, which bears on this proposition's truth, given the way things are; so no such thing as the way the nonconceptual matters to its truth. Such is how things are; which is not to say that there is no such thing as things having been otherwise.

There is also, Putnam shows us, another possible understanding of necessity. A given acquaintance with the world makes only certain questions available as to how the conceptual is organised, and as to how it relates to the nonconceptual. For some features of the conceptual, that acquaintance makes no thought available as to the presence or absence of that feature, whose truth turns, in any determinate way, on how things are—on what nonconceptual the world provides. A given acquaintance, say, provides no way for a thought to be about *being red* on which being red may or may not be being coloured. Equally, it may provide no way for a thought to be about *being red* on which being red may or may not be what is instanced by *this* (towel, say) being as it is. From

the vantage point of such a notion of necessity we can get a view of how, for all of what is so of the first notion, still, how things are may matter to whether the conceptual is structured *thus*, or rather *so*.

We thus gain a new understanding of Kant's problem. First, mind and world *may* fail to cooperate in providing the opportunities for judgement there had seemed to be (on a certain acquaintance with the world). But *our* minds endow us with *flexible* members of the partnership; forms of thought which give the world a say in how the conceptual within *our* reach is, in fact, organised, and where it reaches. There is no *one* form of judgement to which the world must be receptive if our concepts are to have the employments in fact marked out for them. The point holds at any level of generality.

Second, there is something it takes to make for an *intelligible* question (that is, a question at all) as to whether the world is hospitable to this or that form of judgement. It takes special conditions for there to be something one is asking in asking whether being red excludes being green (or at least thus asking something to which how the world is matters). Enough must be fixed as to how enough concepts anyway reach—not just most general concepts, but those less general ones which are their specialisations (not just, e.g., being coloured, but being red). If we think of the problem as Kant did, it can seem that what we want assurances for is, of ways in which we could not but think, so to which we could not but take the world to be hospitable, that these are forms of judgement to whose correctness the world is, in fact, equipped to speak. Here I see Putnam as lining up with Moore: if we reflect on what it would be for there to be an intelligible question as to whether this is so, we can see that there is none.

If the question is whether this rose is red, the conceptual itself—the shape it in fact has—is our guide to when an answer would be correct. *It* fixes how the world matters to correctness here. Such is its role. If the question is what *else* would be so of the conceptual if, anyway, such-and-such is—that sort of question which can make the conceptual's shape itself negotiable—the conceptual itself provides no such guidance. Newtonian mechanics does not tell us what bears on whether its most general shape is the most general shape of mechanics. *Mutatis mutandis* for whatever the most general shape of mechanics may be. What, then, does fix how questions of this form are to be answered? The standard of correctness for answer to such questions is, Putnam tells us, no more than is to be found in what a reasonable person would think. (This is clear in 1962. See also 1975: 235 and 2002, especially I.2, II.7.) We share a sense for what the right answer to such a question would be. The right answer is what, to such a sensibility, would be correct. One *could* insist that it is not gold if it is not yellow. But—as Leibniz also insisted—for most purposes, at least, that would not be a reasonable view of what

we were talking about all along when we identified certain items in the world as gold.

Guidance by the conceptual—standards imposed by its shape itself—can seem comforting, as opposed to mere guidance by some sensibility we share (perhaps in being the sort of thinker we are) since the former guidance seems guidance entirely independent of anything to do with our psychologies, in comparison to which the latter is *mere* guidance by our inclinations, which, as such, subverts that very objectivity which makes judgement *judgement*—thus subverts the very idea that there is a *fact* as to, e.g., whether to be gold is to be yellow.

The illusion is unmasked in a point already made. The rose is red only if its being as it is is something being red; only if *being red* reaches to particular cases in a particular way. If we conceive of the conceptual as with a shape which remains constant no matter how its denizens which reach at all reach the nonconceptual there is, such shape determines *nothing* as to where *being red* reaches. Perhaps if it is red, then it is not green. Perhaps a host of other things of that sort. But, independent of where being green reaches, this ties our hands not at all when it comes to whether to call the way that rose is red. The conceptual is our guide to what would count as something being *red* only insofar as bits of it have given reaches. As to the reach of that bit, *being red*, there is what we would (or would be prepared to) count as something being red. There is no other standard by which what would *really* count as that—as being that very way I have just identified—might diverge from this. The concepts *we* identify reach just where one who shared our sense for such things would see them reaching. Putnam (1977, 1999) has this point in view in dismantling the (illusory) project of interpreting an (oxymoronically) uninterpreted language. In (1999), commenting on (1977), he says,

I went on to say, “to speak as if *this* were my problem, I know how to use my language,, but, now, how shall I single out an interpretation? is nonsense. Either the use of the language *already* fixes the ‘interpretation’ or *nothing* can.

I still agree with those *words*. But I would say them in a rather different spirit now. The difference has to do with how one hears what is involved in an appeal to “use.” ... On [the] alternative picture ... [i]f one wants to describe the use of the sentence “There is a coffee table in front of me,” one has to take for granted its internal relations to ... facts such as that one perceives coffee tables ... [in] the sense in which to see a coffee table is to see that it is a coffee table ... (1999: 14)

For talk to be about *coffee tables*, there being a coffee table before one must be the sort of thing one suitably *au fait* with things can recognise (e.g.) by sight; the sort of thing a case of which one of us could recognise. I return to this in section 8. (See, too, my forthcoming.) What we *say* of a rose in calling it red is fixed by no less than our sense for what particular cases would be ones of *being red* being instanced.

Our minds are accommodating. We can *see* how the world could be hospitable or not to thought of a given shape. We are prepared to learn from the world how to shape our thought to fit it. We can recognise such lessons. What we *can* see here—room for gaps between how it seems we can, or must, think of things and how they may, in fact, be thought of—is just what can make Kant's problem *seem* to arise. At which point we need to note: what we can see is how the world might, *recognisably*, cooperate other than we thought it did in providing opportunities for judgement.

It takes special conditions—conditions of *acquaintance* with the world—to provide intelligible questions as to whether the world admits of being thought of in thoughts of such-and-such shape. Intelligible questions: that is, any questions at all. There is not, always, and automatically, such a *question* for just any form of thought—e.g., as to whether the world admits of thoughts governed by conjunction elimination. For to understand such a question—to identify what question it is—one must see how the relevant region of the conceptual—that of which the question is asked—is to be identified. The *world*—the nonconceptual—must furnish the opportunities for such identification that there are. Without them there is no more such a question than there would be thoughts about *Frege* without Frege. Such is Putnam's unfolding of what Moore began.

In asking for a 'deduction', Kant meant to raise a question asked from no perspective on the world; a question there would be to ask independent of whatever acquaintance one might have with it. Such is a *transcendental* question, answered by some special transcendental thing to say. Putnam helps us see why there are no such questions.

Frege cast that point in one way: from no perspective, there is just the conceptual there in fact is (after the world has had its say). *That* provides no way for the world to bear on whether it *is* the conceptual there is. So it provides no way for a Kantian question to arise. Putnam gives the right form to Frege's insight. The trouble lies in the idea of the transcendental, not in the unintelligibility of the very idea of the conceptual having been shaped otherwise. Neither the nonconceptual, nor our minds, are *simply* irrelevant to the conceptual having those shapes we can identify in it.

Moore glimpsed that same point in a different form. A transcendental perspective on the world cancels out that very acquaintance with it which allows thinking about any given bit of the conceptual at all. It deprives us of the possibility of saying of *what* we are asking whether it has ‘employments marked out for it’. Acquaintance with the nonconceptual is needed for bringing the conceptual in view. Putnam shows us the essential role of such acquaintance in a cognitive economy.

Putnam’s way with Kant’s problem leaves distinct sorts of questions to be asked, not of each thought, but each, sometimes, of some. For it is not as though the conceptual is *unstructured*. We cannot so think of it. Nothing requires us to. So there will always be questions as to some thoughts’ truth, or what bears on that, which are answered simply in unfolding concepts (to borrow Frege’s term) as we can see them to unfold. For any shape the conceptual may have, there will be thoughts which reflect it: their truth demands no more than that the conceptual *be* so shaped. Correspondingly, in given circumstances, the truth of *some* thoughts is settled just by what we can *see* the shape of the conceptual to be. Does a thought expressing conjunction elimination reflect the shape of the conceptual? What would it be like for it not to? *Is* there a question which brings into question the conceptual’s having *that* shape? Not at present. (There is, of course, such a thing as merely *thinking* one sees such things; as one may only *think* he sees a lemon on the sideboard.)

Second, there are also sometimes questions as to some thought’s truth, or what bears on it, which are only answered by what decides whether the conceptual *does* have such-and-such structure rather than some other. No given structure for the conceptual to have supplies an answer to them. Here it is for the nonconceptual—or what we can see there is of it—to speak, through the bearing on such questions we could recognise it to have. For all of which, where the nonconceptual provides us with such questions, there remain those of the first sort.

Finally, as the conceptual is fixed on an occasion, there are questions as to whether this or that bit of it—the rose being red, say—is instanced by the nonconceptual there is; where it is for the conceptual which is in view on that occasion to show how the nonconceptual—things being as they are—bears on whether this is so.

That the nonconceptual may bear on how the conceptual itself *is* shaped leaves genuine projects of unfolding concepts; plenty for a *philosopher* to do. Putnam shows how to conceive such bearing. Projects of unfolding concepts are left standing (within their proper bounds).

7. Putnam: Logic: The conceptual *has* structure: thoughts which reflect it ask no more

for their truth. That is one sense in which how things are has no bearing on them. But this is not the only sense in which the world may or may not bear on what is so. Structure the conceptual *has* need not be structure it would have had no matter what.

If, with Frege, we view laws of logic as *thoughts*, then they are true (absolutely) most general ones, hence reflect the most general structure in any structuring of a domain of thoughts. They have nothing but their structure to make them true—that is, as noted, on some decomposition they admit of—what could not be so if their truth turned essentially on whether things were *thus*, or rather *so*. So the conceptual, structured as it is, leaves no way for the nonconceptual to bear on them. But, by the master thought, this does not mean that there could be no such thing as the nonconceptual having such bearing.

Nor, by that thought, does this mean that the nonconceptual *does* bear (so bear *thus*) on whether some such most general thought is true. There can be such bearing on where there is enough conceptual to hold fixed while leaving open whether *such* conceptual would form (part of) a system of which that most general thought—say, an expression of conjunction elimination—would hold. As things stand, we can find no such thing to hold fixed. So there is simply no question for us to raise as to the truth of conjunction elimination, or thought for us to think in thinking the conceptual to be so structured, on which the nonconceptual would bear. We cannot say that the future *could* not make such thoughts available. But nor could we say what they might be. Thus Putnam tells us,

What I *am* inclined to keep ... is the idea that logical truths do not have negations that we (presently) understand. It is not ... that we can say that the theorems of classical logic are “unrevisable”; it is that the question “Are they revisable?” is on which we have not yet succeeded in giving a sense. (1990: 256)

Saying that logic or arithmetic may be “revised” does not have a sense, and will never have a sense, unless some concrete piece of theory building and applying *gives* it a sense. ... Knowing the “sense” of a statement (or a question) is knowing how the words are used in a particular context; this may turn out to be knowing that the words had a “different meaning” but this is relatively rare. ... I may know the meaning of words, in the sense of knowing their “literal meaning” and not understand what is said on a particular

occasion of the use of those words. (Ibid)

Making sense, in some loose liberal-arts sense of 'sense', might require saying what is *reasonable*, rather than simply saying something to be so. Putnam is, here, no liberal-artist. Making sense is simply saying something whose truth depends, in some identifiable way, on how things are; thus saying something evaluable as true or false. Nor does adding a modal to a non-thought yield a thought. A question (on which the world might bear) as to whether conjunction elimination holds would demand new understandings of such things as *being a judgement*, or *being true*; understandings we cannot, from our perspective on the world, so much as envision.

One need not read Frege's insight quite as Frege did. A feature for a thought to have—reaching to *this*, not *that*, say—gives a sense to 'same' in which a thought may be the same as others; thus belong to a certain range. So an articulation of a thought into elements corresponds to—reflects—an articulation of any domain of thoughts to which it belongs. A thought is known (*inter alia*) by how it bears on, and is borne on by, others. There is no making sense of the idea of 'what is so according to the thought that ...' apart from something such bearing, in this case, is to be understood to be. All of which is to say: we cannot see a given thought other than as structured, *hence* denizen of some structured domain of thoughts within which the bearing of the world on it is fixed.

But here 'structurable' might be more apt than 'structured'. Frege himself insists—for good reason—that a thought is structured only relative to some decomposition of it. By the above, that point must extend to that structure it reflects in domains to which it belongs. Moreover, what decompositions, or articulations, a given thought admits of is liable to depend on the occasion for the articulating. So, too, for articulations of domains containing it. The thought articulates into particular elements—e.g, being about *these* objects, and *these* ways for something to be—structured in a particular way. It is in that sense of structure that a thought is not uniquely structured, or structured *per se*. If its elements are relative to a decomposition, and an occasion for one, then that point extends to domains to which the thought belongs. Their elements are *thoughts* structured in a given way. *Their* structures are not unique, but relative to a decomposition of them and an occasion of it. So, in particular, there is no unique answer to the question *which* thoughts one would find in a domain made up of all thoughts. Put otherwise, there is no unique way of counting thoughts—of saying where there is one thought, where two.

All of which gives new scope for the questions which are central to Putnam's account of how the conceptual is shaped. Where one asks whether a given thought

admits of a given decomposition, the answer is not always to be found by reference to some given structure which is the conceptual's full stop. One must ask what (further) structure one could recognise in a thought which is anyway identified by *so* much of its reach and import.

Frege's core insight survives all this. One cannot see a thought except as structured. One cannot see it as structured without seeing in that structure a most general structure reflected in most general thoughts in Frege's sense. Those most general thoughts do not require the existence of any particular less general thought, structured in any particular way. They require, e.g., neither Sid's existence, nor the existence of such a thing as grunting. It is a feature of such general thoughts that *no* domain whose structure they reflect makes any provision for the nonconceptual to bear on their truth. There are no paths within such a domain by which the nonconceptual, through its bearing on the truth of less general thoughts, may bear on the truth of these most general ones. Nor is there provision for the nonconceptual to matter in any determinate way to their truth.

Those most general thoughts which—as Frege puts it—unfold the concept *true* —a thought, e.g., that a conjunction is entailed jointly by its conjuncts—would, as Frege conceives things, be true reflections of the structure, on any articulation, of any domain of thoughts. But what we are now entitled to say is rather: they would be true reflections of the structure of any domain of thoughts now available to us, on any articulation of it now available to us. Thoughts, and articulations, made available to us: those there *are* with the means provided by what we are acquainted with on our acquaintance with the world. Might different acquaintance make thoughts available to us, with structures, on articulations then available to us, *not* reflected in such laws? We cannot, but need not, pronounce on this. For the suggestion here is one we cannot understand in this sense: the material the world makes available to us for forming thoughts leaves nothing for such a circumstance to be.

Thoughts available to us on our acquaintance with the world are structured in a way to which such things as conjunction introduction and elimination belong intrinsically. There are no paths within such a shape along which the nonconceptual might bear on them. They hold *per se* of thought so shaped. They would hold, *per se*, in a world with just that to be acquainted with. Such necessities are neither quite what Frege had in mind by *no such thing as otherwise*, nor quite the assurances Kant sought. But we are able to reshape our thought should further objects of acquaintance so demand.

8. Anxieties: Kant and Frege shared a conception of the conceptual which issues in an

impasse. Putnam showed the way out. It turns crucially on a role for the parochial in giving the conceptual its shape—not *just* in reaching to some sub-regions and not others. Such a role for the parochial can awaken anxieties.

If for something to be gold is for it to have atomic number 79, rather than for it to be heavy, yellow and malleable, such is the price of preserving the thought that gold is a familiar sort of metal. If it is a fact that the metal with atomic number 79 is what gold is, then it is a fact that that price *is to be paid*. Quine thought, in effect, that there could be no such fact as that such-and-such is the thing to do. He thought, accordingly, that if we *do* identify gold with that metal, there is no more to be said for that than that such is the way of our people. But suppose that, as per above, *what* way for something to be *being gold* is identified by what we would understand it to be—by what we are prepared to recognise as to its reach to the nonconceptual, and the place it thus assumes within the conceptual; that there is nothing in it to make it diverge, in these respects, from what we are equipped to see in it. Then there is more to say. It is part of what it would be for something to be gold that, as things turned out, being that is having a certain atomic number, rather than having a certain colour, weight and malleability. If this means that there are facts about the thing to do—here what price to pay—then so there are.

No shape we took the conceptual to have prescribes any way for the world to bear (as, by the above it does) on what way for stuff to be being gold is. But the conceptual, at work as above, *can* make the world bear on this. If the shape of the conceptual were all that *could* prescribe such things, Quine would be right: choosing the one option, above, is merely the way of our people. Neither the shape we supposed the conceptual to have, nor that we now see it to, prescribes any such thing. It may still seem paradoxical that a sense for what is fitting can be an ability to see what is just *so*.

If there is such a thing as the world bearing on how the conceptual is shaped—e.g., on which way for something to be, at what location, being gold is—then there had better be possibilities for *judging* that the way things are bears thus and so. There had better be *facts* as to how it bears. If what gold is is all a matter of what you choose to *call* gold, then whether the ring on my finger is gold is all a matter of what you choose to call gold. The threat is to the possibility of judgement *überhaupt*.

Just here, though, the rub. There is a *judgement* only where the world holds *sole* authority over its correctness. On the present story, we are imbued with a sense for how the world ought to be seen to matter to, e.g., what it would be for something to be gold. Without the workings of this sense in our responses to things being as they are (or what we see of this), it now seems, being gold could not *be* some one way for things to be, as opposed to others. The worry is: how can *this* be the world holding sole sway over what

being gold in fact is—the sort of sway needed for that to be something to *judge* of?

Behind Wittgenstein's failed attempt to defuse Kant's Pyrrhonian worry there was this idea: there is the system which generates descriptions for the way things are; and then there is our having that system at our disposal. Our psychology may work *ad lib* in putting that system at our disposal. It is the system's task to give those descriptions their content; to make the world matter to each in the particular way it does. Our psychology, the thought was, has no bearing on how any given system does its work. The world's sway over the fate of any given judgement—here taking the world to be as it is according to some given description within the system—is thereby insulated from any compromise by our psychology. Abstracting from the details of the Tractarian view of judgement, the crucial point here is this: psychology can play whatever role one likes in providing opportunities for judgement, so long as all it does in that role is fix what it is that is thus judged; how the world is to matter to that judgement's fate. Kant transgressed that stricture: for him psychology shaped the very thing our judgements represent as one way or another. It would also be transgressed if, somehow, psychology worked to make the correctness of some posture depend not just on what it represented as such-and-such, but also on our feelings towards that. But so long as the stricture is not transgressed, nor is judgement threatened.

A sunset over the Atlantic provides opportunities for judging. One may judge the sun to be sinking rapidly below the horizon. Galileo showed us an understanding of *sinking* on which one could not thus be judging truly. But there are others, on some of which, in so judging, one may be exactly right. Psychology may work *ad lib* in the identifying of some such understanding. A sense for what *sinking* would reach on that understanding might fully identify that reach, so far as it matters to the present worry. The understanding once fixed, there remains the question whether the sun is sinking rapidly on that understanding of its doing so—a substantive question over which nothing so far threatens the world's sole sway. (Even if whether things being as they are (over the Atlantic) is the sun sinking on that understanding of it doing so is decided by what we are prepared to recognise, one can still be wrong as to whether the sun is sinking (on that understanding) in being wrong as to how things are—failing to think anything at all of the way things in fact are.)

Such was the *Tractatus'* idea. A system for describing fixes what each of its elements *says* about the world; how it represents things. Whether the world then obliges in being as represented is left, for all that, entirely the world's affair. Hence, too, whatever the role of our psychology in getting us to think within some particular system: so long as *that*, and just that, is what it does, the world's role is in no way compromised. Tractarian Wittgenstein did not worry much about how a *system* could

get its elements to reach to just to some *one* range of particular cases. He supposed it did so somehow. Such still would not compromise the world's role. He did not envisage what he later stressed: what we are prepared to recognise works to shape what we have in mind, all the way down to particular cases of things being as we find them. But that unfolding of that 'somehow' leaves the general point intact.

What the *Tractatus* missed is that the world also must play a role in how an element in a system represents things to be—what is so according to it—even when the system to which it belongs makes no provision for this. To grant the world such a role is to admit the possibility of judging it to have been played, in a particular case, in one way or another. If there is that possibility, then there is the concept *showing when stuff would count as gold*, which, if the world has a role in showing such things, reaches to a range of particular cases, among which cases in which what is shown is that for something to be gold is for it to have atomic number 79. What is that reach? The answer depends on *what* it is that is thus asked about: a particular thing there is for stuff to be, inhabiting a particular stretch of the conceptual. Which thing that is, which region it inhabits, is not fixed apart from what we are prepared to recognise it to be; so not apart from what we could recognise as something being that. What the reach is of a concept of the form *showing such-and-such as to what would count as stuff being gold* is, similarly, not fixed apart from what we are prepared to recognise, in given circumstances, as a case of *showing* such a thing.

Sid *could* say, 'The sun is sinking', where *nothing* decides what is to be understood by *sinking*. Such would be to say *nothing* to be so. Quine makes that the position we are always in in saying anything. For, for Quine, there is never any judging as to how the world, in fact, speaks to the truth of what we say. We are pushed to that position by his view of the special case: as to how the world bears on the shape of the conceptual, there is nothing but *choices* to be made according to the way of our people. Putnam saves us from that fate. His path to salvation no more threatens judgement than the *Tractatus'* path. On the contrary, judgement perishes precisely in rejecting what he offers.

Judging is *essentially* felt as forced from us by the world. If, as I see things, I could as well think that the sun has set as that it has not, I thereby do *not* to judge that it has set. Judging that is seeing myself as *not* in that position. It is also seeing it as not just *me* who, exposed to things as I am, would be so forced. I cannot help suspecting Pia of peccadillos. But that is just me: wracked by jealousy. For me so to see things just is for me not to *judge* her guilty. Where the world could force me into postures *only* by exploiting what is, in this sense, 'just me'; not by extracting reactions *one* would have, there is no judging to be done. One might also think: where the world could force a posture on me only in exploiting some way I am, but a thinker might not be, that

posture would be just like my jealous suspicions of Pia—not just with no real foundation, but no real judgement at all. But, we have seen, if we are to have any judgement—any stretch of the conceptual—available to us at all, this cannot be right.

There is, though, a different worry as to whether the parochial—our sense for what to acknowledge—could really play the role here seen for it. *We* could not but take the world to admit of certain forms of thought. We are so designed. But if our design really plays a role, other thinkers might think differently about this. Then Kant's Pyrrhonian worry arises. It is, it seems, always a substantive, even if unknowable, fact that the world is as we cannot but suppose it. Frege seems to have raised this spectre:

We may say: we are compelled to make judgements by our own nature and by external circumstances; and if we do so, we cannot reject this law ... this impossibility of our rejecting the law in question hinders us not at all in supposing beings who do reject it; where it hinders us is in supposing that these beings are right in doing so; it hinders us in having doubts as to whether we or they are right. (1893/1967: 15)

Barry Stroud has stressed the same idea. (See, e.g., 1999.)

To disarm it we need only recall what judging is. Just as a thought that such-and-such is so may be articulated into components (its task separated into intelligible sub-tasks), so an agent's being exposed to error as he is may be articulated into particular components: one can carve out of it particular shapes of (preparedness) to assume risk. A judgement just is some such component, a shape for an agent's posture towards the world to take, liable to be found in a range of agents. An agent commits error where (*inter alia*) there is that which would surprise, or disappoint him; where the ways he is prepared to deal with things would thereby go awry. The spectre is that there is such a thing as the *real* shapes thus to be carved out of *our* postures towards the world, and that we are somehow congenitally blind to error as to what these real shapes are. We *think* the world can speak to such shapes; but it is in fact so constituted that it cannot. Undiscoverably, the opportunities we *see* for judging are not really there. To which one might ask: How would things be different if we saw opportunities there really were? The answer can only be: in no way that would surprise or disappoint us, or that would be any reason for us to engage, or be prepared, to engage differently with things. Which is just to say: we commit *no* error in seeing our postures towards the world as

articulating into constituent postures, judgements, in the way we do.

Wittgenstein's response to Kant's Pyrrhonian moment, for all its faults, still undoes that moment. Let Martians be thinkers as different from us as a *thinker* might be. Their postures towards the world would differ from ours. They might see theirs, or *ours*, as carving up differently into constituent postures with the ambitions of a judgement, over which the world holds sole sway. The things they saw there were to think would thus belong to different systems of thoughts—systems for describing things—than any we could envision. Such has precisely no bearing on whether the systems we see and use are ones for describing the world as ways it is, or, at worst, is not. *That* is just between us and the nonconceptual.

Putnam's insights, on present ground, come from careful attention to the details of particular cases—in the first instance, cases of scientific discovery—and a keen sense for the deep principles of thought at work in them. He offers a new way of understanding Kant and Frege; and with it the means for moving beyond their own understandings of the problems they engaged with. He removes for us a problem Kant could not solve, nor Frege dissolve. He gives us a new view of maximal generality, thus removing the need Kant saw for the mind to shape reality itself, and the illusion Frege harboured that, at some level, the conceptual is not open to being shaped at all. He thus limned the limits of what there is to ask intelligibly about the cooperation of mind and world.

Putnam thus leaves philosophers a distinctive sort of problem to approach and grapple with. Philosophic questions remain different in kind from scientific ones, though, as Putnam shows, seeing them clearly may draw on scientific knowledge. Philosophy is not a kind of armchair science. There is that activity which Frege called 'unfolding' a concept: seeing what there is for us to see, as things stand, of how the conceptual is shaped—*what* might require, e.g., that a thinker be an agent. There is work enough for a philosopher, without either denying the world bearing on the conceptual's shape, or abandoning the methods which are his own.

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