The aim of this essay is to explore Richard Rorty’s and John McDowell’s respective discussions of the relation between Kant and Wittgenstein. I take Rorty’s readings of both Kant and Wittgenstein to be helpfully illustrative of ways in which each of these philosophers have come to be read within contemporary analytic philosophy. I will oppose Rorty’s readings of each of these philosophers (as well as the manner in which he seeks to align them) with the readings (and the resulting alignment) of these philosophers proposed by McDowell. It is the hope of this essay that an exploration of McDowell’s readings of these two seminal figures will enable us to see not only the work of each of these authors, but also the philosophical problems they sought to unravel, in a new light.

1. It has been said that post-Kantian philosophers face two alternatives: they can either philosophize with Kant or against Kant. This proclamation suggests two different approaches to the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and, indeed, some commentators have wished to see Wittgenstein as following in Kant’s footsteps, while others have read him as an anti-Kantian. This paper shares the conviction that it is profitable to understand Wittgenstein’s aims in philosophy against the background of Kant’s thought. On the part of many commentators, however, the presumption behind such an approach to Wittgenstein seems to be that it is clear what philosophizing with or against Kant means, the only remaining question being which side of this clearly defined divide Wittgenstein is on.

Richard Rorty takes Wittgenstein as an opponent of Kant’s philosophy, while John McDowell sees him as a champion of the critical enterprise inaugurated by Kant. Their mutual interest in proposing an alignment of Wittgenstein and Kant can invite the impression that McDowell takes Wittgenstein to straightforwardly champion that which Rorty takes him to oppose. But closer examination of their respective readings of Wittgenstein (and of their respective discussions of Wittgenstein’s relation to Kant) reveals that their divergences turn, in part, on very different
understandings of what Kant’s philosophy was trying to achieve and, in particular, on the point of the Kantian account of experience as involving the faculties of sensibility and understanding.

Rorty fastens on to the Kantian distinction between \textit{phenomenon} and \textit{noumenon} and interprets the Kantian manifold of intuition as the outcome of the impingement of noumenal reality on sensibility. The manifold of intuition is construed, by Rorty, as contributing immediately given bits of knowledge which provide the content of phenomenal experience. Rorty applies Wilfrid Sellars’s critique of empiricism to Kant’s account of the relation of sensibility to understanding, claiming that it involves an illicit transition between (what Sellars calls) “the space of reasons” and “the space of causes.” This opens Kant to the charge that his conception of experience (in its appeal to a purely passive faculty of sensibility) relies upon a version of (what Sellars dubbed) “the myth of the given.” Rorty takes the moral of the bankruptcy of any such account of experience -- any account which relies upon an appeal to the Given -- to be that the only metaphysically innocent relation between world and mind is causal. Rorty reads Wittgenstein as also drawing such a moral, and thus insisting upon a sharp separation between “the space of reasons” and “the space of causes.”

McDowell’s relation to Rorty is complex. He shares Rorty’s admiration for Sellars’s critique of empiricist accounts of experience. McDowell’s reading of Wittgenstein (as a critic of such accounts) thus shares much common ground with Rorty’s. He differs with Rorty, however, in two critical respects: 1) on McDowell’s reading of Kant, Sellars’s attack on the Given can be seen as a reformulation of a Kantian point, and 2) McDowell reads both Kant and Wittgenstein as criticizing the moral Rorty draws from Sellars’s work. In particular, McDowell criticizes Rorty for not allowing an external \textit{rational} constraint on the mind. For McDowell, Kant’s philosophy contains the resources for bridging the Rortian divide between causes and reasons. McDowell takes a proper understanding of Kant’s point -- that experience is the product of the joint action of the faculties of sensibility and understanding -- to allow for a way of overcoming Rorty’s dualism. On this view, intuitions are rescued from the status of \textit{mere} Givens in that the faculty of sensibility is receptive (not to the causal impact of the noumenal world but) to the rational bearing of the empirical world. The conceptualizations of the faculty of understanding, on the other hand, figure in an account of how the world can be so.
For McDowell, Wittgenstein follows in Kant’s footsteps in that he also rejects the Given without succumbing to Rorty’s dualism. Wittgenstein’s Private Language Argument, according to McDowell, is an application of a general strategy for rejecting the Given. The sort of private ostensive definition presupposed by the possibility of a private language involves an implicit endorsement of the Given: such private acts of ostension are, in effect, abstractions from a bare presence delivered by the private linguist’s receptivity to his own inner life. McDowell reads Wittgenstein as a Kantian insofar as he takes Wittgenstein’s rejection of the possibility of such acts of ostension to allow for the deliverances of sensibility to come as already conceptually structured. He, thus, takes Wittgenstein (pace Rorty) to be making a version of a Kantian point (concerning how sensibility and understanding are fused) -- one which will look hopelessly metaphysical to Rorty -- in his remark in *Philosophical Investigations* that thought does not “stop anywhere short of the fact” (1958, §95).

His admiration for Kant notwithstanding, McDowell suggests that Kant (despite the merits of his account of experience) recedes into a form of the Given via his appeal to the supersensible. For instance, Kant feels a need to appeal to the schematized categories (as the basic concepts, constitutive of experience and knowledge, which involve the supersensible affection of our receptivity) in order to justify the faculty of understanding’s grasp of the concepts that determine experience. Wittgenstein, however, is concerned to elucidate the dependence of our concepts on practice and thereby to exorcise the impulse to something like a Kantian invocation of the supersensible to ground our various applications of concepts. As we will see, this exorcism culminates in Wittgenstein’s account of understanding as the mastery of a technique.

2. Richard Rorty finds a philosophical account which relies on the Given problematic and much of his own work centers around a criticism of such an account. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty specifies the notion of the Given4 (which he opposes) as “the notion that a quasi-mechanical account of the way in which our immaterial tablets are dented by the material world will help us know what we are entitled to believe” (1979, p. 143). In “The World Well Lost,” Rorty identifies Kant as a proponent of this view of the Given. Kant wishes to “split the organism up into a receptive wax tablet
on the one hand and an ‘active’ interpreter of what nature has there imprinted on the other” (1982a, p. 4). Rorty’s point is that it is philosophically suspect to endorse such a division of labor in the construction of experience -- one according to which there is a passive sensory intake of content, on the one hand, and the understanding’s active organization of that content, on the other. Much of the negative thrust of Rorty’s philosophical work has to do with a rejection of this philosophically suspect position (often in the guise of an attack on Kant’s account of experience). The positive account of experience presupposed by Rorty’s philosophy -- one which is designed, above all, to save us from falling back into an illicit appeal to the Given -- requires that a wedge be driven between the “space of reasons” and the “space of causes,” allowing only a causal link between them.

Rorty’s polemic against Kant, in “The World Well Lost” and elsewhere, plays a central role in his critique of the traditional philosophical conception of “the world.” Rorty seeks to do away, once and for all, with the notion of a world to which experience is related only passively. The world which is well lost, according to Rorty, is one which leaves its imprint on the mind’s passive faculty, which then in turn, in cooperation with an active faculty, produces “experience.” Rorty ascribes this conception of “the world” to Kant and proposes to undermine it by presenting a dilemma whose conclusion “casts doubt on the notion of a faculty of receptivity” (p. 4). Rorty argues that

1) Either the Kantian intuition is effable, or it is ineffable.
2) If a Kantian intuition is effable, it is a perceptual judgment and not an intuition as such. However, a perceptual judgment is incapable of having an explanatory function (explaining how it is that experience is in touch with reality) since it is already transformed by the active faculty.6
3) If a Kantian intuition is ineffable, it is incapable of having an explanatory function.
4) Therefore, the Kantian intuition is incapable of having an explanatory function.

The conclusion of this dilemma undermines (what Rorty takes to be) the contribution of the Kantian faculty of receptivity. If the contribution of the passive faculty cannot ever be specified, then any appeal to the impression of reality in the construction of “experience” is vacuous. Since “the world” plays no role in the construction of experience, Rorty concludes that this purportedly Kantian notion of the world “can no longer be given a sense” (p. 4). It is a world well lost.

For Rorty, Kant’s philosophy rests upon a problematic commitment -- one which, he thinks, recurs throughout the philosophical tradition -- a commitment to a particular conception of experience
(as comprised of given bits of knowledge obtained by the world’s impingement on a purely sensory faculty). Rorty has maintained some version of this reading of Kant throughout his career. In “Dewey’s Metaphysics,” for instance, Rorty criticizes Dewey for following in the misleading footsteps of Kant. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty supplies a brief intellectual history of post-Kantian philosophy based on his account of what is problematic in the position espoused by Kant. Rorty distinguishes two traditions that were committed to Kantian philosophy. The first is “German idealism” culminating in the philosophy of Hegel. The second is “the ‘back to Kant’ movement of the 1860’s in Germany” (1979, p. 134). Although “German idealism” made some progress in overcoming the initial limitations imposed by its Kantian commitments, the “back to Kant” movement sacrificed what progress had been made and propagated the Kantian infection even further. What Rorty takes exception to in the philosophy of the “back to Kant” movement is their preoccupation with (what they called) *Erkenntnistheorie*, relying on the distinction introduced by Kant between knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and science (*Wissenschaft*) (1929, A832=B860). Philosophy as *Erkenntnistheorie*, according to Rorty, aims to chart the mental and noumenal influences on the region of appearance in order to endow the claims to phenomenal knowledge with the certainty worthy of a science. Due to the catastrophically far-reaching influence of Kant’s conception of experience, one of the most important tasks of twentieth-century philosophy, according to Rorty, was the overcoming of Kant’s legacy. On Rorty’s telling of the story, as we shall see in a moment, Wittgenstein is one of the heroes who taught us how to live without Kantianism. Before we turn to Rorty’s portrait of the hero, however, we need to take a closer look at the work of a figure who (Rorty thinks) helped us to properly identify the villain.

3. Rorty’s main source for the attack on Kant’s commitment to the Given is Wilfrid Sellars’s seminal work, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind.” In this philosophically ground-breaking work, Sellars identifies “the point of the epistemological category of the given” to be the explication of “the idea that empirical knowledge rests on a ‘foundation’ of non-inferential knowledge of matter of fact” (1956, p. 255). Sellars’s focus, in this article, is a specific version of the Given, embraced by some forms of empiricism, according to which entitlement to a claim is supplied by a description of a causal
process (involving the impact of external objects on the claimant’s sensory surfaces). For Sellars, the causal impingement of real things on the mind’s sensibility cannot license an entitlement to a claim. Sellars points out that “in characterizing an episode or state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says” (1956, pp. 298-299). Entitlement cannot come from outside of the “logical space of reasons,” via the causal impingement of an external reality on the senses, but must be supplied from within the space of reasons. In other words, the claimant is entitled to a claim only when she can justify the claim through reasoning and arguments (rather than by appeal to some process of mere external passive determination).

Rorty argues that Kant falls prey to Sellars’s criticism of the “myth of the given” in that he (Kant) seeks to ground the claims to knowledge by giving an account of the production of empirical (knowable) objects. In Rorty’s reading of Kant, intuitions provide the justification of knowledge claims by issuing from sensibility’s trafficking with the real (noumenal) world. However, if intuitions are somehow prior to any experience (outside the space of reasons) then they are not knowledge and cannot ground claims to knowledge. Intuitions cannot occupy a place within the space of reasons either, for then they would be perceptual judgments and would lose their privileged status of communicating the real. Hence one cannot employ them in justifying what one says. But if one cannot so employ them, then (Rorty concludes) the whole account of intuitions and organizing conceptual schemata must go by the board.

It is important to recognize that Rorty’s move -- although prompted by Sellars’s attack on the Given -- is not a mere extension of Sellars’s thought. For Sellars, in contrast to Rorty, there is an intimate relation between causes and reasons. Hence, the moral which Rorty draws from Sellars’s attack on the Given (and attributes to Wittgenstein) can be set out more clearly by developing Sellars’s conclusions and contrasting them with Rorty’s.

4. Sellars’s reaction to the untenability of the sensory Given is that observational reports are legitimate non-inferential knowledge-claims within the space of reasons. But how can observation
reports, as non-inferential bits of knowledge, be legitimate members of the space of reasons? Is that not precisely what the empiricists who are committed to the Given would assert? Sellars answers that observation reports are non-inferential not in that they are justified non-inferentially but in that they are acquired non-inferentially. Sellars does not appeal to the affection of sensibility by an unknowable reality in order to account for claims to knowledge. Instead, he proposes that observation reports are true in so far as they comply with the normative strictures set forth by the concepts making up the space of reasons. For instance, Sellars holds that endorsing the proposition “x, over there, is green” requires the acquisition of, and adeptness in, the use of a “battery of concepts.”

Not only must the conditions be of a sort that is appropriate for determining the color of an object by looking, the subject must know that the conditions of this sort are appropriate. And while this does not imply that one must have concepts before one has them, it does imply that one can have the concept green only by having a whole battery of concepts of which it is only one element (1956, p. 275).

The credible endorsement of “x, over there, is green,” then, presupposes the acquisition of the concept “green” and a battery of other concepts through a long history of interaction with different objects in different circumstances. In other words, the truth of an observation report requires the claimant to be in the space of reasons.

Furthermore, according to Sellars, generalizations from observation reports are allowed by more concepts (that is, norms) available within the space of reasons. Sellars argues that “since no empirical sentence type appears to have intrinsic credibility, this means that credibility must accrue to some empirical sentence types by virtue of their logical relation to certain sentence tokens, and, indeed to sentence tokens the authority of which is not derived, in its turn, from the authority of sentence types” (p. 295). The credibility of general empirical sentences relies on their logical derivations from observational tokens. These logical derivations are allowed by concepts or rules that distinguish correct generalizations from incorrect ones. Finally, these concepts are part and parcel of the space of reasons and become available to those who are initiated into this space.

5. Rorty, in contrast to Sellars, wants to allow for causal accounts of the relation between the world and the mind without violating the integrity of the space of reasons which he finds jeopardized in
In “Representation, Social Practise and Truth,” Rorty defines scientism as “the assumption that every time science lurches forward philosophy must redescribe the face of the whole universe. Scientists think that every discovery of micro-structure casts doubt on the ‘reality’ of the manifest macro-structure and the intervening middle structures” (1991a, p 160). In other words, Rorty finds that Sellars, despite his spirited attack on the Given, remains committed to a form of representationalism according to which not singular sentences (observation reports) but entire conceptual schemes must correspond (refer) to reality. Hence, Rorty divides representationalism into two categories. The first is the view that singular sentences represent reality. Rorty and Sellars, both, attack this view as a form of “the myth of the given.” The second is Sellars’s own view according to which conceptual schemes, not the content determined by these concepts, represent reality, and scientific investigations can reveal the causal mechanisms underpinning the representation of reality by conceptual schemes. Rorty reacts to Sellars’s move by positing an impassable gulf between the space of reasons, the normative space of giving and asking for reasons, and the space of causal relations. He encourages non-normative investigations of reference (word-world relations) while emphasizing the irrelevance of these investigations to the tasks of epistemology and the space of reasons. Therefore, Rorty struggles to dismiss both forms of representationalism, emphasizing that the divide between the space of reasons and the space of causes must remain.

For Rorty, Wittgenstein is the hero who triumphs over the tradition (including Sellars) by positing the radical divide between the space of reasons and the space of causes. In “Wittgensteinian Philosophy and Empirical Psychology,” Rorty applauds Wittgenstein’s revolt against traditional philosophical notions and interprets this revolt as driving a deep wedge between empirical psychology as an investigation into the causal connection between the world and the mind, and philosophy as concerned with charting the space of reasons. Rorty concludes:

> the notions of “philosophical problems raised by psychological discoveries” and of “philosophical criticism of psychologists’ methods and doctrines” must stand or fall together. It would be well if they both fell (1977, p. 169).

Rorty rejects each of these notions -- “philosophical problems raised by psychological discoveries” and “philosophical criticism of psychologists’ methods and doctrines” -- on the ground that each involves
infringements on the divide between causes and reasons. In a later work, “Is Natural Science a Natural Kind?” Rorty reaffirms his commitment to the aforementioned reading of Wittgenstein, emphasizing that a causal account of the relation between the mind and the causal world is possible: “Wittgenstein’s picture of the relation of language to the world is much the same as Davidson’s. They both want us to see the relation as merely causal, rather than also as representational” (1991b, p. 60). Sellars’s exclusion from the list is due to the fact that he -- unlike Wittgenstein and Davidson -- is committed to a form of representationalism. Wittgenstein and Davidson allow for a scientific (causal) account of how the mind relates to the world, but such an account has (pace Sellars) no representational role whatsoever. Thus Wittgenstein and Davidson are the twin prophets of the dualism (between reasons and causes) which Rorty passionately endorses and which marks, in Rorty’s view, the decisive break with the Kantian legacy.

6. McDowell is in agreement with Rorty’s contention that the Given must be discarded. However, McDowell does not agree with Rorty’s reading of Kant nor with the moral Rorty draws from the demise of the Given. For McDowell, Kant is not properly charged with a commitment to the Given, and, moreover, Kant’s philosophy itself contains the resources for overcoming the divide between the space of reasons and the space of causes. McDowell supports his reading of Kant by drawing on a passage in the “Transcendental Doctrine of Elements” of the Critique of Pure Reason where Kant states that “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (1929, A51=B75). This passage, according to McDowell, supports the claim that the faculty of sensibility, supplying the manifold of intuition, and the faculty of understanding, supplying the concepts, do not operate independently of each other. Knowledge and experience arise as the indissoluble product of the joint operation of the two faculties. Hence, McDowell concludes that the Kantian distinction between concepts and intuitions is properly understood as an abstraction from what, taken in itself, is a unitary process (1994, Lecture 1, §4). Kant should not be read as advocating an analysis of knowledge as a two-stage, portmanteau, affair: sensibility does not produce the manifold of intuition in order for understanding to then come along and endow it with significance. This conclusion undermines Rorty’s
claim that Kant is committed to a version of the “myth of the given.” Such a claim would require Kant’s commitment to a fundamental separation between concepts and intuitions. McDowell argues that this is a misunderstanding of Kant.

By emphasizing Kant’s insistence on the equiprimordiality of intuitions and concepts, McDowell may appear to be suggesting that Kant is not Rorty’s target but his ally. This is only partially true. McDowell would consider Kant as Rorty’s ally only in the latter’s attack on the Given. However, McDowell is careful to point out that, in rejecting the Given, Kant’s view does not “threaten to disconnect thought from reality” (Lecture 2, §1). In other words, Kant does not recoil from the Given into a sort of Rortian coherentism which denies any external rational constraint bearing on thought and judgment. Such coherentism, according to McDowell, abuses the good Kantian move that thoughts without intuitions are empty by crediting intuitions with only a causal bearing on thoughts. In other words, coherentism denounces the problematic representational effect of the Given on thoughts and replaces it with a causal bearing, which is considered to be an adequate constraint on thought and judgment. The question that plagues coherentism concerns the precise nature of this causal bearing on knowledge. The question is critical in that the causal bearing must abstain from assuming a representational role as in the myth of the Given or in Sellars’s scientism. However, if the commitment to the Given and scientism are resisted, it seems that the only alternative that remains is Rorty’s chasm between causes and reasons. Such a divide, according to McDowell, loses sight of Kant’s insight regarding the rational bearing of the world on thought, brought about through the notion of the joint operation of understanding and sensibility.

In order to capture Kant’s insight which, according to McDowell, does not fall prey to the Given or to coherentism, it is important to examine the notion of an external rational constraint bearing on thought. The rational bearing of the world on thought is grounded in the notion of experience as involving concepts as well as intuitions. The empirical intuitions are yielded by the receptivity of the mind to empirical particulars (1929, A20=B34). Concepts, on the other hand, are rules or standards (A106 & A126) which direct the activity of the mind in explaining the empirical particulars. That concepts help explain the particulars is grounded in the supposition that they condition experience as
well. Therefore, the conceptual activity of understanding presupposes the conceptual organization of the empirical particulars. In other words, we have experiences because we are affected by empirical particulars as already conceptually determined. We understand in that our faculty of understanding is able to produce judgments (involving the categorical synthesis of the representation of the particulars). These judgments become expressed when we give an account of experience (and not merely an account of how our representations of the empirical world are produced). The account we give is subject to the same rational (conceptual) constraint as the one bearing on experience. In other words, it is the same rational constraint bearing on the judgments constituting experience that determines the correctness of our expressed judgments concerning experience. Hence, McDowell’s point about Kant: There is an external rational constraint on thought.\(^{15}\)

7. McDowell’s reading of Kant allows him to see Wittgenstein (pace Rorty) as a Kantian in three respects: 1) in his rejection of the Given, 2) in his insistence upon the rational bearing of the world on thought and judgment, and 3) in his rejection of any coherentist account of knowledge (which seeks -- through a misguided attempt to evade an appeal to the Given -- to eliminate the rational bearing of the world on the knowing subject). In regard to the rejection of the Given, McDowell sets forth Wittgenstein’s Private Language Argument which “applies the general rejection of the Given” (1994, Lecture 1, §7) to the notion of private ostensive definitions.

In Mind and World, McDowell relates Wittgenstein’s discussion of private ostensive definition to the myth of the Given by arguing that private ostensive definitions are abstractions based on a Given presence.

\[\text{Any concept that was constituted by a justificatory relation to a bare presence would have to be a private concept. Making the abstraction that would be necessary to form such a concept would be giving oneself a private ostensive definition. In effect the idea that concepts can be formed by abstraction from the Given just is the idea of private ostensive definition (Lecture 1, §7).}\]

As apparent from McDowell’s comment, private ostensive definitions involve, in effect, the formation of universals or concepts from particular objects which are given to a subject as bare presences (“as what sensations and so forth are,” §7). In other words, the subject manufactures a private ostensive definition
by associating the sign ‘S’ with a sensation. The question is whether this definition is legitimate, and the answer is a resounding No. The reason is simple: the private ostensive definition does not provide a rule for the use of the sign. In other words, further applications of the sign ‘S’ are neither sanctioned nor forbidden by the private ostensive definition. Once the naming is performed, the next move is left entirely open. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein has this problem in mind when he remarks that “naming is not by itself a move in the language-game -- any more than putting a piece on the board is a move in chess” (1953, §49). Putting a piece on the chessboard is not a legitimate move in chess, since it does not constrain the further use of that piece. In the same way, naming by itself is not a move in the language game, because it leaves the future use of the sign undetermined.

It should be emphasized, in advance, that McDowell’s reading of Wittgenstein’s treatment of private ostensive definitions does not reflect the commonplace approach to this aspect of Wittgenstein’s thinking. Therefore, the exposition of McDowell’s account of the Private Language Argument would gain in lucidity when contrasted with Saul Kripke’s influential take on Wittgenstein’s overcoming the problem of private ostension. In addition, Kripke’s approach will be seen to provide the details of what amounts to a coherentist reading of Wittgenstein’s Private Language Argument (a reading which can be endorsed by Rorty among others).

Kripke, in *Wittgenstein On Rules and Private Language*, maintains that a central concern in the *Philosophical Investigations* is the articulation and the overcoming of the skeptical paradox. Wittgenstein articulates the skeptical paradox in the statement that “no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule” (1958, §201). Kripke reformulates the paradox in the claim that “there can be no fact as to what I mean by ... any ... word at any time” (1982, p. 21). The skeptical paradox has, as its corollary, the problem of private ostension because once the private justificatory relation to a bare presence (as set forth in private ostensive definitions) is established, the next use of the sign is neither sanctioned nor forbidden. Kripke, to his credit, recognizes the force of the Wittgensteinian rejection of private ostensive definitions, as well as the paradox that emerges when one, in response to the rejection of the private ostensive definitions, tries to identify her sensations by criteria. The identification of sensations by criteria is paradoxical because it is
reducible to the following absurdity: “if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it” (§201). In other words, the use of signs for Given particulars can be explained by some criteria, but the application of these criteria is not guaranteed, since the particulars, given independently of the criteria, can also be made to accord with some other set of criteria which conflict with the first ones. This is a sort of skepticism since it casts doubt on one’s ability to understand the meaning of the signs.

Kripke’s Wittgenstein, to McDowell’s disappointment, accepts the skeptical assumption (that meaning is determined by criteria for the use of signs) and supplies a skeptical solution, arguing that communal agreement on meanings can make the semantic skepticism introduced by Wittgenstein benign (p. 79). Kripke’s skeptical solution, in effect, implies a form of coherentism, akin to Rorty’s, which rejects the bearing of objects on our thoughts about them. In Kripke’s account, meanings are confined to the intersubjective and normative space of reasons, and the domain of interaction between the subject and the object (as a bare presence) is innocuously independent of that space. Wittgenstein may be seen endorsing this interpretation: “[I]f we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of ‘object and designation’ the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant” (1953, §293). But this is not an endorsement; it is rather a reason for giving up the model that constrains us to consider the object as irrelevant. We only need to read to §304 where Wittgenstein has the following exchange with his interlocutor:

“And yet you again and again reach the conclusion that the sensation itself is a nothing.”
-- not at all. It is not a something, but not a nothing either! The conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said. We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself on us here.

As apparent here, Wittgenstein does not endorse the ‘object and designation’ model of the way we express our sensations, because the ineffable object fails to make any contribution to our discourse about sensations. But instead of looking for meaning in the normative coherence of our designations, Wittgenstein rejects the grammar of ‘object and designation’ as structuring our talk about sensations. In other words, Wittgenstein is rejecting the grammar that expresses our sensation as a Given “preconceptual this [bare presence] which is supposed to ground our conceptualizations (the items that
we want to gesture at, when it is pointed out that ‘pain’ and ‘sensation’ are words of our common language, with an inarticulate noise: §261)” (McDowell 1989, p. 290).

In “Wittgenstein On Following a Rule,” McDowell supports the thesis that Wittgenstein rejects the grammar of ‘object and designation’ and the associated coherentist/skeptical solution to the paradox by pointing out that Wittgenstein dismisses the assumption that meaning is an interpretation thrown over a bare presence-- as involving a “misunderstanding” (Wittgenstein, 1958, §201). The nature of the misunderstanding is brought to light when Wittgenstein (in the same fragment) maintains that “there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call ‘obeying a rule’ and ‘going against it’ in actual cases” (§201). McDowell uses these passages to dismiss Kripke’s account of Wittgenstein’s theory of meaning and offers a version of the straight solution to the skeptical paradox. McDowell’s straight solution rejects private ostensive definitions, the paradoxical version of the criterial account of meaning, as well as Kripke’s skeptical solution on the ground that they are in one way or another committed to the myth (or, to use Wittgenstein’s word, the grammar) of the Given (1984, p. 331). For McDowell’s Wittgenstein, our language does not require super-hard (brought about by nature or convention) criteria for its use since our linguistic experiences take place in the context of customs and practices, and our initiation into and participation in salient practices is an adequate constraint on our judgments as to how a sign should be applied.18

For McDowell, Wittgenstein’s notion of a custom or a practice is related to Kant’s notion of experience in that they both account for the meaningful use of language through the rational bearing of things on thought. This can be elucidated further by showing that Wittgenstein’s notion of practice also involves something like the Kantian insistence that experience is the result of the joint operation of sensibility and understanding. In Wittgensteinian vocabulary, sensibility amounts to receptivity to an item in a practice and must involve, as with Kant, more than sensitivity to a brute presence (as in the private linguist’s sensation); the things with which we have our practical commerce are already signified by the norms and proprieties of the relevant practices. Practical norms or rules, as we will see in §9, are pragmatic modifications of Kant’s concepts. They are similar in that they condition our language-involving thoughts about objects. For Wittgenstein, to think of an object, the subject responds to the
object according to the rules and standards making up the normative pattern of the practice. It is the pragmatic peculiarity of Wittgenstein’s view, one that is not present in Kant, that such a response is brought about by adequate training in that practice. Hence, Wittgenstein is not paradoxical (despite his own confession) when he claims that “when we say, and mean, that such-and-such is the case, we -- and our meaning -- do not stop anywhere short of the fact; but we mean: this-is-so” (1953, §95). It is McDowell’s contention, in interpreting this passage and others of this sort, that there is no gulf between meanings (space of reasons) and the real world (space of causes), as suggested by Rorty’s and Kripke’s Wittgenstein. For McDowell’s Wittgenstein, becoming a participant in a language game (resulting in the capacity to make claims that such-and-such is the case) gets to the things themselves (that this is so). This is because the concepts determining thoughts about objects in the world represent the normative order constituting the practical context. Therefore, it seems that (McDowell’s) Wittgenstein and Kant are in considerable agreement when they reject the Given in favor of an external rational constraint.¹⁹

Despite the affinity between Kant and Wittgenstein concerning the external rational constraints on thoughts, an important aspect of McDowell’s approach to Wittgenstein is a developmental view of the subject which, according to McDowell, goes missing in Kant’s account (1994, Lecture 6, §2). For Wittgenstein, the subject begins as an apprentice to a practice, requiring instruction and supervision in order to act properly. The subject then proceeds to become competent, that is, she develops appropriate concepts and acquires independence in making the proper moves.²⁰ This process of understanding culminates in the mastery of the practice allowing the subject not only the freedom to act in a certain manner but also the entitlement to approach the practice critically and creatively by holding the actual moves in the practice accountable to the salient normative constraints. However, McDowell argues that this aspect of the pragmatic approach to the subject is not available in Kant’s account (Lecture 6, §2). The culprit is Kant’s reliance on the supersensible.

8. The above criticism of Kant is expressed in a suggestive manner and requires a broader analysis of the Kantian texts to display its full force. This section attempts to supply the textual evidence required to allow McDowell’s claim that “Kant cannot succeed in his admirable aim, to
supersede traditional philosophy” (Lecture 6, §2) which I will assume to entail a commitment to the supersensible. The most conspicuous protrusion of the reliance on traditional philosophy occurs in Kant’s delineation of the tasks of philosophy as involving the investigation of the categorical framework that supply the conditions for the possibility of any knowledge whatsoever. Such a framework, as itself a form of knowledge, requires the application of the categories to transcendental intuition, yielded by “a transcendental affection of receptivity by a supersensible reality” (Lecture 5, §4).

For Kant, a major task of philosophy is the systematization of the axioms or fundamental judgments that provide the foundations of the science of experience. In the Critique of Pure Reason, in the chapter entitled “The Architectonic of Pure Reason,” Kant refers to this task as belonging to the purview of the scholastic concept of philosophy:

Hitherto the concept of philosophy has been a merely scholastic concept -- a concept of a system of knowledge which is sought solely in its character as a science, and which has in view only the systematic unity appropriate to science, and consequently no more than the logical perfection of knowledge (1929, A838=B866).

By the “systematic unity appropriate to science” Kant has in mind the systematization of the foundational axioms of scientific inquiry. Scientific knowledge (Wissenschaft) is the systematic unity of the truths that supply the foundations of mere knowledge or cognition (Erkenntnis). In a similar passage in the Logic, Kant maintains that philosophy, in the scholastic sense, is a skill of reason and has two parts: “First, a sufficient store of cognitions (Erkenntnis) of reason; second, systematic coherence of these cognitions, or their conjunctions in a whole” (1974, p. 28). In other words, philosophy, according to the scholastic concept, has the task of providing for the coherence of the cognitions of reason. Such a coherence can be accomplished by systematizing the axioms whose truths allow for the derivation of the truths of the other cognitions. The systematization of these axioms is brought about by a special synthesis of the fundamental concepts -- the categories -- making up the framework of the faculty of understanding (the faculty of concepts and conceptualization). The philosopher, through the special synthetic employment of the faculty of understanding, sets forth -- represents as axioms -- the concepts that make experience possible.22

Kant’s discussion in “The Highest Principle of All Synthetic Judgments” of the Critique of Pure Reason can be invoked to further elucidate the scholastic concept of philosophy. In this chapter of the
first *Critique*, Kant maintains that the possibility of experience is a peculiar synthesis of the concepts defining the limits of understanding and experience.  

The possibility of experience is, then, what gives objective reality to all our *a priori* modes of knowledge. Experience, however, rests on the synthetic unity of appearances, that is, on a synthesis according to concepts of an object of appearances in general. Apart from such synthesis it would not be knowledge, but a rhapsody of perceptions that would not fit into any context according to rules of a completely interconnected (possible) consciousness, and so would not conform to the transcendental and necessary unity of apperception (1929, A156=B195).

The first sentence of the passage makes clear that the possibility of experience is that in terms of which the *a priori* modes of knowledge “acquire meaning and significance” (A155=B194). *A priori* modes of knowledge are the foundational axioms of empirical knowledge. For Kant, the “possibility of experience” is a certain manner of synthesizing the most basic concepts of experience. This synthesis, which results in the basic judgments (axioms) of the science of experience, is brought about through the interpretation of the categories according to the pure forms of intuition, involving the receptivity to supersensible particulars.

Through elucidating the synthesis of possible experience, Kant claims to have supplied what converts the rhapsody of perceptions into scientific knowledge. More specifically, the synthetic unity of possible experience is a realization of the pure concepts of understanding, the categories, which results in the formulation of the axiomatic foundations of science. For Kant, the axioms of the science of experience are the synthetic principles of pure understanding (A161=B232). Therefore, possible experience relates to actual experience as the *a priori* foundation of the truth of necessary empirical judgments.

For Kant, the setting forth of the basic axioms of the science of experience is the task of the philosopher. The ordinary person, entangled amidst the rhapsody of perceptions, cannot grasp their foundations. In order to elucidate the special status of the philosopher, Kant invokes the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy (*conceptus cosmicus*). “On this view, philosophy is the science of the relation of all knowledge to the essential ends of human reason (*teleologia rationis humanae*), and the philosopher is not an artificer in the field of reason, but himself the lawgiver of human reason” (A839=B867). According to
the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy, the philosopher supplies the systematicity of the axioms of the science of experience in relation to the essential ends of mankind.

The ends which allow for the philosophical systematization of knowledge are the regulative ideals of reason, maxims (A666=B694). The maxims are supersensible concepts or moral rules, based on reason’s access to the order of noumenal reality. Moral maxims, according to Kant, are of two sorts, subordinate and ultimate. The subordinate ends are determined by three questions: “1) What can I know? 2) What should I do? 3) What may I hope” (A805=B833). These questions are concentrated in the question: What is man? In other words, the subordinate ends are the means for the “whole vocation of man,” (A840=B868) which is the ideal of the supreme good (A810=B839). By subordinating the question concerning the foundations of knowledge to the ideal of the supreme good, Kant suggests that the philosopher produces the system of the axioms of the science of experience in order to further the whole vocation of man.

Kant distinguishes the supersensible concepts expressed as maxims from the categories by referring to the former as regulative and to the latter as constitutive of experience. Furthermore, he maintains that the concepts of understanding -- of which the schematized categories are the most fundamental -- cooperate with the faculty of intuition, while the supersensible concepts do not. In other words, the supersensible concepts do not have corresponding intuitions. Yet, it remains to be shown, in a more precise manner, how the supersensible concepts are interpreted, how they lead to action, and how they systematize the possibility of experience. The response to these questions is distilled in the formation and the implications of intellectual aesthetic judgments.

In part one of the Critique of Judgment, Kant distinguishes between two forms of aesthetic judgments, judgments of taste and intellectual aesthetic judgments. A judgment of taste is based on “an ability to judge forms without using concepts and to feel in the mere judging of these forms a liking that we also make a rule for everyone, though our judgment is not based on an interest and also gives rise to none” (1987, Ak. 300). The reference to an interest of reason is meant to effect a contrast with judgments of experience which involve intuitions. A judgment of taste, then, does not involve the synthesis of concepts nor does it produce concepts to be synthesized in experience (as in practical judgments). There
are two species of the judgment of taste. The first is that of the art connoisseurs and the lovers of art who have acquired the proper social sensibilities and are capable of judging “the products of fine art with the greatest correctness and refinement” (Ak. 300). This judgment is disinterested, does not involve constitutive concepts, and does not produce an interest because of its basis on contingent social norms. Now, empirical objects can also be pleasurable (allow for aesthetic judgments) by allowing for “at least the possibility of achieving the purposes that we are to achieve in nature according to laws of freedom” (Ak. 176). Clearly, these objects are pleasurable insofar as their form attests to their harmony with the highest ends (the regulative concepts) of reason. In other words, they result in the harmony of cognitive and moral powers. For Kant, this harmony is superior to the harmony of the forms of objects with social norms in the first species of the judgment of taste.

Intellectual aesthetic judgments, in contrast to judgments of taste, result in pleasure not in the presentation of empirical objects but in the presentation of “practical maxims (insofar as such maxims qualify of themselves for giving universal law) a liking that we make a law for every one” (Ak. 300). According to Kant, an intellectual aesthetic judgment “is not based on any interest, yet it gives rise to one” (Ak. 300). The moral maxims, determining the intellectual aesthetic judgments, refer directly to the supersensible substratum and as such (the moral maxims) are ends-in-themselves and not concepts to be synthesized in experience. In other words, the supersensible concepts do not involve synthesis as in the constitutive concepts of experience. Therefore, moral maxims are pleasurable in that they are not based on any interest for some other end, but give rise to interest (they are regulative). This interest is a desire to approximate our activities as nearly as possible to the prescriptions of the moral maxims. For instance, the highest good, as the most perfect supersensible concept, is desirable simply because it is pleasurable and can be made pleasurable for everyone. For Kant, pleasure in supersensible concepts is moral feeling (Ak. 300). This pleasure is different from the disinterested pleasure in the form of empirical objects in that the latter gives rise to no interest. It is also different from interested pleasure in empirical objects in that it is simply not based on the constitutive concepts.

For Kant, the moral education of the philosopher is not a sufficient but a necessary condition for the scientific involvements of the philosopher. Without the moral training, the philosopher, like the
ordinary person, would consent to the rhapsody of perceptions and would not be inspired to set forth upon the “secure path of science” (1929, Bvii). The cosmopolitan philosopher, having acquired excellence in moral matters by aligning her actions in accordance with the supersensible concepts, ventures upon the scientific enterprise -- seeking to hold the empirical world accountable to a similar lawfulness benefiting the moral realm. More precisely, the outcome of the philosopher’s scientific involvement is the articulation of the system of the synthetic principles (axioms) of understanding as the “possibility of experience” brought forth through the realization of the categories by appeal to transcendental intuitions yielded by the supersensible affections of receptivity.

9. Wittgenstein, true to the “spirit” of Kant’s philosophy, continues the critical enterprise by adjusting a major problem in the Kantian “letter” which concerns Kant’s appeal to rigid rational concepts, including the supersensible concepts and the constitutive concepts of experience. Kant, as was shown above, justifies the appeal to the constitutive concepts by maintaining that they are inspired by the interest of reason to achieve in nature a similar lawfulness to that available in the realm of freedom (A839=B867). This achievement is brought about through synthesizing the categories and pure intuitions (involving the affection of receptivity by a supersensible reality) in the synthetic a priori axioms of the science of experience. However, the dogmatic givenness of supersensible concepts (the foundations of freedom), and by analogy the synthetic production of the constitutive concepts of experience is counter to the “spirit” of the critical enterprise. Wittgenstein eliminates the appeal to the dogmatic moral norms as well as the constitutive concepts of experience by a different approach to “understanding.”

In §217 of the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein’s interlocutor asks a potentially Kantian question: “How am I able to obey a rule?” Wittgenstein offers two interpretations of this question, “If this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do” (1958, §217). The interlocutor’s question is a Kantian question only according to the interpretation in the consequent of Wittgenstein’s conditional. Kant’s appeal to the supersensible concepts as well as his endorsement of the constitutive concepts of experience imply a worry about the justification of rule
following. For Kant, there must be rigid rules and concepts (in moral and epistemological matters) which justify the subject’s thoughts and actions. Wittgenstein’s response to the Kantian aspect of the interlocutor’s question is “if I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: ‘This is simply what I do’” (§217). Wittgenstein can be interpreted as suggesting that the appeal to the noumenal realm and to the constitutive sub-bedrock assurances in regard to empirical knowledge is redundant.

For Kant, the need for the appeal to the supersensible concepts and the constitutive concepts arose from his anxiety concerning understanding. Having inherited the tradition’s irreverence for experience, Kant worried about the errors of authority in the moral judgments allowed by social norms, on the one hand, and empirical judgments licensed by mere empirical concepts on the other. Therefore, he sought more assurances and claimed to have found them in the dogmatic constraints of morality and the unique constitutive concepts of experience.

Wittgenstein, however, wants to dispel the Kantian worries. For Wittgenstein, the rational bearing of objects on thought is sufficient for one’s understanding of experience. In response to the Kantian anxiety about the authority of the representations of practical and empirical concepts, Wittgenstein would say briefly, “this is simply what I do” (§217). Having been trained in the salient practices or institutions supplies the adequate independent rational justification. In other words, justifications are available in the practices, not external to them.

One could, however, ask for a causal account of how one obeys a rule and engages in a practice. Wittgenstein, anticipating this worry, responds: “I have been trained to react to this sign (the expression of a rule) in a particular way, and now I do so react to it” (§198). In other words, to the question concerning the causes of obeying a rule, Wittgenstein offers the story about apprenticeship and learning the techniques of a practice. Hence, Wittgenstein embraces a developmental view of the subject of experience not present in Kant. According to this view, the subject is always already in a community of practices. At first the subject is passive, her thoughts about objects are mere imitative responses to objects. But as the subject develops, she begins to understand the language of her community. “To understand a language means to be a master of a technique” (§199), and to master a technique is to
achieve higher levels of competence in a practice -- to have acquired the proprieties of a practice in such a way that one performs the practice spontaneously as if it were second nature. One who understands a language is capable of employing it in such a way that her descriptions, for instance, are accurate; they depict the way things really are. Such a mastery need not involve the realization of concepts in axiomatic form as in Kant’s notion of philosophical understanding. “[I]f a person has not yet got the concepts, I shall teach him to use the words by means of examples and by practice. --And when I do this I do not communicate less to him than I know myself” (§208). For Wittgenstein, one’s mastery of a technique seems to license her to teach that technique, but teaching does not necessarily involve direct communication of the techniques in a formal and axiomatic manner. The master practitioner can teach by examples, performances, and active supervision (this list is by no means exhaustive). Pace Kant, being in possession of the axiomatic basis of experience is no longer the sufficient condition for complete understanding. This, however, is not to deny that, in some cases, technical mastery involves a grasp of axiomatic foundations as, for instance, in the practice of Euclidean geometry. 31

Wittgenstein’s view of understanding as mastery of techniques involves a major departure from Kant’s views on “understanding” and “reason,” which involve trafficking with the supersensible. Wittgensteinian “understanding” is only limited by the training in the practices and institutions amidst which the subject finds herself. It is an acquired expertise in a practice, an ability to make the proper moves in different particular circumstances.

10. This essay has sought to show that the Kantian critical enterprise is not a victim (pace Rorty) but a hero of the battle against the Given. Once this status of critical philosophy is brought to light, a deep and powerful relationship between Kant and the later Wittgenstein is unraveled. This essay has developed this relationship through McDowell’s reading of the bond between Kant’s concept of experience and Wittgenstein’s notion of practice. Kantian “experience” and Wittgenstein’s “practice” have been shown to abrogate the empiricist’s form of the Given through the account of external rational bearings on thoughts.
It has also been shown that, despite his valuable concept of experience, Kant’s appeals to the noumenal realm and to the constitutive concepts of experience interject the Given back into his discussion. This essay has shown that Kant worried about the authority of the understanding’s representation of empirical concepts and the reason’s postulation of practical concepts. He sought to justify them further by grounding practical judgments in supersensible concepts and empirical judgments in the constitutive concepts of experience.

Wittgenstein, according to the final argument of this essay, exorcises the Kantian worry which led to his appeal to the supersensible. Wittgenstein dispelled the need for this appeal through his modification of Kant’s notions of understanding and reason. Wittgenstein defined understanding as the mastery of the techniques or the practices that make up the cultural-linguistic tradition in which the subject finds herself. With this move, Wittgenstein undermined Kant’s appeal to rigid conceptual machinery by proposing that the grasp of experience is not achieved by invoking sub-bedrock assurances but by adequate training in salient practices.
Bibliography

Anscombe, Elizabeth

Aristotle

Brandom, Robert

Budd, Malcolm

Burnyeat, M. F.

Cavell, Stanley

Coffa, Alberto J.

Conant, James

Davidson, Donald

Diamond, Cora

Dummett, Michael

Goldberg, Bruce

Habermas, Jürgen
1971 *Knowledge and Human Interests.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Hacker, P. M. S.

Haller, Rudolf
1988 *Questions On Wittgenstein.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Heidegger, Martin

Kant, Immanuel
1956 *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Kripke, Saul A.

McDowell, John

Putnam, Hilary

Rorty, Richard
University Press.

Salmon, Wesley C.

Sellars, Wilfrid

Stenius, Erik

Strawson, P. F.

Thomas, George

Williams, Meredith

Wittgenstein, Ludwig
1922 Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD.

NOTES

1 Hilary Putnam and Stanley Cavell are examples of contemporary philosophers who claim that Wittgenstein’s thought is best understood when viewed against the background of Kant. In “Was Wittgenstein a Pragmatist?”, Putnam offers an extended discussion of the relation between Wittgenstein’s philosophy and that of Kant. He concludes:

There were some genuine insights in Kant, insights which were hard won, and by which Wittgenstein was educated. Wittgenstein could not have seen so far if he had not stood on the shoulders of that giant (1994a).

See also Putnam’s claim, in “Rethinking Mathematical Necessity,” that Wittgenstein belongs to a Kantian tradition of thought about logical necessity.

A continuing interest in the relation between Kant and Wittgenstein can also be traced from Cavell’s earliest writings to his most recent work. In “The Availability of Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy,” Cavell writes:
The problems of philosophy are not solved by “hunting out new facts;” … What do such answers look like? … [W]e could say that what such answers are meant to provide us with is not more knowledge of matters of fact, but the knowledge of what would count as various “matters of fact.” … It is a knowledge of what Wittgenstein means by grammar -- the knowledge Kant calls “transcendental.” … And where Kant speaks of “transcendental illusion” -- the illusion that we know what transcends the conditions of possible knowledge -- Wittgenstein speaks of the illusions produced by our employing words in the absence of the (any) language game which provides their comprehensible employment. … If his similarity to Kant is seen, the differences [between Kant and Wittgenstein] light up the nature of the problems Wittgenstein sets himself. For Wittgenstein it would be an illusion not only that we do know things-in-themselves but equally an illusion that we do not (1962, pp. 85-86).

2 J. Alberto Coffa, in The Semantic Tradition From Kant to Carnap, argues that Kant is the father of the semantic tradition (the tradition of seeking “a conception of the a priori in which pure intuition played no role” (1991, p. 22)) in philosophy (p. 7), and that Wittgenstein’s purposes were fundamentally opposed to that tradition: “their philosophical hopes seemed to be Wittgenstein’s fears; their projects, Wittgenstein’s targets; their enemies, Wittgenstein’s friends” (p. 141). Coffa further argues that “even Kant was too much of a rationalist for Wittgenstein’s taste, since … Kant remained enthusiastic about science and rationality in general” and that “if Wittgenstein was a fifth column among semanticists, it is because from the very beginning his heart was with one of the most romantic, unreason versions of idealism. If it ever looked otherwise, it is in part because he joined the enemy camp in order to display its failure from within” (pp. 141-2). Rudolf Haller, in Questions on Wittgenstein, in a similar vein, explicitly takes issue with Cavell’s alignment of Kant and Wittgenstein. He goes on to deny the parallel between Kant and Wittgenstein even more vehemently than Coffa, stating that “Wittgenstein seemed to follow Mauthner, who replied to the neo-Kantian motto ‘back to Kant’ with his own: ‘back to Hume’ “ (1988, p. 53); Haller concludes: “the critique of language is not the critique of reason” (pp. 52-3).

3 The problematic character of this presumption can be illustrated by comparing Eric Stenius’s claim that “Wittgenstein was in essential respects a Kantian philosopher” (1960, p. 214), and James Conant’s apparently parallel claim that certain basic ideas of Wittgenstein have their source in Kant (1991, p. 115). The “presumption” would lead one to suppose that Stenius and Conant are allies when, in fact, the philosophical positions which Conant attributes to Kant and Wittgenstein are in clear opposition to the ones which Stenius attributes to them. Stenius insists that “what Kant’s transcendental deductions are intended to perform … is performed by (Wittgenstein’s) logical analysis of language” (1960, p. 218). Thus, Stenius concludes:

Wittgenstein moves the limits of theoretical reason to the limits of language. Whereas Kant thought “possible to theoretical reason” to be a more narrow concept than “logically possible,” these two concepts are identical according to Wittgenstein (p. 219).

Conant, however, distinguishes two notions of limit: 1) limit as imposed by the laws of logic and 2) limit as the boundary of theoretical discourse. Conant does not see the Tractatus (as Stenius does) as identifying these two notions of a limit, but rather as seeking to follow Kant in arguing that the former notion of a limit rests upon a confused conception of logical necessity. Conant reads the transcendental deduction as supplying the limiting concepts for significant thought in theoretical discourse -- as marking the limit not of thought per se, but of thought about objects. This limit, according to Conant, is transgressed “in philosophical speculation” (1991, p. 171), while the laws of logic cannot be transgressed and “should not be represented as imposing a limit on thought” (p. 171). Conant finds Wittgenstein to be a Kantian insofar as he is sensitive to the two notions of limit and has corresponding notions in his own philosophy. Stenius, from the standpoint of Conant’s reading, misunderstands Kant and therefore Wittgenstein’s Kantianism.

4 Sellars, in “Empiricism and Philosophy of Mind,” maintains that “many things have been said to be ‘given’: sense contents, material objects, universals, propositions, real connections, first principles, even givenness itself” (1956, p. 253). Sellars, in his article, subsequently narrows his concern to the role played by the Given in sense-datum theories. This is precisely the version of the Given to which Rorty pays the most attention. Nevertheless, there are ample reasons to believe that Rorty (like Sellars) means to be opposing any form of appeal to the Given.
Rorty summarizes the dilemma as follows: “insofar as a Kantian intuition is effable, it is just a perceptual judgment, and thus not merely ‘intuitive.’ Insofar as it is ineffable, it is incapable of having an explanatory function” (1982a, p. 4).

McDowell’s criticism of Rorty’s reading of Kant implies a rejection of the second premise. McDowell reads Kant as arguing that experience results from the cooperation of concepts and intuitions. Intuitions, as such, are the products of the Kantian analysis of experience and concern the reference to particulars in judgments of experience. This view undermines Rorty’s interpretation which relies on an account of intuitions as pre-conceptual Givens. See §6 for a more detailed treatment of the contrast between Rorty’s reading of Kant and that McDowell.

Rorty writes: “what Kant had called ‘the constitution of the empirical world by synthesis of intuitions under concepts,’ Dewey wanted to call ‘interactions in which both extra-organic things partake.’ … [T]he level of generality to which Dewey ascends is the same level at which Kant worked, and the model of knowledge is the same -- the constitution of the knowable by the cooperation of two unknowables. Sounding like Kant is a fate that will overtake any systematic account of human knowledge which purports to supplant both physiological Lockean accounts and sociological Hegelian accounts by something still more generic. The ‘ontology of the sensible manifold’ is the common destiny of all philosophers who try for an account of subject-and-object, mind-and-body, which has this generic quality” (1982b, pp. 84-5).

The proponents of Erkenntnistheorie declared their task to be, as Rorty puts it, “the patient labor of sorting out the ‘given’ from the ‘subjective additions’ made by the mind” (1979, pp. 133-34).

It may be objected that this reading of Sellars conflates internalist foundationalism (the proper target of Sellars’s attack) and some version of externalism. The proper target of Sellars’s attack is the myth of the Given as found in some forms of empiricism, and the Given does not simply imply an assumed foundation for justification. It also entails that such a foundation be “knowledge of matter of fact,” that is, it should depict how things really are. This latter implication is brought out by the causal account of the impact real things on sensibility.

Sellars’s scientism is, for Rorty, characterized by slogans like “science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not” (Sellars, 1956, p. 303).

In “Representation, Social Practice and Truth,” Rorty argues that Davidson’s work on the role of the disquotational theory of truth in a viable theory of meaning eliminated the last trace of representationalism by showing that the proper context for a theory of truth is semantics, not epistemology. “So the thing to do is to marry truth and meaning, and conversely. But that theory will be of no use to a representationalist epistemology, nor to any other sort of epistemology. It will be an explanation of what people do, rather than of a non-causal, representing relation in which they stand to non-human entities” (1991a, p. 154).

Rorty (1991c, p. 3) supports his reading of Wittgenstein as an anti-representationalist by invoking Michael Dummett’s essay, “Can Analytic Philosophy Be Systematic, and Ought it to Be” where Dummett claims to set forth a central idea of Wittgenstein “about which it would be universally agreed that any attempt to construct a theory of meaning must come to terms with [it]” (1978, p. 452). This idea involves “the rejection of the conception, advanced by Frege and by Wittgenstein himself in the Tractatus, that the meanings of our sentences are given by conditions that render them determinately true or false, in favor of one according to which meaning is to be explained in terms of what is taken as justifying an utterance” (p. 452). Rorty fastens unto the idea presented here and claims that Wittgenstein rejects representationalism. I will offer my critique of this reading of Wittgenstein in §7.

Although McDowell’s primary target, in his critique of coherentism, is Donald Davidson, he finds Rorty applauding and exaggerating “the aspects of Davidson’s thinking” that he has “objected to” (1994, Afterword, Part I, §6).

Kant expresses his view of experience, in a historical manner, as involving a course in between Leibniz and Locke. “Leibniz intellectualized appearances, just as Locke … sensualized all concepts of the understanding, i.e., interpreted them as nothing more than empirical or abstracted concepts of reflection. Instead of seeking in
understanding and sensibility two sources of representations which ... can supply objectively valid judgments of things only in conjunction with each other, each of these great men holds to one only of the two, viewing it as an immediate relation to things in themselves. The other faculty is then regarded as serving only to confuse or to order the representations which this selected faculty yields” (A271=B327).

15 Although McDowell argues that Kant and Wittgenstein share the thesis that there is an external rational constraint on thought, he (McDowell) is careful to note that their accounts of how it is that there is such an external rational constraint differ. I will develop this difference in §§8-9.

16 Kripke states that “the impossibility of private language emerges as a corollary of his [Wittgenstein’s] skeptical solution of his own paradox” (1982, p. 68).

17 Kripke illustrates the skeptical paradox thus: “Now suppose I encounter a bizarre sceptic ... he suggests, as I used the term ‘plus’ in the past, the answer I intended for ‘68 + 57’ should have been ‘5’! Of course the sceptic’s suggestion is obviously insane ... After all, he says, if I am now so confident that, as I used the symbol ‘+’, my intention was that ‘68 + 57’ should turn out to denote 125, this cannot be because I explicitly gave myself instructions that 125 is the result performing the addition in this particular instance. By hypothesis, I did no such thing. But of course the idea is that, in this new instance, I should apply the very same function or rule that I applied so many times in the past. But who is to say what function this was? ... So, perhaps in the past I used ‘plus’ and ‘+’ to denote a function which I will call ‘quus’ and symbolize by ‘+’. It is defined by
\[ x + y = x + y, \text{ if } x, y \leq 57 \]
\[ = 5 \text{ otherwise} \]
who is to say that this is not the function I previously meant by ‘+’” (1982, pp. 8-9)?

18 McDowell writes: “The upshot is that if something enters into being a participant in the relevant customs, it enters equally into being capable of making any judgments at all. We have to give up that picture of genuine truth, in which the maker of a true judgment can shrink to a point of pure thought, abstracted from anything that might make him distinctively and recognizably one of us” (1984, p. 352).

19 There is a temptation, if one is not sufficiently alive to the snares of idealism, to infer from the above account that the existence of all objects is dependent on human practices or experience. This conclusion and the thesis that supported it are then reduced to absurdity by pointing out that dinosaurs, for instance, went extinct well before the advent of any of the human practices and institutions; yet we seem to have a deluge of evidence that they existed. Such arguments can be refuted by rejecting their assumption that the existence of all objects is dependent on human practices. Although it is true that many types of objects, i.e., chess pieces, flags, money, etc., depend for their existence on human practices, there are a host of other objects whose existence lacks this sort of dependence. This does not imply a contradiction in McDowell’s account of Wittgenstein’s position but a peculiarity in some of our practices in which objects do not depend on the practices for their existence but are, nevertheless, understood according to the grammar supplied by those practices. This is not ad hoc; scientific activities, for instance, involve sophisticated practical constraints, but this does not mean that atoms or molecules came into being as soon as the appropriate disciplines were developed. Scientific practices supply us with the concepts to think objects like atoms or dinosaurs (or to be able to discourse about them), but these concepts do not determine their objects in the same way as the rules of chess determine chess pieces. Hence, in some of our practices, including the scientific ones, the concepts underdetermine objects, and that should be enough to evade the idealist challenge.

This point is put in an interesting manner by Elizabeth Anscombe. In “The Question of Linguistic Idealism,” she introduces Hume’s observation regarding the natural unintelligibility of promises and extends the notion to rules. To be “naturally unintelligible” is to not be an expression of “perception or experience” which she means in the sense of Humean sense impression. Naturally unintelligible things, according to Anscombe, “are understood by those of normal intelligence as they are trained in the [appropriate] practice” (1976, p. 121). In other words, naturally intelligible notions -- such as the existence of dinosaurs, horses, giraffes, colors, and shape - - are not the products of human linguistic practices. But “if there is such a thing as idealism about rules and about the necessity of doing this if you are in conformity with this rule, then here Wittgenstein was a linguistic idealist. He insists that these are the creation of human linguistic practices” (p. 122).
This acquired conceptual context, however, does not share the history of Sellars’ “battery of concepts” acquired through long causal interaction with the surroundings. In a footnote to an earlier version of the second lecture of Mind and World, McDowell contrasts his position with that of Sellars in the following manner:

Where my way of thinking exploits a direct rational connection between the judgment that something is red and something’s being manifestly red, Sellars allows only a mediated entitlement to the judgment, derived from a warranted belief in a correlation, conceived in merely causal terms, between the subject being confronted with red things and his being inclined to produce an utterance of ‘It’s red’ or something similar.

For Sellars, entitlement to a claim is derived from the subject’s causal interaction with the world such that, through this interaction, the subject acquires a “battery of concepts.” A judgment bears upon the world through the mediation of this causal interaction. For Sellars, the Kantian fusion of spontaneity and receptivity in constituting experience is precisely the subject’s causal interaction with the world (1968, p. 9 & p.16). For McDowell, Kant does not hold that a causal interaction determines standings in the space of reasons. According to McDowell’s Kant, the subject’s interaction with the world is always conceptual, and there is a direct rational connection between a judgment and the world.

This distinction can be traced back to Aristotle in the form of the distinction between real knowledge and knowledge for us. Myles Burnyeat, in “Aristotle on Understanding Knowledge,” develops this distinction in the following manner:

For Aristotle, Burnyeat claims, there is accidental knowledge (ἐπιστημή ἀπλοῦς) as well as knowledge in the unqualified sense. If one knows a single proposition without having access to the whole science, one knows accidentally. On the other hand, one knows a proposition unqualifiedly if and only if one is in possession of the system of knowledge to which the proposition belongs.

Take, for example, the theorem that every isosceles triangle has angles equal to two right angles. According to A5 [Posterior Analytics], if a man knows this in virtue of knowing that it belongs to every triangle as such to have angles equal to two right angles, then he has ἐπιστημή unqualified. But if he has not grasped the more general fact, and knows only that the property belongs to all isosceles triangles, then, even if he has a perfectly sound proof of the more particular proposition, he does not count for Aristotle as possessing unqualified ἐπιστημή (1981, p. 100).

Aristotle’s accidental knowledge resembles our view of knowledge as justified true belief. According to this notion of knowledge, both of the above cases constitute cases of knowledge. Burnyeat concludes that Aristotle’s notion of unqualified knowledge cannot be the notion of knowledge in circulation now, since it involves “not a requirement of justification but of scientific explanation” (p. 101). Therefore, he suggests that ἐπιστημή be translated as understanding, because “explanation and understanding go together in a way that explanation and knowledge do not” (p. 102). I do not want to go too deeply into the details of Burnyeat’s interesting theses concerning the translation Aristotle’s technical terms into English. It suffices to say that knowledge in the unqualified sense would be better rendered into English as knowledge with understanding, in contrast to mere knowledge as justified true belief.

At this point, we should try to get clear as to what the Aristotelian requirement of scientific explanation on ἐπιστημή comes to. At the beginning of Posterior Analytics, Aristotle says that ἐπιστημή is of what cannot be otherwise (1984b, 71b12, 15-16). Burnyeat reads this claim as a “substantive thesis designed to elucidate a current concept of understanding. That understanding is constituted by knowing the necessary connections in nature” (p. 110). In other words, to understand that the sun is eclipsed, it is not enough that we explain why the sun eclipsed today. We should rather explain, in the manner of contemporary philosophers of science, why there are solar eclipses at all in terms of law-like generalities that govern the behavior of heavenly bodies. It follows that in a “properly ordered science necessity would be transmitted to the theorems from above” (p. 111). As we have seen,
to have knowledge with understanding (ἐπιστήμη) is to be in possession of the whole science. This means that the understanding of the truth of a particular proposition that belongs to a science must involve demonstration from first principles (p. 101). “These principles in turn are to be not merely necessary but necessary because they are per se predications expressing a definitional connection (p. 111).” Burnyeat illustrates the status of first principles by identifying their logical structure as universal affirmative propositions or two-place predicates of the form AaB, “where either A belongs in the definition of B or B belongs in the definition of A” (p. 111). These propositions are not just immediate bits of knowledge in that they do not admit of explanation through a middle term. They are also first in that “their necessity will be directly intelligible from or in the fundamental definitions of science (A3, 72b24-5)” (p. 112).

Burnyeat emphasizes that Aristotle’s first principles are not analytical truism, but universal and necessary truths concerning some sort of things (p. 112). These things, however, are not physical objects. They are universal, necessary, and everlasting things (A6, 75a18-37; A8: A30; A31), such as mathematical entities, i.e., numbers and triangles. The reason empirical things are excluded from the domain of ἐπιστήμη is that they are available through perception and “[e]xplanation imports generality, which is beyond the scope of perception (A18, 81b6-7; A31)” (p. 114). According to Burnyeat, Aristotle is remarkably skeptical concerning our knowledge of “mundane matters of fact” (p. 115).

Burnyeat argues that for Aristotle ἐπιστήμη reveals the structure of reality due to the following assumptions: [1]Aristotle believed that ideal explanations involve full axiomatization of a science in this way: the first principles are the axioms and non-ampliative demonstrations through apodeictic syllogisms in Barbara (A14) unpack their content. Furthermore, Aristotle held that syllogisms and demonstrations broadly construed are reducible to the narrow sense of demonstration in the form of syllogisms in Barbara (p. 120). Aristotle also believed that “[2] for any science there is just one adequate set of axioms, and ... [3] these axioms are true, primitive, immediate, more familiar and prior to and explanatory of a complete and finite set of theorems” (p. 126). Burnyeat claims that given these beliefs (some of which are now considered false), “an axiomatic system is not just a preferred ordering of humanly constructed knowledge, but a mapping of the structure of the real” (p. 126).

Finally, Burnyeat offers a short history of philosophy in an effort to situate his discussion of Aristotelian epistemology and philosophy of science. He argues that the distinction between knowledge with understanding and accidental knowledge (or knowledge of the order of nature in contrast to knowledge for us) is introduced by Aristotle, and that Plato, lacking that distinction, “tends, characteristically, to assimilate knowledge to understanding” (p. 135). Stoics, Burnyeat claims, radically alter the Aristotelian/Platonic framework: “What is intrinsically (in itself) convincing (piston) ... is transferred by the Stoics from first principles of Aristotelian science to the ground-level certainties of perceptual experience [cataleptic impressions]” (p. 138). Burnyeat points out that Aristotle acknowledges perceptual certainties and their problems, but he [Aristotle] remains firm in not letting “them structure his inquiries or dictate his choice of starting points” (p. 138). Nevertheless, the Stoic transformation of Aristotelian foundations allows the skeptics to deny the inference from the intrinsic convinciness of cataleptic impressions to their truth. With this move, Burnyeat claims, the skeptics induce the separation of epistemology from the philosophy of science. “Descartes challenged scepticism with a valiant attempt to pull them together again, with a philosophy of science based on epistemology, reversing the Aristotelian (Platonic) enterprise of putting philosophy of science at the center of epistemology” (pp. 138-9). The Cartesian reversal is grounded in the thesis that the subject (the knower) has access to immediate and indubitable bits of knowledge which function, subsequently, as the basic foundations upon which the scientific edifice is built. Aristotle, as we have seen, argued that the subject is not in possession of knowledge until the scientific edifice has been constructed. The Cartesian attempt, Burnyeat contends, failed, leading to the divorce between epistemology and the philosophy of science in more recent philosophy. Kant, as apparent from my discussion in the text, is interested in reviving the Aristotelian account according to which knowledge is grounded on a core of philosophy of science. This is in line with the anti-Cartesian moment of Kant’s philosophy which aims to debunk the empiricist forms of the Given.

22 In order to elucidate the relation between concepts and axioms, it is important to clarify the relation between a priori and a posteriori modes of knowledge in conjunction with synthetic and analytic judgments. The a priori
mode of knowledge is, according to Kant, “absolutely independent of all experience” (1929, B3), but a posteriori knowledge is justified only through experience (1929, B3). While “a priori” and “a posteriori” deal with justification of judgments, “synthetic” and “analytic” concern their truth. Analytic judgments are those that are either logically true or self contradictory. Logical truths are interpretations of valid formulas -- formulas that are provable theorems and true in every interpretation of the system. Self-contradictory judgments are those “whose falsity can be established by reference to the syntactic and semantic rules of language” (Salmon, 1966, p. 31). Synthetic judgments are those “whose truth value is, in relation to the syntactic and semantic rules alone, indeterminate” (p. 31). Empiricists claim that all and only analytic judgments are a priori -- their truth or falsity is established according to syntactic or semantic rules of a system without reference to experience. Moreover, for empiricists, all synthetic judgments are a posteriori in that they require observation to establish their truth. Rationalists (Kant is included among them) press for synthetic a priori judgments which are not logical truths but are established to be true in a certain interpretation prior to making any observations in the domain of discourse supplied by that interpretation. In other words, synthetic a priori judgments have the status of axioms. Kant, for instance, considers the axioms of Euclidean geometry (1929, B16, A25=B41, & A163=B204) and Newtonian physics (1985b, Ak. 472) to be synthetic a priori.

Synthetic a priori truths can either act as inferential tickets allowing for truth-preserving ampliative inferences or be stated as true statements. Wesley Salmon, in The Foundations of Scientific Inference, maintains that if the claim “any two balls in this urn that have the same color also have the same flavor” were synthetic a priori, it would supply the inference ticket, a rule, for the following ampliative inference, making it demonstrative.

- Some black balls from this urn have been observed.
- All observed black balls in this urn are licorice-flavored.
- Therefore, all black balls in this urn are licorice-flavored (1966, p. 9).

The same ampliative inference could be restated in non-ampliative form with the synthetic a priori truth as a premise (rather than a rule of inference).

- Some black balls from this urn have been observed.
- All observed black balls in this urn are licorice-flavored.
- Any two balls in this urn that have the same color also have the same flavor.
- Therefore, all black balls in this urn are licorice-flavored (1966, p. 9).

This reading of Kant can help in seeing the relation between the (schematized) categories and the axioms of science by making clear the capacity of axioms to be also expressible as specific semantic rules. The categories or the constitutive concepts of experience would then be more general physical semantic rules whose employment brings about specific synthetic a priori truths. Kant also maintains that the axiomatic foundation of an empirical scientific system, such as Newtonian physical science, are derived from the more general axioms of experience (Kant, 1985b, Ak. 473 & 475, fn. 8).

23 These limiting concepts are produced through the synthesis of mere concepts and the notion of an object in general and are systematized due to the special interconnection among the forms of judgments. In order to emphasize this dimension of the synthetic concepts (the categories), Kant contrasts his account of the relation among the categories to that supplied by Aristotle. In book Γ, chapter two of the Metaphysics, Aristotle uses the notion of πρὸς εὐθύνειαν (focal meaning) to show that substance is the primary referent of the other senses of being (the categories). In other words, substance is what unifies the various categories in that the other categories are said of substances. Hence, substance, for Aristotle, is being as such. Kant calls Aristotle’s analogical effort to unify the various fundamental predicates in the notion of substance “rhapsodic” and claims that his own view is more systematic. For Kant, his table of categories is more systematic in that it is developed on the basis of the structure of standard form categorical judgments while Aristotle’s enumeration of the categories lacks this organizational basis (1929, A81=B106-7).

24 In the Preface to the Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science, Kant states that “science proper, especially science of nature, requires a pure part, which lies at the foundation of the empirical part and is based upon an a
priori cognition of natural things. Now to cognize anything a priori is to cognize it from its mere possibility” (1985b, Ak. 470).

It is important to recognize that the categories here are not mere concepts nor concepts of objects in general but constructs involving pure intuitions. In the Preface to the Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science, Kant emphasizes this point in the following manner: “in order to cognize the possibility of determinate natural things, and hence to cognize them a priori, there is ... required that [in addition to the logical forms of judgment] the intuition corresponding to the concept be given a priori, i.e., that the concept be constructed” (1985b, Ak. 470).

The three subordinate ends are in line with the subject matters of the disciplines belonging to Francesco Suarez’s metaphysica specialis (Heidegger, 1982, p. 80) and can also be traced back further to Augustine’s three sciences (disciplina): cosmology, psychology and theology. Having inherited Suarez’s metaphysica specialis, Descartes endorsed the idea that reality is a chain of substances held together and ruled by the highest substance, God, and each portion of which is subject to one of the disciplines. Leibniz inherited Descartes’s scheme, and Kant came upon the metaphysica specialis through the Leibnizians, especially Wolff and Baumgarten.

This notion of moral feeling, as the ground of moral law, has been criticized for ultimately reducing pure interest in the highest good to the empirical conditions of sensibility. Habermas, for instance, in Knowledge and Human Interests, maintains:

Of course, reason cannot become subject to the empirical conditions of sensuality ... If the effect of this singular causality of reason, that is pure practical pleasure, is contingent and attested only by experience, then its cause must be conceived as a fact ... [A] pure interest is conceivable only on the condition that reason, to the same degree that it instills a feeling of pleasure, follows an inclination, no matter how much this differs from immediate inclinations: in reason there is an inherent drive to realize reason. This, in turn, is inconceivable from the transcendental viewpoint (1971, pp. 200-201).

Cora Diamond, in “Wittgenstein and Metaphysics,” writes of a similarity between a “Kantian spirit in ethics and logic” (1991, p. 35) and Wittgenstein’s Tractatus. This similarity concerns “the idea of the understanding as, in its correct use, in agreement not with some external thing but with itself” (1991, p. 29). Now Diamond also writes of “Wittgenstein’s later view of philosophy as laying down no philosophical or metaphysical requirements” (p. 35). This can be taken as a critique of the Tractatus and Frege, but, in what follows, I want to also construe a criticism of Kant on the basis of the above theme in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. Kant’s appeal to supersensible concepts, in ethics, and the categories, in his metaphysics and epistemology, amounts to laying down requirements. This section investigates what becomes of “understanding” once the metaphysical and philosophical requirements are abandoned.

McDowell amplifies this Wittgensteinian response to Kant in this way: “Kant wants subjects of experience and intentional action to be already, just as such, in possession of objective reality. He wants exercises of conceptual powers to be intelligible only as undertaken by subjects who do not need philosophy to regain the world for them. But since he lacks a pregnant notion of second nature, and has no inclination to naturalize spontaneity within the realm of law, the best he can provide in the way of an experiencing and intending subject is the merely formal reference he allows to ‘I’, in the ‘I think’ that must be able to ‘accompany all my representations’” (1994, Lecture 6, §2).

In The Bounds of Sense, P. F. Strawson, to whom McDowell expresses great indebtedness, affirms the viability of this approach to Kant and Wittgenstein thus: “We should remember that all [of] Kant’s treatment of objectivity is managed under a considerable limitation, almost, it might be said, a handicap. He nowhere depends upon, or even refers to, the factor on which Wittgenstein, for example, insists so strongly: the social character of our concepts, the links between thought and speech, speech and communication, communication and social communities ... [A]n other name for the objective is the public” (1966, p. 151).

By “she engages in the practice of Euclidean geometry,” I mean to limit the practitioner to the scope of Euclidean geometry alone. This is not to affirm the special Kantian relation of Euclidean geometry to human
experience (that the axioms of Euclidean geometry are the conditions of experiencing any object in the physical space). The claim that Euclidean geometry is synthetic *a priori* has been refuted. This refutation was not achieved, as many tend to think, through the introduction of non-Euclidean axiomatic systems as such, for the introduction of such systems only showed the relative consistency of these different systems. The refutation was accomplished through the efforts of Helmholtz and Reichenbach. Helmholtz introduced the notion of internal visualization, and Reichenbach, on the other hand, showed that *a priori* knowledge of geometry is to be radically separated from the synthetic geometry (Salmon, 1975, p. 23). The latter is only an interpretation of the former through coordinating definitions. Therefore, it is impossible to assert *a priori* that a system of geometry is the one that organizes human experience.

P. F. Strawson, in *The Bounds of Sense*, distinguishes phenomenal geometry and physical geometry in line with the above distinction between *a priori* knowledge of geometry and synthetic geometry respectively. Strawson, then, maintains that “Kant’s fundamental error, for which, at that stage in the history of science, he can scarcely be reproached, lay in not distinguishing between Euclidean geometry in its phenomenal interpretation and Euclidean geometry in its physical interpretations ... And this mystery does invite the suggestion that the geometry of phenomenal space embodies, as it were, conditions under which alone things can count as things in space, as physical objects, for us” (1966, p. 285).