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Reply to Edward Kanterian

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Abstract

The reply to Kanterian offers a rebuttal of his central criticisms. It reaffirms the difference between Kant's arguments in the Aesthetic and at B 148-9; it rejects the alleged error of logic in Fischer's (and my) arguments; and it rejects Kanterian's reading of passages in the Preface (A xx-xxii) and of the Amphiboly. Beyond these specific points Kanterian assumes that Kant's project in the first *Critique* cannot be understood as a 'descriptive metaphysics' and so begs the question at issue.

Keywords: neglected alternative, Trendelenburg, Fischer, descriptive metaphysics, scepticism

The Trendelenburg/Fischer dispute in the 1860s has a historical interest but its development into an acrimonious polemic considerably diminished its philosophical value.[1] In my accounts (Bird 2006: ch. 9, 173–8; 2010: 486–99) I set aside those aspects of the disagreement to focus on one feature where it seemed to me that Fischer, in criticising Trendelenburg, made a valuable contribution to the philosophical understanding of Kant. His point was essentially to disambiguate, as Kant plainly wished to do, the deplorably unclear general philosophical distinction between what is 'subjective' ('ideal') and what is 'objective' ('real'). Others of Fischer's views, as both Kanterian and I note,[2] were more problematic, and I shall not pursue them. Nor is it my wish to continue the polemical tone in the debate, or to pursue the wider literature cited in Kanterian's notes (especially nn. 12, 18), but only to indicate what seem to me to be serious errors in his objections to my account.

Kanterian's primary objections are that my account misrepresented Trendelenburg, that Kant *had* failed to consider the neglected alternative in the Aesthetic, and had not remedied that neglect later at B148–9 as I claimed. Two crucial grounds for the objections are first

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that my account commits an alleged logical error (Kanterian, p. 273), and that in any case a passage from Trendelenburg demonstrates that he distinguished types of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' just as Fischer (and I) did (p. 274–5). In the concluding pages Kanterian rehearses a traditionalist[3] account of Kant's transcendental idealism whose central feature is a commitment to the real existence of things in themselves as an antidote to a traditional and Cartesian philosophical scepticism about knowledge of reality (p. 279).

In section 1 I examine the central objection that I failed to recognize the character of Trendelenburg's neglected alternative; I consider first the Aesthetic (section 1.1) and then B 148-149 (section 1.2). In section 2 I examine A's two central objections first that the criticisms of ambiguity in Trendelenburg commit a logical fallacy (section 2.1) and second that in any case Trendelenburg acknowledged the ambiguity in a quoted passage (section 2.2). Finally in section 3 I say something of Kanterian's traditionalist account of transcendental idealism in opposition to my view that Kant's project is properly understood as a 'descriptive metaphysics'. It is evidently not possible here to address that issue in the detail given throughout Bird 2006, but I note how much more extensive that detail is than Kanterian recognizes, and reject his reading of two brief passages in the Preface and Amphiboly which I used (in Bird 2010) to indicate that project of a descriptive metaphysics.

1. The Character of Trendelenburg's Neglected Alternative

Kanterian (and Trendelenburg) represent Kant's view in the Aesthetic as: since space and time are *a priori,* necessary and intuitive, they are 'subjective' and do not therefore belong to 'objective' things in themselves (p. 276–7). They belong exclusively, that is only, to appearances. But the suggestion is that this does not take into consideration a further option, which is that space and time belong *both* to (subjective) appearances *and* to (objective) things in themselves. Two questions plainly arise here. First is whether Trendelenburg's 'subjective/objective' distinction accurately represents Kant's position, and second whether Kant's inference from 'belong to appearances' to 'do not belong to things in themselves' is warranted. Trendelenburg believed that he represented Kant's position accurately but that Kant's inference was unwarranted. He further claimed that in drawing the unwarranted conclusion Kant had opened the way to a traditional scepticism in which we lack 'objective' knowledge of things in themselves (Abstract).

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My counter claim is that Trendelenburg's unqualified distinction between what is subjective and what is objective (3A) does not accurately represent Kant's more complex division between what is transcendentally and what is empirically 'ideal' (subjective$_{1,\ 2}$), and what is transcendentally and what is empirically 'real' (objective$_{1,\ 2}$). I also hold that Kant's inference in the Aesthetic from the character of our experience of space and time to the conclusion that they do not belong to things in themselves is correct; and that our ignorance of things in themselves is not an invitation to scepticism about the (phenomenal) knowledge we do have. That knowledge is provided in what Kant calls an 'empirical reality' compatible with his 'transcendental ideality'.[4]

1.1. The Aesthetic

I outline relevant features of the Aesthetic not merely to repeat what I have previously said but to note what Kanterian seems not to have understood or acknowledged. In line with Kant's aim in the Aesthetic to 'isolate' *a priori* elements in our experience (B5–6), the detailed arguments demonstrate that space and time in our experience are both *a priori* and intuitive. Neither Trendelenburg nor Kanterian question those demonstrations. What they question is the conclusion from those demonstrations that space and time belong to appearances and not to things in themselves. Or rather they do not question that space and time in our experience belong to appearances but only that they do not (cannot) also belong to things in themselves. Yet both the *a priori* and the intuitive character of space and time in our experience conflict with their belonging to things in themselves.[5] For things in themselves are items wholly independent of our cognitive powers and with no necessary link to our intuition and sensibility. If space and time, as we understand and deploy them in perception, in science and in mathematics, are independent of our cognitive powers then any properties we ascribe to them will be *a posteriori* not *a priori*. By the same token whatever the properties of things in themselves may be they have no necessary link with our intuition; and yet it is our intuition which (according to the undisputed arguments in the Metaphysical Exposition) constitutes the spatio-temporal form of our experience. These features combine to show the dependence on our cognitive (sensory) powers of that spatio-temporal experience and which mark their characterization as (transcendentally but not empirically) ideal (or subjective). If, therefore, we ask the question: given the demonstrated character of space and time as we experience them can they (as such) belong to things in themselves?, the answer is patently 'No'.

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1.2. The Passage at B148–9

It might be said that there would be no need to cite another passage against Trendelenburg if it is evident that the disputed inference in the Aesthetic is correct. But the appeal to B148–9 is important because it reveals another, related, unclarity in Trendelenburg's position. I distinguish two often confused questions, one from the Aesthetic considered above and a different question from B148–9. It is in relation to these different questions that the later passage is significant.

In the Aesthetic, as I have represented it, Kant asks the question:

> (1) If our experience of space and time is as the Metaphysical Expositions say, could that experience be ascribed to things in themselves?

The answer outlined above is: No; that experience has to be characterized as 'appearance' with the weak 'mind-dependence' associated with transcendental idealism and in contrast to the strong mind-dependence of empirical idealism.[7]

At B148–9 Kant puts a different question:

> (2) Suppose that there are things in themselves beyond our cognitive experience (and therefore beyond *our* experience of space and time); could they have (some form of) spatio-temporality?

(1) and (2) are different questions, even though commentators (including Kanterian) do not always distinguish them. In particular Kant's negative answer to (1) does not provide any answer to (2). An unqualified negative answer to (2) might be given so long as there is a strict prohibition on any meaningful description of things in themselves. Kant comes close to such a position but does *not* hold that references to things in themselves are meaningless.[6] As I put it in Bird 2006, for Kant reference to things in themselves has in our case a *cognitive* but not a *semantic* deficit, so that an affirmative answer to (2) would be feasible so long as the cognitive deficit attached to reference to things in themselves is retracted. But by this time in the first *Critique* Kant has made explicitly clear that we can have no knowledge without some reference to sensibility (B75–6). This, I believe, is why the issue emerges at this point in the Transcendental Deduction; it does not merely repeat the Aesthetic position in answer to (1), but raises and answers the quite

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different question (2). Even in the light of that general restriction of our knowledge Kant's position allows him to offer a qualified negative answer to (2).

The answer to (2) given at B148–9 is more complex and less decisive than that provided for (1).[7] This is bound to be so since Kant has now affirmed that we can have no knowledge of things in themselves, that is, knowledge of independent objects involving no appeal to sensibility. Kant has the same kind of difficulty here that he has in characterizing an 'intellectual intuition' (B68, 72, 158–9, etc.) or those 'analogical' references beyond our experience which he accepts (and thinks important) as on the borderlines of our knowledge and understanding (B310–11; *Prol.* §§57–9; 4: 350–62). Essentially the point is that, though we lack positive knowledge of purported things in themselves, nevertheless we can characterize them as at least *not* having the spatio-temporal features which *we* recognize in experience (B149). Such an alien[8] experience (as Kanterian rightly calls it, p. 270) cannot be quite like ours because it would have to be mediated by some (intellectual) form of intuition of which we have no more positive knowledge. Kanterian accepts this in allowing on Kant's behalf some 'analytic' features of things in themselves but not any more positive 'synthetic' features, but he has failed to see how such an account differs from the conclusion in the Aesthetic and does not, as he thinks, merely repeat it. The account, moreover, meets Trendelenburg's requirement that Kant should consider that space and time might belong *both* to appearances (in our experience) *and* to things in themselves (outside our experience).

Unsurprisingly, however, Kanterian does allow himself a formal criticism of Kant's position at B148–9 in a familiar dilemma. When Kant supports his qualified admission of those negative, analytic, claims about things in themselves by appealing to an inevitable difference in the required intuition (intellectual as opposed to sensory) Kanterian objects that this either retracts the claim that we know nothing of things in themselves or else disallows even the negative, analytic, claims. That strict formal view is, however, not consistent with his apparent willingness to admit some analytic claims about things in themselves (p. 270). If this is a genuine formal objection to Kant then it will apply also to Kanterian; but evidently there is some room for at least an analytic understanding of a (transcendental) 'thing in itself'. Such things in themselves have to be understood, defined, in some way, and those definitions will ground just the analytic claims Kanterian (and Kant) are prepared to accept. That definition includes their independence from our cognitive powers and

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their inaccessibility to our forms of intuition. Those features are for Kant demonstrably so unlike *our* necessary cognitive powers as to warrant the qualified negative answer which Kant gives to question (2). Kanterian's dilemma is an empty formal gesture.

2. The Central Ambiguity in the 'Subjective (Ideal)/Objective (Real)' distinction

Kanterian has two central objections against the claim that Trendelenburg misrepresents Kant's complex 'subjective/objective' distinctions. First is the suggestion that to mark these ambiguities in Trendelenburg's account commits some logical error (section 2.1); second is the claim, supported by a quoted passage, that Trendelenburg recognized the same complex distinctions as Fischer and I (and Kant) (section 2.2). My response to these criticisms is first that the logical point is spurious, and second that the interpretation of the quotation is unclear and contentious. The passage shows only that Trendelenburg recognized *some* of the complex terminology from Kant. It does not show that his distinctions are exactly those advocated by Fischer, myself and Kant, and is even interpretable in a way which conflicts with Kanterian's account.

2.1. An Alleged Logical Error in the Charge of Ambiguity

The claimed point of logic arises from Fischer's primary complaint that Trendelenburg's arguments contain a significant ambiguity in his use of 'subjective (ideal)' and 'objective (real)'. It is easy to see how this might affect the validity of an associated argument, for with the relevant ambiguities in premises and conclusion it may be interpretable as having true premises and a false conclusion and so judged invalid. Kanterian, however, understands such cases differently; he claims that such an argument with these significant ambiguities 'is logically impeccable, valid if not sound as long as [its terms] are used unequivocally' (p. 273). But it seems to me absurd to defend any such argument as 'logically impeccable' by saying that if its terms were *not* ambiguous it might be represented as a generally valid form. This is an appeal not to logic but to pseudo-logic. I am confident that Kanterian and I can agree on some appropriate descriptions for such faulty arguments containing significant ambiguities, but 'logically impeccable' will not be among them.

2.2. Trendelenburg's Claimed Acknowledgement of the Ambiguities

Kanterian moves towards a more promising point in claiming that Trendelenburg recognized the disputed ambiguity in Kant's four-fold account of empirical/transcendental ideality/reality, and expressed the

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distinctions in a quoted passage. That the passage is inadequate for this purpose can be shown summarily since the passage does not even refer to all four items in Kant's catalogue. The only two Kantian terms used are 'empirical objectivity' and 'transcendental reality'. Kanterian suggests that we reserve 'empirical subjectivity' for Kant's 'empirical idealism', but neither of these terms, nor the term 'transcendental ideality', are mentioned in the passage.

The issue in any case is not simply whether Trendelenburg recognized that Kant *has* a four-fold division, but rather how he understands each term in Kant's classification. The question (made clear throughout Bird 2010, especially 488–9, 491–3) is particularly how Trendelenburg understands the distinction between empirical and transcendental idealism and how it relates to their (weak or strong) forms of mind-dependence. But here the noted gaps, and other obscurities, in the passage prevent it from providing a clear answer. Consider, for example, two issues of interpretation. Kanterian suggests that we associate 'exclusive subjectivity' with transcendental idealism as a rejection of transcendental realism. But an empiricist might reject transcendental realism without subscribing to any form of idealism. Kant's rejection of transcendental realism clearly leads him to accept some form of idealism, and mind-dependence, but the passage offers no account of that commitment. Again, consider the suggestion that what Kant calls 'empirical objectivity' is necessarily 'conditioned' by the character of the space and time in which that empirical objectivity obtains. But that conditioning character in what James called 'the great envelopes' of space and time (James 1912: 94; 1918: 2, 135–6) is *their* 'exclusive subjectivity' which falls short of Trendelenburg's required anti-sceptical objectivity. It is in this way that Trendelenburg convinces himself that Kant cannot support the required objectivity and must give way to a Cartesian scepticism (p. 279). Construed in that way the passage might be said to reflect Trendelenburg's empirically idealist scepticism about our objective (even empirical) knowledge.[9]

3. The Wider Context of Transcendental Idealism

That reference to what, according to Trendelenburg, Kant would need to establish against an idealist scepticism (knowledge of real things in themselves) points immediately to the considerable question of our, and Kant's, understanding of transcendental idealism. Because it is so wide-ranging neither Kanterian nor I can seriously deal with it in this context. He replaces a fuller discussion with two limited objections to

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my treatment of Kant's project as a 'descriptive metaphysics'. For in Bird 2010 I had pointed to two passages in support of that view, namely the Preface 'inventory' metaphor and the account of transcendental reflection and its outcome in a transcendental topic in the Amphiboly. Because Kanterian inevitably says little of the wider evidence cited in favour of Kant's descriptive metaphysics in Bird 2006,[10] his general (traditionalist) account of transcendental idealism functions in this context only as an expression of an approach in conflict with mine rather than as any evidence in its favour. Nevertheless Kanterian provides vigorous objections to my account of those two passages from the Preface and the Amphiboly and here it is feasible to show that his objections are misconceived.

3.1. The Preface 'Inventory' Passage

Kant, like Leibniz, calls for a proper 'inventory' of our knowledge/experience (Bird 2006: ch. 2, p. 28) and in a Preface (Axx–xxii) proposes that his new 'metaphysics' should follow such a plan. Kanterian's objection to this is that in the passage Kant is connecting that project *not* to the propaedeutic *Critique* but only to the later applied metaphysics in, for example, the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. To read the passage in that way seems to me quite unjustified; it is to strain too hard to press a text into a preconceived interpretation. The metaphysics which embodies the inventory is specifically associated in the passage with the *Critique,* for the 'complete' system which Kant envisages comprises *both* the complete principles of the system (outlined in the *Critique*) *and* what he calls the 'derivative, richer' detail of the later work. There is nothing in that contrast, or in the associated difference between approaching the work in its two parts as a 'judge' or as a 'fellow worker', which restricts the inventory metaphor to the later, derivative project. The natural message is that the metaphor applies to both projects; or, more accurately, to the two parts (general and particular) of the one central, revolutionary, project.

Kanterian adds the surprising objection that the project of a descriptive metaphysics 'does not accord with the method of the *Critique*' because the latter involves 'direct and indirect proofs, refutations, deductions, etc.' (p. 280). Why it should be assumed that a descriptive metaphysics *cannot* contain such material is not explained. Should we expect Strawson's descriptive metaphysics in *Individuals* to contain no proofs, refutations or deductions?[11] Should we suppose that geographers, cartographers and navigators do not carry out calculations, engage in argument and deduce or refute associated views? Of course Kant's

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(and Leibniz's) metaphysical inventory is not exactly like a simple list of items on the supermarket shelves. Kant has to *argue*, as he evidently does, for the proposed *a priori* structure of experience and the general principles which embody it.

The essential point in the project of a descriptive metaphysics, which Kanterian misses, is that Kant's revolutionary aim is to *begin* with an accurate account of our experience *before* engaging in the standard philosophical arguments about it; we are to see how things in experience *are* (what experience *contains*, how it is *articulated*) *before* we plunge directly into the received (and endless, undecidable) philosophical issues over the justification for any such items in experience[12] (*Prol.* 4: 255; *Critique*, Preface Aviii–x). A good example of the benefits of such a revolutionary approach is the demonstration in the Refutation of Idealism that a traditional idealist scepticism was based erroneously on a mistaken order of priorities between inner and outer experience. In that case, as in others, the upshot is to question and perhaps reject a traditional, often idle, scepticism associated with an unthinking 'school metaphysics'. But the refutation of a sceptical position here rests on a careful examination of the actual relationships between items in a given experience.

3.2. The Amphiboly's Transcendental Topic

In the Note to the Amphiboly (B324) Kant offers a general characterization of 'a transcendental topic' as one in which we decide 'the place which belongs to every concept according to the difference in the use to which it is put and the directions for determining this place'. On the following page he fits this project more specifically into the (preceding and succeeding) criticism of Leibniz and appeals again more generally to 'a transcendental reflection' as a procedure for determining the 'location of the representations of the things compared, … whether thought by pure understanding or given in appearance by sensibility'. Two objections are made by Kanterian to the suggestion that Kant's project in the *Critique* can be understood as providing a transcendental topic based on a transcendental reflection, of which the criticism of Leibniz is a specific example. First these general notions are 'not congruent with the Critical project or even the Doctrine of Elements'; second that the Amphiboly procedure remains open to the traditionalist criticism that Kant regards 'thinking a thing in itself' as necessary despite the fact that categories are inapplicable to it. I say nothing here of the second complaint which is a familiar but more extensive puzzle in Kant and which is answered in Bird 2006: chs 22–23.

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As in 3.1 it seems to me short-sighted and unjustified to impose Kanterian's restrictions on the scope of Kant's terminology; in this case to restrict a transcendental topic and transcendental reflection merely to the specific criticisms of Leibniz in the Amphiboly. Kant makes very clear how this procedure prepares the way for all the diagnostic, 'ground-clearing' activities in the following Dialectic. The procedure incorporates a diagnosis of philosophical error which goes beyond the case of Leibniz, and is, apparently in conflict with what Kanterian says, quite evidently asssociated with the Doctrine of Elements in its essential appeal to what belongs strictly to the senses and to the understanding. Even if the transcendental topic were confined to the four heads of comparison they are in any case so wide-ranging (covering the 'inner/outer', the 'matter/form', and 'appearance/thing in itself' distinctions) as to involve a great deal of what Kant outlines in the Aesthetic, Analytic and Dialectic.

Kanterian endorses Trendelenburg's belief that Kant has failed to resolve a scepticism about knowledge of things in themselves, even though it is evident that Kant regards such a philosophical aim as hopelessly misguided. This marks a fundamental disagreement between Kanterian and myself over the importance and value of philosophical scepticism which cannot be resolved here. Kanterian asks: 'What sceptic will be silenced by the assertion that experience is not offered a justification but taken as a datum?' But this disregards the possibility that Kant's project does not even aim to silence such a sceptic. It might also be said to be precisely because *nothing* can silence the sceptic that it is better simply to disregard that fruitless argument and turn to something more rewarding. It is difficult not to see that attitude echoed in Kant's remarks about the endless and futile oscillation from scepticism to dogmatism and back again (Aviii–x). Kant's aim is not to join in that philosophical roundabout but to find a more rewarding method of bypassing it. In assuming, with Trendelenburg, that the primary goal must be to rebut, or at least address, such philosophical scepticism Kanterian begs the question against a Kant who endorses the project of a descriptive metaphysics. He has apparently not understood that, so construed, Kant repudiates that assumption.

Notes

1 The idea of translating some of the documents in the Trendelenburg–Fischer dispute occurred to me at one point but their philosophical, as opposed to historical, value did not seem to me in the end to justify the attempt. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are given to the A and B edition pages; references to the *Prolegomena* are given to sections or Akademie edition pages.

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2 Kanterian, in this issue, pp. 278–9; Bird 2010: 486, 491.

3 I outlined a set of features associated with a 'traditionalist' interpretation, in opposition to a 'revolutionary' account, of Kant in Bird 2006: ch. 1. It is clear that both Trendelenburg and Kanterian qualify as 'traditionalists' while I regard myself and the Fischer I approve as 'revolutionaries'. I say more of this contrast in relation to traditional scepticism in n. 12.

4 Kanterian offers diverse accounts of the relationship between transcendental idealism and empirical realism. On p. 275 he identifies (equates) the two but also says only that the former 'establishes' (entails) the latter. On p. 279 he ascribes to me the view that the former doctrine actually *entails* the latter, although I had made it clear (Bird 2010: 493, 495, 497–8; 2006: 167, 179, 191) that I did not hold that view. My claims are that the two doctrines plainly form an integral package for Kant, and that his idealism is compatible with, but does not entail, empirical realism.

5 I add the qualification 'transcendental' because it is important to recognize that Kant allows reference to 'empirical' things in themselves as unexceptionable. The latter cover what Kant calls objects of experience, as he explains in his account of the contrast between raindrops and rainbows (B62–3). In what follows I refer to transcendental things in themselves without adding the qualification except where it is useful to emphasize the distinction.

6 I note that in Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense* (Strawson 1966) the text and the title *have* given the mistaken impression that Kant thought reference to (transcendental) things in themselves was meaningless.

7 The answer given to (1) in the Aesthetic is not speculative but decisive; the answer to (2) at B148–9 is unavoidably both speculative and indecisive. It is, to use Kant's preferred terminology, 'problematic', which does not mean that it lacks meaning or justification. Throughout the Dialectic and the *Prolegomena* (e.g. §§57–59, 4: 350–62) Kant allows such problematic references to have a legitimate function and value, as analogical or boundary concepts (B310–11; cf. Bird 2006: 572–4, 753–4). I add that Kant's difficulties in this context reflect similar problems that arose in the discussion of the possibility of an 'auditory' quasi-spatial world in Strawson 1959: ch. 3 and Bennett 1966: ch. 3. So far as I know the issue never received any resolution except perhaps Strawson's conclusion, echoing Kant's position, that the outcome is indeterminate (Strawson 1959: ch. 2, 63, 85–6).

8 Kanterian seems to accept this terminology himself in outlining the B148–9 passage (p. 270), although elsewhere (p. 285) he seems to regard such references to 'alien' cognition in Fischer's and my comments as 'un-Kantian'. He says: 'Fischer's and Bird's talk about two kinds of reality distracts from the issue at stake and is quite un-Kantian'. This is puzzling and arguably incoherent; but in any case Kant is plainly highly sensitive to the restriction of his own account to 'our' human experience (cf. 'the human standpoint', B42–3) and appeals often to alternative 'alien' experiences different from our own. Kant notoriously speaks of the 'appearance/thing in itself' distinction in terms of 'two worlds' (A 249), and in the third Analogy even envisages the possibility of some form of spatio-temporality beyond our cognitive reach (B261). There is nothing un-Kantian in this.

9 It would be interesting to find that Trendelenburg did adequately recognize Kant's complex distinctions but that would require a more extensive survey of his views than merely this one passage. Any convergence between Kant's and Trendelenburg's views, however, would conflict with the evident divergence between them over the status of our knowledge of things in themselves. Trendelenburg thinks that such knowledge is *required* in order to rebut philosophical scepticism while Kant thinks that this

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is a mistake. For Kant our knowledge is adequately accommodated within empirical (not transcendental) realism, within appearances and not things in themselves. For him Trendelenburg's requirement for rebutting philosophical scepticism rests on a philosophers' myth, which needs demythologizing of the kind Kant applies to Leibniz in the Amphiboly. As in many other cases, Kant is sceptical about philosophers, especially those bound to the routine issues of a school metaphysics, but not sceptical about our genuine knowledge in e.g. science and mathematics.

10 Nothing is said of the supporting account in Bird 2006 of Kant's attitude to scepticism (ch. 11), his distinction between empirical and transcendental enquiry (ch. 5), his use of the 'isolation' method of identifying essential features in experience (ch. 3), or of the extensive geographical, cartographic and navigational metaphors which, along with the inventory imagery, reflect a descriptive metaphysics. In particular almost nothing is said of the extensive discussion of Adickes's interpretation of many well known 'idealistic' passages in Kant (ch. 23) including *Prolegomena*, §13, 4: 290–4 and Fourth Paralogism (A), both of which Kanterian wrongly treats as uncontentious Kantian commitments to things in themselves (chs 10, 23).

11 I note the point (in Bird 2003: 67–86) that Strawson changed his mind about 'descriptive metaphysics' between *Individuals* (Strawson 1959) and *Skepticism and Naturalism* (Strawson 1985). In *Individuals* part of his argument was directed explicitly at a rebuttal of a general philosophical scepticism, but in the latter he had given up such an argument and suggested that we should simply bypass, rather than attempt to refute, such scepticism (Strawson 1985: 3, 10, 19, 23, 29).

12 Philosophers, of course, take different views about the significance of philosophical scepticism. Strawson (1985) and, I believe, Kant see it as a relic of an exhausted philosophical tradition in a routine and unthinking 'school metaphysics', but this was evidently not Stroud's view (1984). However, in this context it cannot be simply taken for granted that a relevant traditional scepticism is a central target for Kant, or epistemology generally, without begging the question.

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