

An Evaluation of Kant's Transcendental Idealism Using the Inversion Theory of Truth

Abstract:

This paper examines the work of Immanuel Kant in the light of a new theory on the nature of truth, knowledge and falsehood (the Inversion Theory of Truth). Kant's idea that knowledge could be absolutely certain, and that its truth must correspond with reality, is discredited by a dissection of the Correspondence Theory of Truth. This examination of the nature of truth, as well as knowledge and falsehood, is conducted with reference to Sir Karl Popper's writings on regulative ideas, the criterion of demarcation and the principle of falsifiability. It is argued that if truth is to be regarded as certain, it should be used to describe objects and events in the objective (noumenal) state, and that subjective knowledge must contain (and is improved by) falsehood. Perceptions and knowledge are obtained by the biological and evolutionary process of Active Subjectivism. Ideas we have knowledge of can be metaphysical or scientific, according to Popper's Criterion of Demarcation. Kant's "Copernican revolution" claim that our intellect imposes absolutely true laws on nature could not allow for the possibility that ideas might be constructed from fallible perceptions, and hence that all knowledge is uncertain. Instead, he developed a Critique of Practical Reason in which religion, though not provable through logical reasoning, could be proved by our innate moral sense, giving us a Categorical Imperative that could lead to perverse results. By rejecting the absolute certainty of a priori knowledge, and admitting a degree of essential falsehood, we arrive at a more reasonable grounding for moral behavior.

Keywords:

Inversion Theory of Truth, Active Subjectivism, essential falsehood, representational inexactitude, falsifiability, Transcendental Idealism, Categorical Imperative.

Introduction

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) set out with the objective of criticizing reason, particularly that of Hume, whose skepticism & empiricism had in one blow demolished the stature of both science and religion, and which awoke Kant, he said, from a "dogmatic slumber". He began with the standpoint that knowledge, rather than the objective state, could be an absolute certainty (Kant 1787). It was an understandable assumption, given his background. Nonetheless, this self-styled revolutionary philosopher missed an opportunity to overthrow accepted wisdom and to reconfigure the course of his subject by means of adopting an unconventional theory of truth.

To explain what I believe to be the severity of this mistake, it is necessary to examine a

new theory of truth, knowledge and falsehood propounded by the author and introduced to the world in Professor Jeremy Shearmur's 2021 Second International Zoom Conference on the Philosophy of Sir Karl Popper (Lugten 2021). Called the "Inversion Theory of Truth", it was developed by the author to resolve the seemingly intractable conflicts between relativist, pragmatist and absolutist philosophies, by showing how they were misdirected by the Correspondence Theory of Truth. In this paper, I examine the impact of this new theory on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

A Comparison of the Inversion and the Correspondence Theories of Truth

Sir Karl Popper was a strong proponent of the Correspondence Theory of Truth. It is generally agreed that so was Kant, who wrote: "Truth is said to consist in the agreement of knowledge with the object. According to this mere verbal definition, then, my knowledge, in order to be true, must agree with the object". His use of the term "mere verbal" shows he had his doubts, and he continued; "Now, I can only compare the object with my knowledge by this means, namely, *by taking knowledge of it*. My knowledge, then, is to be verified by itself, which is far from being sufficient for the truth" (Kant 1800). Unfortunately, as I'll try to show, in choosing a response to these epistemological doubts, he did not choose wisely. To demonstrate the inadequacy of the Correspondence Theory, I will start with an example from Popper's "Conjectures and Refutations": For any sentence "x", "x" is true if, and only if, it corresponds to the facts, x. This he exemplified as follows: "Smith walked into the pawnshop at 10:15" is true if, and only if, Smith walked into the pawnshop at 10:15 (Popper 1963).

We can examine the problem of correspondence with Smith, who, as we have seen, walked into the pawnshop at 10:15. In citing Smith, Popper chose a statement of historical fact to serve as his example. For "x", he could have chosen a contemporary fact, such as "The Tower of London overlooks the Thames", or a religious claim held as fact by believers, such as "Thor has a powerful hammer named Mjolnir". He could have chosen a scientific statement of fact, either historical or contemporary, such as "Birds evolved from dinosaurs", or, "In the Sun, hydrogen is converted into helium". All these statements have attendant problems concerning their possible truth. The Thames is not the same at successive moments, and neither is the Tower. Fantastical statements can't be held as true without compelling evidence. If watching a fast-forward replay of the end-Cretaceous, who could pause it, point to a creature, and exclaim "This is the first bird!"? A true description of a nuclear reaction must include the uncertainties involved with quantum happenings. Popper could also have chosen an explanatory statement, or theory, instead of an unvarnished fact: "Smith walked into the pawnshop because he wished to reclaim an item". But can the word "Smith" correspond to the person Smith? The word "Smith" has remained unchanged since its first appearance in this context in 1963, while the person Smith, after so many years as an example of epistemology, may be assumed to have grown in wisdom since

entering the pawnshop at 10:15, if, indeed, it was exactly 10:15. Besides doubt as to the self-conscious identity of Smith, important if he were pleading insanity before a jury, there is the question of evidence: on whose testimony can we validate the statement, or whose wristwatch? Can a “true” statement, which might later be contradicted, about a person, who is now a changed person, have any meaning? All these statements could correspond to the truth, while, at the same time, possess a degree of uncertainty about themselves. The problem of “correspondence” means that “true” statements exist, but they fall within a blur of inherent uncertainty. This blurring echoes that described by physicist Carlo Rovelli as an uncertainty in our perception of the macroscopic world, quantified by entropy, as a determinant of thermodynamic time (Rovelli 2018). As a result of this “blurring”, we can neither make nor recognize true statements. Within that blurred uncertainty, truth resembles a stopped clock; even when exactly correct, it cannot tell you precisely when that is.

Popper recognized that the “truth of a statement” is regulatory, analogous, in its accuracy, to the measurement of a length, which can never be exactly attainable, but which can be close enough for functionality. It has what is called “truth content”, but it also has an “information content”. The truth content is gained by a statement being a good approximation of the facts, while the information content is proportional to the precision of its claim. The less likely a statement is to be correct, the more information it contains. The truth content cannot exceed the information content, however, a very precise statement, with high information content, can be far from the truth. At 10:15, the precise statement “It is ten o’clock” is false, but it agrees correctly that it is neither 8 am nor 2 pm. It has to blur only 15 minutes to qualify for a high truth content, while the truth content of statements of the time more distant from 10:15, like 8 o’clock, require that much more blurring to be accommodated. It has a high information content because of its precision, in stating an exact time instead of a range, but the truth content is reduced by the amount of blurring necessary to accommodate the actual correct time. Its high information content nonetheless makes it more useful than the “true” statement “It is between 7 am and 3 pm”. False information inaccurate only to the degree of 15 minutes beats a true statement that is 8 hours vague. It accommodates our quest to know the time with a much smaller degree of blurring. One could say that it has a higher “knowledge content”. Content is inversely proportional to likelihood. Paradoxically, the true statement with the highest information content would be so accurate, with so little blurring, that the likelihood of its being measurable would approach zero.

This is so at odds with the dictionary definition of “truth”, implying something that is 100% complete, certain and self-consistent, that confusion is bound to result. The Inversion Theory of Truth solves these problems, and supports Popper’s Criterion of Demarcation and principle of falsifiability. Combined, these ideas can resolve self-contradictions and inconsistencies in the work of other philosophers that still disrupt people’s lives today.

Popper's epistemology divided our experiences into what he classified as World 1, 2 and 3, representing different objective/ subjective realms (Popper 1972). I propose to give a definitive location to the concepts of truth and knowledge within this very useful framework.

It's commonly said; "The truth must be out there; it will be discovered one day". This places truth in Popper's World 1, the "objective state". The objective state is the world as it would exist in the absence of any conscious beings to experience it. Here, things exist as objects, which are typically congregations of components assembled in a particular way for a period of time, making them events in time. Interestingly, when objects *are* experienced, they acquire a property that is not materially a part of them in any way: the property of being known.

There is also the phrase "To know the truth". Knowledge belongs to World 2, otherwise, the "subjective state", and there is a process by which transference from World 1 to World 2 occurs - by which the object/event is subjectivised. This process, which I call Active Subjectivism, results in World 2 knowledge. I will demonstrate that this knowledge is different from and can never be equal to, or "of the" truth. Subsequently, the knower can transfer, by speaking, writing or building something, the knowledge of World 2 into World 3, where it becomes objective knowledge, but still not truth, even though it may be written on a truth-item, World 1 page of paper. Knowledge in World 3 can interact intersubjectively with other people, including future generations of people, when it is subjectivized by being listened to or being read, or otherwise experienced.

I'll note that there's one other realm outside the objective state where the word truth applies, that being our intra-subjective personal experience, including the emotional sensations we experience, together with thoughts about our moods, aspirations, sentiments and affections. These sensations, such as joy, anger, fear, hunger and love, are an aspect of our experience we can call introspection, and they have an objective quality in that they refer to aspects of the physical status of our bodies. Thus, I could truly state the subjective experience that "My toe hurts", or "I am happy", and romantic philosophers will still be able to experience True Love. However, intrasubjective reports are special cases of the truth-concept, which cannot be directly experienced by others.

Because I defy the common definition and usage of "truth" as something objective known with certainty in the subjective state, and place the definition of truth as an absolute certainty into the objective state, I call this the Inversion Theory of Truth. Logically, the word "truth" can be used to mean "certain" in the objective state and introspectively, but must be considered as uncertain and inappropriate when applied to statements about the subjective state.

There are three aspects of this theory I wish to consider: (1) the ontogeny of the subjective state, (2) how this leads to an analysis of ideas, and (3) Popper's idea of falsification.

(1) The ontogeny of the subjective state is a process I call Active Subjectivism. It is the active process of subjectivization of an object or event in World 1. It is performed by biological organisms heavily selected for through evolution, so that they will respond appropriately towards

stimuli important for their survival. For any given species, a problem, such as how to find food, will be met with evolutionary options, such as enhanced vision, hearing, or sense of smell, and adaptations appropriate to that species would be selected for. The organism's "view" of the world is shaped by the circumstances of its evolutionary history.

The emphasis that an individual will accord to aspects of its perception, and hence, to a large extent, the form its knowledge will take, will depend upon its biological requirements. Active subjectivism allows a selectivity in knowledge processing that ensures optimal speed and efficiency. In the 1940's, neurophysiologists demonstrated that the eyes of a frog will forward to its brain only the information it needs for survival. For instance, out of reflex, the frog will snap forth its tongue in a fly-catching movement whenever a black spot moves across its visual field, no matter what the spot actually is. Furthermore, the frog seems oblivious to stationary stimuli. Therefore, what you or I might not recognize until we had tracked it down by its noise and then observed the shape of, the frog has recognized as its next meal on the basis of a single moving image, and has already eaten. Clearly, this difference in response time is critical to the survival of an animal that depends on flies as a staple of its diet. Contrariwise, it would not help us to perceive flies in such a batrachian fashion not only because flies are not a popular menu item in polite society, but also because a frog, it was concluded, "will starve to death surrounded by food if the food is not moving" (Lettvin 1942)

The mental process of creating perceptions introduces into World 2 the invention of sensations, or qualia, that don't exist in World 1. To that extent, they meet the following definition of falsehood: that which exists subjectively but has no counterpart objectively. There are 2 types of falsehood. "Essential falsehoods" are subjective inventions necessarily added to the object/event in the process of subjectivization.

Since the very property of "being known" is included within this definition of falsehood, all knowledge of the objective world, counter-intuitively, is basically false. However, this very basic essential level of falsehood has minimal practical impact on our affairs. It is necessary to understand what the effects of essential falsehood are and what are the limits of its influence.

"Superessential falsehoods" are deliberate subjective misrepresentations, i.e., lies. Essential falsehood is incorporated by the information-processing infrastructure of our sense organs to become integrated step by step into our perception. Vision, perhaps our most sophisticated mode of perception, is inherently unfaithful to the objective world. It provides us with a prime example of a quale, defined as a property as it is experienced as distinct from any source it might have in a physical object. The very colors that we experience so vibrantly are merely differences in the energy of massless particles called photons, which are perceived as color by the brain.

One can go further and mention that one in 100,000 persons are reported to share a neurological condition called synesthesia, whereby sounds are able to evoke the visualization of corresponding colors. This implies either that perceptive processing by these people is more inventive than it is for the rest of us, or that the rest of us are blind to an important natural property of falling trees and compression air waves, giving us a false impression of our world.

In the following paragraphs, the terms perception and sensation will be used without distinction between them, although pathological situations can arise that separate them. The best known of these is the “blindsight” investigated by Larry Weiskrantz and Nicolas Humphrey in the 1960’s and 70’s (Weiskrantz 1974). Lesions to the visual cortex of the brain can eliminate the sensation of vision entirely, leaving victims completely in the dark. Yet thanks to an alternate visual pathway through the superior colliculus, concerned with subconscious functions related to visual input, it is possible for these individuals to learn to navigate obstacles without realizing that they “perceive” them.

If subjective knowledge of the objective world contains inherent essential falsehood, it is valid to question whether the world actually exists as it is represented to us by our senses. The answer is disquietingly limited to "not exactly" or "absolutely not". To these possibilities we assign the terms "representational inexactitude" and "representational uncoupling". They differ from representational exactitude, which is the impossible condition whereby our senses mirror the objective, without distortion, into the subjective. This situation would require the known object to be identical with knowledge of the object, which would require a thing outside the mind to be identical to a thought inside the mind. I hope to show why it is reasonable to believe in a special case of representational inexactitude, namely that the subjective knowledge of each individual in a species, through the process of Active Subjectivism, *improves* on the objective world by highlighting that information it gathers which is of particular use to it.

Active Subjectivism introduces essential falsehood into World 2, but because it is universal, it is routinely imperceptible. Active Subjectivism is an evolutionary process that improves upon World 1 to facilitate our survival. Our sensory processes have evolved to be hypersensitive to the detection of threats to our survival, i.e., predators, as well as stimuli facilitating the acquisition of food and reproductive opportunities.

Consider the completely neutral perception of a shrubbery. Alice the Australopithecine examined it, paying equal attention to each leaf and twig, and wondered whether an orange glint of light was sunlight catching a flower, or whether it might be reflecting from the eye of a tiger lurking behind the shrubbery. Her friend Betty’s Active Subjectivism immediately highlighted the orange glint and screamed “Could be Tiger! Run!”. Clearly, Betty is the more likely of the two to have survived, becoming our distant ancestor. Her Active Subjectivism has improved upon the neutral, more objective Active Subjectivism of Alice. By incorporating a greater degree of essential falsehood into her subjective World 2, Betty’s life was saved by her ignorance of the complete truth about the shrubbery.

(2) We live in a world of objects/events, connected by physical laws and mathematical relationships, which govern their behavior and describe their extension in space-time.

Which brings to mind Carlo Rovelli, who, in “The Order of Time”(Rovelli 2018), gives this unforgettable description of the importance of objective events: “A stone is a prototypical thing; you can ask where it will be tomorrow. A kiss is an event. It makes no sense to ask where the kiss will be tomorrow. The world is a network of kisses, not stones.”

By analogy, we subjectivize perceptions of objects as objective events linked by ideas that we form about them and their relationships.

Within the subjective state, ideas link events in a process of understanding whereby their meaning is transformed into knowledge. These ideas are experienced as thoughts within our minds. The intent or content of thoughts is formed by our expectations or experience and is expressed in the meaning of statements drawn from them. It has been recognized that thoughts are not arbitrary patterns of activity within our brains, but instead, are highly structured according to syntactical rules of language. The work of Noam Chomski and other psychologists suggested that the infant mind possesses linguistic parameters, including possible sets of grammar and syntax, which are resolved according to cultural factors during different upbringings (Chomski 2006). By using such rules of sentence construction, we develop both a deep language structure (giving semantic meaning) and a surface language structure (giving strings of phonetic utterances) that constitute a generative grammar. This enables us to issue well-formed sentences. In short, man has evolved as a manipulator of symbols with respect to inborn mental structures, which vary only superficially from one language to another, such that their meaning is understood and can readily be conveyed between individuals. Our ability to generate meaningful sentences is taken for granted by Active Subjectivism on the same biological grounds as is the belief that our subjectivism is a successful adaptation to improve on our objective chances of survival. When expressed to others, these sentences rejoin World 1 to become “objective knowledge”, a special blend of objective and subjective that Sir Karl Popper designates as World 3 (Popper 1972).

These ideas may be about things that do not make testable predictions, like metaphysics and religion. Alternatively, they may concern things that do make testable predictions, i.e., scientific theories. Popper drew a Criterion of Demarcation between these two types of ideas, saying that while both types were meaningful and potentially important, only scientific ideas incorporated a protocol whereby their “correspondence to the truth” was continually assessed, and improved upon.

(3) The third aspect of the Inversion Theory of Truth I wish to consider is how Active Subjectivism generates Popper’s Criterion of Demarcation and his principle of falsification. Let us consider the relationship between objects and events, related in World 1 by physics and mathematics, and in World 2 by subjective ideas. Popper analyzed this relationship in his critique of Plato (Popper 1945). In “The Republic”, Plato seems to have placed “certainty” not in the Popperian World 1 or World 2, but in Forms that existed outside space and time. This seems similar to where religions place their all-powerful gods, in a kind of World Zero. Plato could aspire to know the Forms directly through a transcendent ascent from his metaphorical cave, through study and revelation. Thus Plato was able to experience the idea of mathematical perfection. Plato considered our objective World 1 to be a corruption of the Forms; likewise, our World 2 perceptions must be corrupt. Godel’s theorems of the incompleteness of mathematical ideas showed that mathematical Forms cannot stand as perfect, and so should be, with the laws

of physics, categorized as World 1 “objective ideas”. Our corrupted knowledge of these, the category of “subjective ideas”, is doomed to an uncertainty shared with Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, and the statistical nature of entropy. Therefore, Forms must be communicated to our World 2 via Active Subjectivism, not revelation, and incorporate errors and uncertainty in the process. There is no shortcut from “World Zero” to World 2 that can directly reveal “true knowledge”.

As a consequence of the impossibility of “true knowledge”, the closest we can come to the “truth” is to critically evaluate those statements which according to Popper’s Criterion of Demarcation make testable predictions as we attempt to solve a particular problem. The statement, as a theory, is then typically tested in a controlled experiment such that any confirmed results outside of our range of expectation specifically indicate a problem with the theory. Theories that survive testing are corroborated, not verified, and are considered our “best knowledge” of World 1 until such future time as they are falsified. In the case of Smith, we attempt to corroborate the theory that he entered the pawnshop at 10:15 by seeking people’s personal recollections or perhaps an entry in his diary or the evidence of a time-stamped receipt. These would fortify our belief that Smith entering the pawnshop at 10:15 is our best knowledge of historical fact. Nonetheless, we must acknowledge that Smith, were he a murder suspect, may have engineered the supporting evidence to create an alibi. Our job, then, is to try and falsify it, so we cannot say that our best knowledge is certain or true. Not yet disproven theories contain essential falsehood, which, in comparison to tautologies and definitions, is what makes them interesting. After being disproved, they contain a superessential falsehood. While they still have knowledge content, they’re no longer “best knowledge”. This division of falsehood into “essential” and “superessential” is a distinguishing feature of the Inversion Theory.

The intersubjective ideas of objective knowledge are known with a degree of certainty that corresponds to our mental trustworthiness or that of our reporter. This is not necessarily very great. In the expression of an idea, the objective event may be misstated by telling a deliberate lie as might the defendant in a criminal trial, or by our being mistaken in our perception as might be a witness in the same courtroom. In this respect, the term “known falsehood” can be defined as a statement which contradicts our experience, and an unknown falsehood is one which in retrospect, might stand corrected by our subsequent experience. These definitions can both be derived from our original definition of falsehood, although it is necessary to interpose a degree of faith, as previously mentioned. Starting with both 1) the premise that falsehood is located in the subjective state, as being an experience without an objective base, and 2) the faith that the subjective state serves as an inexact representation improving on the objective state, we are able to distinguish essential from superessential falsehood. Essential falsehood cannot be avoided, and we can never know the degree by which it misleads us. For practical subjective purposes, it is irrelevant, as long as we are content in our faith that it is acting on the objective world in a manner advantageous to ourselves. Superessential falsehood is any subjective manifestation which, in addition to not being identical to an objective base, is not even the result of an essential operation on an objective base. In other words, such falsehoods are completely untied from

objective reality. To the extent that they can mimic essential falsehoods, they are biologically disadvantageous. Fortunately, it is possible to determine the extent to which superessential falsehoods are misleading with respect to material objects. This ability depends on a property of matter which must also be taken on faith: that it behaves consistently with respect to our experience at all times. Acting on this assumption, we develop, upon receipt of a claim made about a material reality, expectations about how an encounter with it would be experienced by ourselves. If the original claim was spurious, then the extent to which it was misleading is measured by the difference between our expectation and our experience. Both the claim (our expectation) and our interpretation of the experience are subjective ideas. When they contradict each other, or prove different, it is the expectational idea which is by definition superessentially false. In this determination, the essential falsehood of all experience is not a factor. The act of acquiring an experience which contradicts an expectational idea is called the "disproof" of that idea. The idea is then, by conventional usage, held to be "false". There will probably be other spurious ideas which relate to material we have not yet encountered. These ideas, while superessentially false, are not yet disproven, and, in a hypothetical sense, can be regarded as unknown-false.

It has been said that philosophers, however much they may disagree about most things, use the word "Truth" as a property of propositions, sentences, or beliefs, i.e., as a property of subjective ideas and never of things, or events in the objective state. The word "True" has been defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as:

- "1. In accordance with fact or reality, not false or erroneous" and
- "2. In accordance with reason or correct principles or received standard, rightly so called, genuine, not spurious or hybrid or counterfeit or merely apparent".

These definitions are descriptive of the Correspondence Theory of Truth. Other theories of truth, the Coherence Theory, the Performative Theory, the Pragmatic Theory and the minimalism of Frank Ramsey are all 'subjective' theories of truth which ultimately depend on correspondence. Because of the essential falsehood in our experience, the Correspondence theory has problems with respect to the description of our interactions between the objective and subjective states. This difficulty is only made worse by the fact that, when we use the word "true", we think of something that is somehow both complete (has 100% integrity) and self-consistent (is unable to contradict itself). Since it would be impractical to dissociate the concept of "truth" from these connotations, it is my belief that "truth" should be re-defined to be that which is both complete and self-consistent. According to my "Inversion Theory of Truth", the word is no longer applicable to objects and events in the subjective state. These include the result of any process of subjectivisation, with the exception of introspective statements, such as "I am happy", "my toe hurts", or "I like strawberries". (Arguably, introspection is an examination of our body states as objects, and results in true statements). Statements of "revealed

truth”, such as “I know that God exists”, are meant to say something about the objective world, but can only really be about one’s introspection. Only their introspective aspect can be held to be “true”, not the claim that God exists, which is a belief. The word “truth” should remain as a descriptor of objects in their objective states. What we have in the subjective state is not truth, but our beliefs, and our *knowledge* of objective objects and events. Our knowledge may be essentially or superessentially false, but never true. In the case of certain categories of knowledge, specifically scientific claims, we may try to eliminate superessentially false knowledge by means of a program described by Sir Karl Popper as “falsification”. The predictions of theories are rigorously tested, and, when found erroneous, the theory must be remedied or supplanted, and tested all over again. Theories that make useful predictions and survive falsification can then be considered justified only insofar as they are the “best knowledge” that we have available at any given time. They join metaphysical ideas, or beliefs, that is, memes that cannot be tested (“I know that God exists”), and introspective knowledge, (“I like strawberries”), in the intellectual landscape of Popper’s World 3. That is, the world of objective knowledge; the physical utterances, records and constructions that conscious animals share with each other and posterity. Within this world, Popper’s Criterion of Demarcation draws a line between metaphysics and science, based on whether or not a thought system, (or collection of memes) makes falsifiable predictions. In the case of metaphysics, certain ideas tend to be considered “true”, certain authorities considered to be absolute, without there being any ability to prove them false or bogus, and these memes tend to be regressive. As David Deutsch put forward in his “The Beginning of Infinity”, (Deutsch 2011) the survival of civilization now depends on the final ascendancy of progressive memes, of science and best knowledge replacing those metaphysical philosophies that insist on a subjective truth. The most basic regressive memes of all, our contested notions of truth and falsehood, pervade Kant’s philosophy.

Analyzing Kant’s Transcendental Idealism

Kant began with the standpoint that knowledge, rather than the objective state, could be an absolute certainty. This is called “a priori” knowledge, equivalent to the term *epistēmē* as used by Plato and Aristotle, and through it, objective experience was processed and categorized into forms of intuition which included relations in space and time, understanding, substance and causality, plurality, unity, existence, etc. Kant was driven to this by a need to explain, in the face of Hume's doubt, the attainment by Sir Isaac Newton of what was regarded as “True Knowledge” in his theories of mechanics and of gravity (Popper 1945). If science could explain objective knowledge, why couldn’t we explain God, the Soul, Free-Will and ethics? In CPR Bxvi, Kant wrote that our assumption is that our cognition must conform to the objects, but all attempts to understand them a priori through the concepts that would extend our cognition have come to nothing. So let’s try, he suggested, assuming that objects must conform to our cognition. This would agree better with the desired possibility of an a priori cognition of them, which is to

establish something about them before they are given to us. He concluded that True Knowledge was possible because we are not passive assimilators of observation. Instead, we form data into a cosmos during which process we impose on perceptions the mathematical laws inherent in our mental mechanism. Science and math discover the way things appear to us, they don't discover objective reality. Thus our intellect doesn't discover universal laws in Nature, but prescribes its own laws. This inversion of Locke's "blank slate" he called his "Copernican Revolution". According to the strong version of his "Transcendental Idealism", objects in Popper's World 1, which Kant called "noumena", only exist because rational cognizers exist and perceive them, otherwise they wouldn't. I'm not sure what this means for objects no one is looking at, or for objects like Neptune and Pluto, not discovered in Kant's lifetime. Kant could in fairness say: "Our intellect doesn't draw its laws from Nature but imposes its laws on nature", but in further supposing that the laws thus imposed are necessarily true, he overreached. Popper noted that Kant made "pure natural science" a "necessary result of our mental outfit", which poses a new problem, viz: "How did anyone else fail to discover gravity?"

Warning signs that one is dealing with a Kantian logic include use of the terms "veridical appearance" and "manifestly real". Veridical appearance means that if anything appears to be the case, and it is the case, then the veridical appearance is manifestly real. Correspondingly, a statement is "objectively true" if what it states is manifestly real, or it is objectively false, if not. In which case, it is "objectively truth valueless" (Hanna 2023). But veridical appearances are constructs of our Active Subjectivism, so its manifest reality contains essential falsehood. Non-recognition of this will lead to errant conclusions as one extends one's veridical appearances to statements about manifest reality. And no statement is objective, let alone objectively true, at least while it is being thought, made, received and understood. They become a part of objective knowledge (Popper's World 3), after being recorded in some way, but whilst being thought about, they are subjective, and they are products of Active Subjectivism and contain essential falsehood. Statements that lack objective truth value are superessentially false. Furthermore, a weak view of Transcendental Idealism maintains that all manifestly real objects are isomorphic to the forms and structures that are "non-empirically" generated by our mental capacity, but they aren't literally type-identical to those non-empirical or a priori mental forms or structures (the non-Identity thesis). This is just as well, or the perception of an elephant would result in the poor beast being squished inside our skulls, with the result of a painful death for ourselves, not to mention the elephant. The weak interpretation allows at least some introduction of essential falsehood into transcendental idealism.

Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic (Kant 1787) describes how sensations are organized into conceptions through the absolute mediation of space and time. What he described is a process that converts objective events into subjective events: individual sensations converging to provide complete perceptions. Kant argued that this cannot be a random happening and that it must follow a design. But it didn't occur to him that the design is biological and fallible and that the resulting perception includes falsehood; instead, he said that design, based on space and time, is mathematical and, therefore, absolute, so that the perceptions are always true. This, I believe, is a

false conclusion. According to his *Transcendental Analytic* (Kant 1788), sensation is organized stimulus; perception is organized sensation; conception is organized life. Here, in my opinion, Kant magnified his original mistake. He assumed that absolutely true conceptions (ideas) follow from absolutely true perceptions because intellect, too, is based on infallible mathematics (or is perhaps the mirror of God's Will). He did not appreciate that ideas are constructed from fallible perceptions only to predict other fallible perceptions and that knowledge is uncertain.

Kant argued that the world must have an absolute order because the thought that knows the world has an absolute order. The laws of thought are also the laws of things. The laws of science are necessary and absolute because they are ultimately the laws of thought that are involved and presupposed in every experience, past, present and to come.

In short, he was prepared to argue that laws of ideas, thought and science are absolute simply on basis of identity with the "laws of experience", i.e., the formation of the subjective event, which, I propose, contains falsehood in a biologically systematic manner as well as being prone to random functional error.

Yet Kant realized that objective events differ from subjective ones and that their real nature can never be experienced. "We know nothing but our manner of perceiving them; that manner being peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared by every being, though, no doubt by every human being" (Kant 1788). This last phrase within the sentence is necessary to save his argument; yet it contradicts the preceding phrase and is inadmissible. Without identical perception shared by every human being, the blind and deaf included, his argument for the necessity of knowledge would have fallen. It should not be facile to suggest that absolute laws of science and ideas that are based on absolute laws of experience should not depend on whether one suffers a visual or auditory handicap.

The final stage of Kant's philosophy is his *Transcendental Dialectic* (Kant 1788). Because the objective event can never be known as it is in itself, the realm of science is limited (but justifiable therein) to the consideration of appearances, and any attempt to reason the strict truth, and also any attempt to investigate metaphysical questions beyond the scope of science, is merely dealing with insoluble puzzles or "antinomies of reason.". Therefore, in religion, the "substance" and "cause" that would be applied to questions of the incorruptibility of the soul, free will and the Absolute Being are, in fact, applicable only to the way in which the world organizes experience, so it is a "paralogism" to argue from this their existence externally. As Prof. Robert H. Kane has noted, science seems to say that everything is governed by laws of cause and effect, yet our Will seems free and not determined by the laws of nature (Kane 2000). Kant concluded that this contradiction could not be resolved by theoretical reason. Likewise, attempts to prove the existence of God fail because they try to extend the categories of understanding to matters that go beyond the bounds of possible experience, and which can only be taken on faith.

Kant had discovered that because ideas are subjective, there is inherent uncertainty in their correspondence to the real world.

Throughout his *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant went on to say that although religion

can't be proved by logical reasoning, it can be proved by absolute, mathematics-like morals, based on an innate moral sense that is not derived from experience (Kant 1788). This moral law is supreme and universal, it being our duty to follow it, out of our own free will. Thus his Categorical (because it applies Absolutely, no exceptions) Imperative (because we must adhere to it): Act only by that maxim which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law. For instance, a law permitting murder would be impossible for everyone to follow without exterminating everyone; hence, it can't be allowed. He also derived alternative formulas such as his "principle of humanity", which is to treat everyone as an "End unto themselves" rather than as a "means to an end". This formula was much more like the "Golden Mean", in practice. His argument is that if a practical reasoning on how to live and act presupposes a moral law, we would believe in it. This is even though it lies beyond the understanding of scientific theory, because it is based on our feeling of conscience, or the moral law within us. The assumption that conscience is a Divine instrument or a manifestation of His Will seems manifest in his work. So long as it can be argued that the conscience has mechanical origins, (i.e., is the product of the evolution of the human gene-pool, due to enhanced selection for a population which co-exists in an orderly society), then, the Categorical Imperative nature of morality can be disproved. It can no longer be Absolute and is just another, albeit good, idea.

Nonetheless, I would argue that from this initial error, Kant compounded his mistake. He insisted that the Categorical Imperative necessitates that the only virtue of an action is not that it might, as a consequence, create good or happiness, which are impermanent phenomena, but that it be a manifestation of the Absolute morality. Action is judged on the basis of intent, not outcome. The only good is Good Will - the will to follow moral law. The moral law exists not to make us happy but to make us worthy of happiness. Only the feeling of a command to duty proves that Will is Free; reason alone cannot. Similarly, the sensation of duty justifies belief in Life after Death, as that sensation wouldn't exist otherwise. This in turn postulates the existence of God. Our moral sense commands us to believe it.

Therefore, according to Kant, the objective fact that morality is understood by rational people poses an absolute constraint on moral behavior. Justice, based on this morality, should be equally and absolutely applicable to all rational people. It should protect them from being victimized as a means to an end in the creation of greater good or happiness. However, we know instead that the only objective fact posing a constraint on our behavior is Darwinism. Our behavior can be fully consistent with survival of the fittest without any restraint on our behalf towards those weaker than us, and, accordingly, oppression of the poor by their rulers as a means to a rather selfish end is still a common form of government to this day. But it is not necessary for our behavior to be governed by objective demands alone. We have the intelligence to devise a subjective code which could be the morality of Kant, but it need not be. It can be anything, such as the pursuit of happiness, or even the subjugation of the individual, that man collectively chooses.

It is my belief that the Categorical Imperative provides a useful, but not absolute, basis for moral behavior. Doubtless, if it was moral for me to kill someone, and that was generalized

throughout society, society would collapse. If it was moral for someone in authority to tell 20,000 lies in 3 ½ years on matters of vital public importance, and this was generalized, then society could collapse (Kessler 2020). Lies from a political leader destroy the openness a society needs to remain a democracy. Likewise, lies spewing out from greedy entrepreneurs can damage the marketplace of free capitalism. On the other hand, the consequences of telling the truth can, under special circumstances, be monstrous. The classic consequentialist example is the question of how to respond to the SS officer at your door, demanding to know about the Jewish person hiding in your attic.

Kant's absolutist assumption is that an act is either moral or it is amoral, and he failed to seek a middle road as he did in the resolution of his antinomies. To solve the paradox of the SS officer, I maintain it is necessary to include the middle consideration of loyalty, which can be to self, family, nation, or some other cause that one would be prepared to die for. The desire not to lie is located within our self-loyalty, which would be cheapened and demeaned by lying. Loyalty to the self can be immoral, as in a desire to get rich at any cost to others, but in a moral sense, it is a desire to preserve our integrity, or reputation for honesty. It is ethical to lie only in order to protect that to which our loyalty is greater than our self-loyalty. If your loyalty to the hidden Jewish person, or, indeed, the cause of fighting the fascist foe is greater than is your self-loyalty, then the lie becomes morally imperative.

As another example, Robert Hanna argues for the "objective truth and rightness of the concept of human dignity". He complains that other philosophers, who deny (as too ambiguous to support such a normative load) the "objective truth and rightness of Kantian dignitarianism", therefore deny the "objective truth and rightness of the concept of human worth and of common sense morality and political theory".(Hanna 2023) I personally believe that our human dignity provides valid grounds for our human rights, but it is only once we accept that the "truth and rightness" of human dignity is *subjective*, and subject to error and ambiguity, that we can debate their validity on open terms (i.e., "this is preferable to that, for the following reasons", instead of "only this, not that, is acceptable to my belief system"). Even as we agree that our dignity is derived from the miracle of consciousness, and its transience, and that it must be protected, prolonged, enhanced and enjoyed as much as possible, our rights are subjective and negotiable. Hence we debate whether the right to free speech includes the right to lie deliberately and dangerously, or whether the rights of a pregnant woman outweigh those of a fetus, whose soul, according to a new argument, may not even be conferred to it until God is sure it won't be aborted or miscarried.(Lugten 2023) We argue about education, health care, gun rights, migration, employment opportunities, provision of basic needs, and land ownership because one person's right is another person's oppression. These arguments cannot be solved by an absolute doctrine, but only by a consensus that is apt to change over time.

Conclusion

This paper has introduced a theory of truth, the Inversion Theory, to constitute a

remedy for perceived deficiencies in the Correspondence Theory of Truth. The new theory was used to conduct an examination of Kant's "revolutionary" idea: that of Transcendental Idealism. I contend that Kant was misled by the Correspondence Theory of Truth into an incorrect assumption that a priori knowledge, rather than the objective state of the world, could be considered an absolute certainty. This, I argue, invalidated the rest of his work, especially his arguments for an absolute Categorical Imperative. If he had, instead, inverted the contemporary idea of the meaning of truth, he could have achieved a morality derived from knowledge-based best practice. This would have constituted a "Copernican revolution" indeed.

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