

Kant's Analyticity:

A Historico-Phenomenological Revisiting and Restatement (For All)¹

Panos Theodorou, University of Crete, Hellas

Abstract

In the vast majority of the literature on Kant, the prevailing view is that his conception of analyticity and analytic truths suffers from obscurities and inconsistencies that render it, in the end, unintelligible. In the present paper, I try (i) to underline the meaning of these conceptions of Kant's, (ii) to bring to the fore a crucial hidden presupposition in his account of analytic truths, and (iii) to present an interpretation that restores an intelligible account of Kantian analyticity and analytic truth. Contrary to the 'received' view, I claim that definition is the royal way to Kant's analyticity and analytic truth, and that the latter cannot be understood apart from a very specific kind of appeal to the intuition of the object falling under the concept being defined. I call this elusive and fragile act "simple intuition," pointing thus to the medieval notion of *apprehensio simplex* (and the long history behind it). Then I try to show how this is done with reference to the most suitable species of concepts, the mathematical, and by analogy (and with expectable limitations) to the empirical ones. Of course, the present attempt to reconstruct an intelligible Kantian

¹ This paper is based on a talk I gave in 2004 at the Colloquium of the Department of Philosophy, University of Patras, Greece. I would like to thank that audience, and especially Costas Pagondiotis, who was also my first informal instructor to Kant's secrets. Deep thanks also go to the two anonymous referees of the *Kant Studies Online* and to Robert Hanna, who so kindly and generously provided me with numerous remarks on the final draft of this paper. Lastly, I express my debt to Simon Summers for his help in linguistic matters.

account of analyticity and analytic truths does not also mean that I endorse it as successful and final in the context of philosophy's effort to clarify the possibility and kinds of a priori truths.

1. Introduction: the methodology and purpose of this essay

The latest phase of discussions on Kant's analyticity arose out of the interest that was shown in this issue from the side of the linguistic-analytic school of Logical Empiricism and its epigones. More specifically, the semantic approach to language understood it on two levels: as a play of signs defined on the basis of explicit and accurate syntactic rules, and a subsequent meaning-giving interpretation of these signs, connecting them to referents in a world. In it, then, analyticity is a property of sentences as syntactic formations of signs or of propositions as somehow interpreted sentences. Sentences are analytic just in case their truth can be decided by consideration of their merely syntactic form. Propositions, accordingly, are analytic just in case their truth can be decided solely on the basis of the meaning of the terms that constitute them, without recourse to observation of what is the case in the world of their referents. Syntactic analyticity appears to have been the clearest and least problematic case. Even Quine, in his famous paper on the "two dogmas of empiricism," clearly leans toward accepting the possibility of syntactic analyticity. Semantic analyticity, however, is notoriously problematic. In the context of the analytic tradition, semantic analyticity has been considered to be a matter of deciding the truth of a proposition only by examination of the meaning of the terms, i.e., exclusively from within the so-called "space of reasons."

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The corresponding latest resurgence of interest in the issue of analyticity in Kant is caught up in expected but unacceptable methodological and interpretive misunderstandings, owing to the supposedly self-evident view of language that is definitive of the above described philosophical context. On the semantic understanding of language, meaning is understood as having radical primacy over the reference it determines. There is no cognitive access to the referent outside its mode of presentation in the meaning. The meaning of a term is conceived as the way it is used in relation to other terms of a linguistic system, in accordance with specific semantic rules. Reference is considered to be a secondary affair, having to do (one way or another) simply with an empirical-pragmatic language learning process that connects portions of available linguistic expressions with clusters of stimuli torrents. What all this means is that for the analytic tradition, semantic analyticity (the philosophically interesting type of analyticity) can and must be examined without any substantial concern for referents. To many, this point appeared to amount to a modern restatement of Kant's traditional view of analyticity. Thus, it was thought, a parallel examination of modern semantic analyticity and Kant's view of analyticity could prove beneficial for both sides. Problems inherited from the Kantian scholarship on analyticity could be now elucidated and dissolved, and the realizations resulting from such an elucidation could perhaps be used to discover some limitations of the still problematic logico-empiristic notion of semantic analyticity. In any case, an endeavor like this could manifest the potential within analytic philosophy for a recursive interpretation of Kant's epistemology, and a presentation of it as a forerunner, albeit a premature one, of the thus justified course and development of analytic philosophy.

From my point of view, which, to be clear, is inspired by the fundamental principles of phenomenological philosophy, another approach to Kant's fundamental distinctions between analytic and synthetic truths must be built. First of all, in Kant, language is not first instituted as a syntactic play of linguistic signs within a complete semantic void that is subsequently given a volitional arbitrary semantic interpretation. It rather *expresses* the content of an intuitional experience, the content of which, in Kant, is constituted in conformity to the fixed laws of Formal and Transcendental Logic (in-built, accordingly, in our reason and understanding). In him, language is pregiven only to this extent: as the possibility of the formal ('syntactic') and general metaphysical ('grammatical') formation of sensory contents, the result of which can then also be expressed in a system of signs that mediates between our conceptual contents or understood meanings and its sensory-experiential, intuited referents. From this point of view, no talk of free floating meanings apart from of their referents can be made in a fully intelligible or rather cognitively sound manner, and no significant definition of epistemological distinctions can take place. Put in terms of a Husserlian notion, when disengaged from contentful experience, only *forms of meanings* (*Bedeutungsformen*) can be met in Kant, e.g., "predicate," "subject," or, better, "substrate," "property," etc. — understood from the point of view of a "deep grammar." The rest of language's content is invented, a posteriori, as a concretization of such forms. Unless this fact is understood and embedded in our discussions of analyticity and analytic truth, especially in the strict context of Kant's thought, no sense will ever be made of a philosophically interesting "analytic truth." To be sure, Kant is not fully aware of the latter situation. Thus, his traditional unquestioned intermingling of the general possibility for language with its concretization will, in the end, lead him to the notorious

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difficulty of being forced to claim that “gold is a yellow metal” is an analytic truth. This claim has been an unexplainable mote in the eyes of many Kantian and analytic scholars, and is the reason why the aforementioned resurgence of interest in Kant’s analyticity resulted in an impasse.

Here, my concern is not to defend Kant’s conception of analyticity but rather to show, against past and more recent criticism, that it is fully intelligible and absolutely explainable. Of course, having Husserl’s attempt to frame a viable conception of analytic truths in mind (the specific representation of which would demand another paper), Kant’s approach to the matter is, after all, wrong. Nonetheless, in order to fully realize Kant’s just roughly indicated failure to define “analytic truth,” we must first delve deep, in a sincere effort to reconstruct a robust image of his conception of it. This is a necessary prerequisite for all the various attempts to elucidate and criticize Kant’s notion of analyticity. Of course, the particular questioning, the angle of interest, the emphases, and the textual interpretation, have been essentially influenced by phenomenological philosophy. Nevertheless, the present discussion is conducted in a way that does not presuppose any propaedia in Phenomenology’s teachings. It is a reading that will hopefully show Phenomenology’s potential for interpreting decisive chapters in the history of philosophy, in a way that is fully accessible for those interested in Kant’s thought.

I am fully aware that the reading offered in this paper will appear provocative, even heretical to many readers. However, I am convinced that I am doing nothing more than carefully shedding more light on those folds of Kant’s original account that he did not sufficiently elucidate because, in his eyes, they were self-understandable. In the following, I will first present a necessarily brief historical exposition of the notion of philosophical or a priori truths, in

a way that shows how Kant was led to his magisterial distinction between analytic and synthetic a priori truths (§2). Then, I will present the intellectual context within which this distinction was introduced and the way in which it was received and criticized (§3). After this, I will reconstruct some key stations of the later reception and interpretation of Kant's distinction (§4). As a next step, I will examine some key passages from Kant's work and develop the basic lines of what I consider to be the phenomenological interpretation of Kant's view on analyticity (§5). This interpretation will be further supported by additional textual evidence that, to my knowledge, has passed practically unnoticed (§6). For reasons of brevity and productivity, the discussion here will focus mainly on the class of mathematical concepts, with clear indications, however, of the way in which the findings are applicable to empirical and other kinds of concepts. I will then develop further arguments against some supposed counterevidence and anticipated objections (§7). Finally, I will summarize the points made in the present analysis and delineate some further consequences (§8).

2. Brief historical introduction to the issue: Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, Kant

In the fifth *Meditation*, Descartes expressed the following thought: when I *think* of a triangle, I find in it properties that are imposed on me, as it were, by the very triangle. For example, this is supposed to be the case in the truth that the longest side of a triangle stands over against its largest angle.² Furthermore, in a letter to Elisabeth, Descartes writes that what holds for the body, i.e., for extension, shape, and motion, can be known only by the *intellect*, but that our

² Descartes 1990, vol. II, 44-5.

imagination comes to our assistance in sometimes offering us the possibility of very distinct concepts of body.³ Imagination as such, however, cannot substantially help our intellect, since it cannot furnish an image for *every* concept that our intellect can think of. For example, this is the case with the concept “chiliagon” (“one-thousand-angle”). We conceive this concept with our intellect; our imagination cannot, however, furnish an image for the object of this concept.⁴

Additionally, in both a letter to Mersenne and in the second *Meditation*, Descartes seems even more determined in this regard. In metaphysical research, he maintains, imagination is an *obstacle* rather than a help. For example, in my effort to discover the eternal nature (or essence) of the body in general, imagination can furnish only, e.g., a series of concrete extensions that a body or some bodies can occupy. Hence, the fact that I a priori conceive of the philosophical truth “all bodies are extended” could not originate in imagination, but rather from the intellect alone. The same holds when I seek philosophical truths about the soul (since it is not even representable in imagination), etc.⁵

Descartes seems to be satisfied with these conclusions. Due to this, he suggests that in our search for (absolutely certain) philosophical knowledge, we must trust our *intellect* alone, our capacity for *mere thinking*, with the proviso that it passes the supposedly severe test regarding the criteria of *clearness* and *distinctness* or—otherwise put—of *self-evidence*. Intellect alone can then be trusted as a general source for modern philosophical research.

Leibniz took this issue a bit further. Even though he accepts Descartes’ lesson for showing confidence in mere thinking, he opposes the idea that the criterion of necessity and certainty, i.e., the criterion of philosophical a priori

³ Ibid., vol. III, 227.

⁴ Ibid., vol. II, 50.

⁵ Ibid., vol. III, 141; vol. II, 20-1.

knowledge, is self-evidence, for clear and distinct thought that allegedly arises as self-evident for someone may not appear so for someone else. The sole criterion for such knowledge, Leibniz then claimed, is to check the articulated propositions for *non-contradiction*.⁶ More particularly, if the negation of a proposition expressing a candidate philosophical truth leads to a contradiction, then the original proposition expresses a necessary philosophical truth.

Hume, however, argued that no matter how much he checked propositions offered as a priori philosophical truths, e.g., the so-called “principle of cause and effect,” using the criterion of non-contradiction, he was *unable to persuade himself* that the negation of such truths contained contradiction.⁷

As Kant himself admitted, this claim awoke him from his dogmatic slumber. Thus, the critical Kant is not satisfied either with Descartes’ or with Leibniz’s dogmatic method in what concerns the success of the age-old enterprise of seeking philosophical knowledge. Of course, he is not satisfied with Hume’s *psychologization* of philosophical truths either. Ever since, philosophy has continued its long course in search for philosophical truths on the basis of the famous distinction that Kant introduced at that point. There are two types of philosophical knowledge, Kant maintained: that which is articulated in a priori *analytic* judgments, and that which is articulated in a priori *synthetic* judgments. Only the first, however, can be conceived solely within the field of *mere thinking* and on the basis of the criterion of *non-contradiction*.

But, then, if Kant made the whole issue so neat and clear, why there is still a living and growing philology with regard to the possibility of analytic truths, both in general (in post-Kantian philosophy) and in particular (in Kant’s system)?

⁶ Leibniz 1989, 26-7.

⁷ Hume 2006, 30-1, 40.

In the sections that follow, we will see how Kant's argumentation develops (§3), then discuss the up-to-now unnoticed presupposition behind his conception of analyticity (§4), and see what relevant evidence we have from his writings (§§5-6). In the end, we will have seen how the acknowledgement of the just mentioned presupposition makes the notion of analyticity fully *intelligible* in Kant's system (albeit, again, not necessarily acceptable as *correct*).

3. Kant's attempts to define analyticity and their problems

Some examples of analytic propositions that Kant himself offers us (or can be easily articulated following his instructions) are these:

“A = A.” “All roses are roses.” “All red roses are red.”
 “If a = b and b = c, then a = c.” “All triangles have three angles.” “All triangles have three sides.” “All bodies are extended.” “Substance is that which, in a judgment, can be put only at the place of the subject.”
 “All biangles have two angles.” “Pegasus is a winged horse.” “Gold is a yellow metal.”

There is general agreement that, basically, Kant gives us four explications of what he means with his idea regarding analytic a priori propositions and truths.⁸

- (1) Analytic propositions are tautologies or propositions of identity (*identische Sätze*) or, otherwise put, the negation of such a proposition constitutes a *contradiction*.

⁸ On this, especially in *CPR*, see A6-10/B10-14, B15-18, A47-49/B65-67, A150-151/B189-190, A164/B205, A258-259/B314-15, A718/B746.

- (2) In analytic propositions, the concept of the predicate *is contained* in the concept of the subject.
- (3) Analytic propositions (in contradistinction to synthetic ones) are *non-ampliative* (they do not increase knowledge).
- (4) Finally, an explication that is usually omitted as self-understandable: for the discovery of an analytic truth, we remain solely within the context of the analysis of the subject's concept, i.e., *we do not make any sort of appeal to the intuition (Anschauung) of the object of that concept.*⁹

In conclusion, analytic propositions are those with regard to which we can—non-ampliatively and solely by analyzing the subject's concept (or the relevant term's meaning) — find that it would be a contradiction to claim that the predicate's concept is not contained in the subject's concept.¹⁰ On the basis of the above, it is even said that the substantial criteria of analyticity are (1) and (4), whereas (2) and (3) are, rather, elucidations of the former substantial criteria. Another standard way of sorting out Kant's criteria of analyticity is the following: (1) is logical, (2) is semantic (or,

⁹ The high degree to which this last approach to analyticity is generally regarded as self-understandable is apparent from the fact that it lacks any special examination in the bibliography. See, e.g., Proops 2005; Meyer 2003, 75-6, 83. As we will see, though, a good deal of our proper understanding of Kant's analyticity depends on how exactly we understand this last issue; it is already present, as we saw, in Descartes' attempts at discovering philosophical knowledge.

¹⁰ Here, I will not deal with the problem of what the verb "being-contained-in" means in the context of the analyticity issue. Hanna (2001), Katz (1990, 1997), and Anderson (2004) have questioned the classic criticism of the Kantian concept of analyticity, which is based upon the supposed metaphoricality of the notion of containment, as well as upon the restriction of analyticity to propositions of the type "subject-predicate." Each of them gives, in his way, sufficiently non-mysterious meaning to that notion and shows that the corresponding idea of analyticity can also be extended into types of propositions other than those of the "subject-predicate" form.

for others, psychological), (3) is epistemological,¹¹ and (4) can be considered as (merely) heuristic.

Nevertheless, if we agree to exclude trivially identical propositions (which can be safely seen as cases of logico-empiristic syntactic analyticity), these criteria do not seem sufficient to establish an unambiguous Kantian analyticity. Indeed, by merely analyzing the concepts (meaning) of the subject and predicate terms of a proposition, someone may think of a certain predicate as part of a subject-concept, whereas someone else may not do so. Accordingly, someone may think that a certain proposition does not contribute something to our knowledge, whereas someone else may think that it does, and so on. Analyticity, then, seems to depend on the contingent factors of persons, times, and the conditions under which it is examined. Of course, for the people who take the positive attitude in such cases, the denial of the corresponding propositions would constitute contradiction. We would thus be very quickly led to an impasse.

Kant, however, offers us an additional instruction on how to discern analytic propositions. As we read in the *CPR*, that

¹¹ Beck (1965) credits Kant with an appeal to just the first two criteria, the logical and the psychological. Allison opts for the criterion of epistemic function as more effective (Allison 1983, 74-5). He claims that this explains why in the *Prolegomena* (§2), Kant says that the analytic/synthetic distinction does not concern the origin or the logical form of judgments but only their content. There, however, Kant stresses the independence of analytic judgments from their origin, because under the analytic sentences he additionally wants to include those containing *empirical* (subject-)concepts, as in “gold is a yellow metal.” Even a cursory examination shows that the criterion of epistemic function is not at all better than the psychological one. As I see it, Kant’s own view is that the *fundamental* principle upon which analytic judgments stand is the *logical* principle of non-contradiction, albeit in a way that essentially depends on the above criterion (4). This will be further analyzed in subsequent sections. Confusion on this point brings obfuscation into the history of the problem of a priori knowledge, as well as distortion of the meaning of Kant’s contribution to this problem, via his distinction between a priori analytic and a priori synthetic judgments. Cf. §2 above.

which we think *in* (or *with*) a concept, i.e., that which is contained in a concept, is nothing but its *definition* (A718/B746). In what sense, though, may analyticity be a matter of definition?¹²

If we combine the above suggested criteria for analyticity with the idea that analyticity is a matter of definition, then the criterion for acknowledging a proposition as analytic will be whether the proposition is the definition of the subject-concept or whether it is logically implied by the definition. In this case, the criteria for analyticity also become the criteria for whether a proposition is a definition (or a logical transformation of a definition) and vice versa. There are, however, at least two important problems that arise here.¹³

First, if analyticity is a matter of the non-contradictoriness of a definition, then it becomes very difficult to see how we could still retain a priori *synthetic* truths. If the latter also express *necessary* connections of subject-and-predicate, then wouldn't it be true that their negation would also seemingly constitute a contradiction? Second, if analyticity is a matter of the non-contradictoriness of a definition, then wouldn't this way also be open to the danger of arbitrariness?

¹² Beck (1965, 1956) expresses the view that, contrary to general opinion, Kant does not make analyticity depend on definitions and that, in fact, due to problems that Kant faces with definitions (see also below), the concept of the *analysis* of a concept is proved to be wider than the concept of definition. Nevertheless, as we will see in the following, there are sound reasons in favor of the view that in order to understand the problem of analyticity in Kant, as a problem specifically related to the question of *analytic truths*, we have to connect it—under the conditions that are going to be discussed later—with the possibility of definitions.

¹³ To be sure, Kant reserves the term “definition” in the strict sense only for the mathematical concepts. For the non-mathematical ones he advises the use of the looser term “exposition” (A727-9/B755-7). The reason, however, is not one of essence but of accidents. The analysis of the latter concepts does not fully come up to the status of that of the former ones. In the latter case, that is, we lack definitiveness in the strict sense, the “once and for all” status. But still what is made explicit in both cases is the minimum content of the concept, which enables us to recognize the object of the concept. In all the following, “definition” is being used in a wider sense that refers to either the strict or the looser sense of the term.

Couldn't we *posit* a definition each time and automatically secure its non-contradictoriness? Wouldn't we then lead ourselves in a catastrophic—for the philosophical economy—inflation of analytic truths for every concept we know or could invent? In a word, what, after all, should we understand by “contradiction”?

In his criticism of Kant, Johann Augustus Eberhard moved towards this way of seeing the issue of analyticity and non-contradictoriness. Already in the first issue of his *Philosophisches Magazin* (1788), he claimed that, on the one hand, even the supposed a priori synthetic truths are transformed or can be transformed into analytic ones.¹⁴ This meant that if philosophy were to discover and justify its a priori, necessary truths, it shouldn't after all turn its gaze anywhere else, but solely towards concepts and the principle of non-contradiction. But, as we know, this is exactly what Leibniz had already done! Hence, Kant's critical philosophy had no *raison d' être*.¹⁵ On the other hand, if philosophy were to keep constructing analytic truths based on arbitrary definitions, it would probably run the danger of ingloriously drowning itself in the thus created deflationary overabundance of philosophical truths. The issue at stake is, of course, immense. Philosophy's character and very possibility appears to depend upon it.

¹⁴ Allison 1973, 15-45, 178-82. On September 1789, Eberhard's assistant J. C. Maaß articulated this point somewhat better. Depending on how one builds the definition of a concept (or, for us, also “meaning of a term”), he said, a proposition containing this concept as a subject could be taken one time as analytic and another time as synthetic. Later, this objection was also rearticulated by C. I. Lewis (Allison 1983, 342 n. 32).

¹⁵ Of course, with a suitable extension of this line of thought, this could also be found to concern the *a posteriori* synthetic truths. If we knew how God defined the constitution and the dynamics of being in the original act of creation, everything (seemingly) contingent could be found to be logically implied from that original definition. In this way, it wouldn't be necessary for Sartre to wait for Phenomenology in order to solve the query “why do I now drink peach-juice?”, whereas it would also follow—analytically, indeed—that “gold is a yellow metal.”

Kant himself seems to have realized the problem quite early,¹⁶ but it seems that he tries to solve it systematically for the first time only on the occasion of his first reply to the Eberhardian critique. The core of that reply runs as follows:

Let one put into the concept of the subject just so many attributes that the predicate, which one wishes to prove of the subject, can be derived from its concept merely by the law of contradiction. The critical philosophy permits him to make this kind of analytic judgment, but raises the question about the concept of the subject itself: *how did you come to include in this concept the different attributes* so that it already includes [the] *synthetic* propositions [that one has chosen]? First, prove the *objective reality* of your concept, i.e., first prove that anyone of its attributes *really belongs* to a possible *object*, and when you have done that, then prove that the other attributes belong to the same thing that the first one belongs to, without themselves belonging to the first attribute. The whole question of how much or how little the concept of the subject is to contain has not the least bearing on the metaphysical question: How are synthetic a priori judgments possible? It belongs merely in the logical theory of *definition*. And the theory of definition without doubt requires that one *not introduce more attributes into a definition than are necessary to distinguish the defined thing from all others*. Hence, <in a good definition> one *excludes those attributes of which one can demand*

¹⁶ In his *Reflexion* 3928 (1771), we read: “If someone had at his disposal the totality of the concept [*Begriff*], parts of which are together the concepts [*Notionen*] of subject and predicate, then synthetic judgments would turn into analytic ones. The question that poses itself here is the degree to which something like this may be arbitrary [*willkührliches sey*].”

a proof whether and on what grounds they belong to the former attributes <that are included>.¹⁷

But what is the meaning of this especially important answer of Kant's? How is the idea of analyticity connected with the idea of contradiction and definition? In the secondary literature, some think that in this reply, Kant merely recognizes (directly or indirectly) the difficulty of drawing the analytic/synthetic distinction in a precise way and that he thus readjusts his thoughts in a direction that is not fully clear. Others think that, in one way or the other, Kant is just clarifying the meaning of his still valid distinction.¹⁸

Below, in §4, we will see, in brief, the basic lines of the two positions. I will focus, roughly representatively, on the work of Beck and Hanna. Then, in §§5-6, I will try to offer a new interpretation of the issue concerning what Kant means with his idea regarding analytic truths and definitions, and I will examine whether this idea actually agrees with the two substantial criteria of analyticity—points (1) and (4) above—that Kant himself offered.

¹⁷ This is part of Kant's first reply to the Eberhardian objection, which was prepared by Schultz in 1790, after instructions provided by Kant himself. See *Rezension von Eberhards Magazin, Ak. XX*, 408-9. Here, I use Beck's translation (1965; emphases are added), with one small change to the second part of the second sentence. Cf. also Allison 1973, 175. See also Kant's letter of May 12, 1789 to Reinhold. In §5 below we will return to this translated passage, and cast some new light upon it (especially with reference to the just mentioned "small change").

¹⁸ In the first group of interpreters we find, e.g., Beck, Garver, and Kitcher, whereas in the second we can include, e.g., Allison and Hanna (see Bibliography).

4. "Synthetic definitions" or "analytic definitions in connection with intuition"

According to Beck (1965, 1956), the spirit of Kant's above cited reply to Eberhard is the following. A synthetic judgment can be transformed into an analytic one, just in case we have a definition of the subject-concept. This definition can be either nominal or real. If it is *nominal*, then we have a typical analytic proposition. But this does not suddenly acquire the logical or the epistemological necessity that the original synthetic judgment (containing this subject term) was lacking. Or, if it does acquire it, then it is no longer a definition containing the original subject-concept, but another one with only the same name and with no cognitive value. If the definition is *real*, then, in order to give it, we have to know the demanded conjunction of the independent characteristics; a conjunction, nevertheless, which was being declared in exactly the same way in the original synthetic judgment.¹⁹ Summarily put, according to Beck, the following holds in Kant: the sought-for definitions either do not concern concepts with cognitive value, i.e., in Kant, concepts with *meaning* (*Bedeutung*) (in Frege's terminology, from now on, read: *reference*), or, when they do, the definitions, in case they exist, are (contingent) synthetic propositions.²⁰

To my knowledge, Hanna (1997) is until now the only commentator to have explicitly tried to connect the possibility of understanding Kantian analyticity as somehow connected by the latter with an appeal to *some* kind of intuition (*Anschauung*). Since his proposal is quite complex,

¹⁹ Beck 1965, 83-4.

²⁰ This position is clearly developed and crystallized in Beck 1956 (see, e.g., p. 182). According to Beck, definitions par excellence, qua (a priori) synthetic propositions, exist in Mathematics. We will return below (§§6, 7) to the issue concerning the precise status of mathematical definitions, and question this latter thesis.

and as I am going to interpret Kantian analyticity on the basis of a different version of such a connection, I will reconstruct it in some detail. According to Hanna's reading, then, the Kantian theory regarding necessary truth, i.e., regarding a priori knowledge, is founded upon his theory regarding 'inner' or epistemic necessity. This necessity is identical with the propositional attitude of conviction, and gets elicited by an *insight* based on the schematizing functions of imagination. Each time, the schematizing function of imagination provides us with the exact evidence required for the insight that some truth is necessary.²¹ Thus, the formation of the conviction that the truth of a proposition is necessary in the precise sense of *analytically* true, is, according to Hanna, nothing but an *application* of the general theory regarding necessary truth. What is necessary for the formation of such convictions is an intuition (*Anschauung*) based, for Hanna, upon the suitable—for the case—'schematizing' functions and the corresponding evidence.

More specifically, the necessary intuitional²² evidence for the formation of the conviction that a proposition is indeed

²¹ Hanna understands the notion of the Kantian schema in the following way. (I present his reading without any further comments or criticism—for an account of how I understand the notion, see Theodorou 2015, ch. 8, §8.7.b). For example, empirical schemata, Hanna claims (echoing Kitcher 1993, ch. 3), are what cognitive psychologists call "prototypes." Schemata are monograms or prototypes in the sense that they "sort through, regiment, and effectively classify intuitions in terms of the descriptive specifications of conceptual intensions" (2001, 52). A schema is a "rule of the imagination that connects the concept [e.g., 'dog'] with a set of exemplary images [e.g., in our case, 'a four-legged, tail-wagging, barking, fire-hydrant-visiting animal']; [...] correlating elements of the conceptual content with major elements of the sensory manifold [...] interprets or models the abstract conceptual content in sensory terms [...] reduces many diverse items of the sensory information to a communicable higher-order content that encodes all the distinct informational bits in a unitary survey" (2001, 52-3).

²² To be sure, as Hanna has made clear to me, he wouldn't want to translate "intuition" in this context as *Anschauung*, because of his views on Kantian non-conceptualism and the fact that there is no German word used by Kant that is a semantic equivalent to "rational intuition." Apart from this, let me

analytically true is the schematizing function that, in some way, convinces us that a concept in fact consists in precisely the constituent concepts that we now ascribe to or recognize in it. Here is how Hanna claims that something like this comes about.

[The relevant act of judging] immanently traces the analytic semantic structure of the objective proposition [...] and] becomes genuine analytic *a priori* insight [...] [f]or it [this act of judging] contains a consciousness which reproduces or models the very same essential decompositional structure that makes the proposition analytically necessary. [...] That is: the consciousness is isomorphic, and experienced *as* isomorphic, with the underlying semantic form of an analytically necessary proposition. (Hanna 1998, 130)

At this point, a critical question emerges regarding conceptual analysis in Kantian theory: “What sort of ‘form immanent in consciousness’ will constitute the isomorphic, or intellectually distinct, consciousness in conceptual insight?” (Hanna 1998, 130). Hanna seeks the answer in *Reflexion* 1571: “all concepts can be made distinct if one can make them comprehensible through pictures of the imagination” (cit. in Hanna 1998, 130; cf. §2 above). In what sense, though, can the appeal to the imagery of imagination solve problems of consciousness regarding a possible isomorphism between (analytical) judging and the semantic-*conceptual* content of an objective proposition? Doesn’t this oppose Kantian analyticity in the alternative sense (4) (see §3 above)? Hanna rushes to place himself at a safe distance

add that I use the form “intuitional” instead of “intuitive,” a term that constantly deflects our understanding towards merely subjective and irrational ‘clairvoyance’—the meaning by which the term “intuition” is, after all, almost standardly understood in the analytico-pragmatist tradition.

from such an accusation; “In the special case of purely conceptual cognition or thought [...] this imagery is *linguistic* in nature” (1998, 131; emphasis added). But what could something like “linguistic imagery” actually be?

As I understand this, the core of the idea in Hanna’s reply is as follows. Thinking is not conducted in terms of a ‘deep’ purely mental language, but gets realized as an “immanent empirical imagery [...] [with] a structure whose salient syntactical parts correspond one-to-one to the salient syntactical parts of physical linguistic inscriptions in some natural language or another” (1998, 131). Informative language “literally *portrays* structures via the empirical imagination in its schematizing function” (1998, 132). In conceptual insight, then, Hanna continues, the essential source of the consciousness that a concept consists in precisely the particular structural constituent-concepts it consists in, is the fact that the schematizing function of consciousness can encode “in a single conscious, empirically imaginative ‘*linguistic* schema’” the “underlying *semantic* structure of [an] analytic proposition” (1998, 132; emphases added).

In simpler terms, this means that every linguistically competent speaker of a natural language, who, in an utterance, ‘unfolds’ the semantical microstructure of an analytic proposition, simultaneously uses the consciously lived-through reproductive imagination of *linguistic* imagery in order to achieve the insight that he or she *indeed* develops and expresses that objective structure. For example, when someone utters, with insight, the Kantianly analytic proposition “all bodies are extended,” his or her reproductive imagination immanently reproduces an image of this or that token of the *linguistic* form (objective expression) “[*(All x)* (*BODY x = <... etc., + EXTENDED x> pred EXTENDED*]

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x)],”²³ or, more simply, “everything that is a body, i.e., everything falling under the concept ‘body,’ which is defined as <... etc., + EXTENDED>, is extended.” In other words, every such token is an ordered ‘multiplicity’ of parts, which is isomorphic with the semantic relation of “being-contained-in” between the subject-concept and the predicate-concept in the analytic thought “all bodies are extended.”

Nevertheless, in Kant, there is a crucial distinction between a predicate’s general “*belonging to* the structure of the subject-concept” on the one hand, and its essential “being *contained in* the subject-concept” on the other. And, to my knowledge, Hanna nowhere considers this difference, or the possibility of an independent or critical ‘justification’ of the after all ‘*essential*’ conceptual microstructure (mentioned a few lines above) of the subject term. That is, in a judgment, we may be convinced that we indeed think that everything that we conceive of as body and extended is extended; but why does Kant think that we conceive of bodies in indissoluble conjunction with extension, and in a conjunction that he wants to keep separate from what he calls a priori synthetic cases? This is the question that Hanna does not answer.

5. Kant’s idea concerning analytic truths

What, exactly, does Kant suggest in his reply to Eberhard? Contrary to what Beck thinks, in these lines Kant does not say that for every definition of a concept with cognitive value, i.e., with (Kantian) meaning (*Bedeutung*) (or with Fregean *reference*), one has to synthetically know the unity of the predicates that are

²³ See Hanna 1998, 131-2. The expression in the quotation marks is the “empirically imaginal ‘linguistic schema’ or the ‘semantical schema’ or, also, the (semantical) ‘mental model’” (1998, 134).

contained in the definition. On the contrary, what we read in the relevant passage is an explication of what Kant thinks to be the mechanism for producing analytic truths. What it actually says is that one *cannot* convert a synthetic proposition into an analytic one by means of simply *considering* it as a definition, since each time one wants to give a *definition*, the theory of definitions and the restrictions it imposes will force him or her to include in it exclusively *analytic* predicates. This can be demonstrated by means of a detailed examination of the passage as originally worded. In an intriguing way, Beck (and also Kitcher [1981], who probably copies the passage from Beck)²⁴ omits from Kant's original reply to Eberhard a tiny but unexpectedly weighty phrase (between the end of the first sentence and the beginning of the second). These few words say: "This trick will not help him at all [*Dieses Kunststück hilft ihm nichts.*]" That is, in case someone suitably 'stuffs up' (at will) the subject-concept with the constituents he wants, this will *not* help him or her to convert synthetic propositions into analytic ones. We will see how this short phrase sufficiently elucidates the sense of Kant's reply to the Eberhardian critique and his reason for connecting analyticity with *definitions*.

But what kind of restrictions must be taken into account while building *definitions* and, on the basis of this, *analytic* propositions? In the passage from Kant's first reply, we already saw that according to the "theory of definitions," if the definitions are to have *cognitive value* or (Kantian) *meaning*, i.e., if they are not to be a mere play with empty compounds of letters and arbitrarily made up conceptual contents, it is necessary that they define concepts with "*objective reality*" or, directly, the very "*things*" that are meant in or by these concepts, i.e., the subject-concepts have to be checked over against their possible *objects*. Objects,

²⁴ Cf. Kitcher 1981, 228.

however, are given in *intuitions*—in intuitions of self-present *objects*; not of their ‘linguistic representations.’ The question that arises constantly, then, is the following one: if we recollect condition 4 (§3), doesn’t this prerequisite automatically render the definitions *synthetic* propositions? Directly or indirectly, Beck, Kitcher, and all interpreters until now answer this particular question in the affirmative—with Hanna being considerably distanced. In Kantian scholarship, the observed reluctance, if not open hostility, to the idea of approaching analyticity as essentially connected with definitions is caused by just this implied dependence of definitions on the intuition of the objects defined, and thus by the apparent conflict between such an approach and the aforementioned condition 4. In fact, this is precisely the only real *crux interpretum* in our efforts to understand Kant’s notion of analyticity, which constantly deflects interpreters to other simplistic or sophisticated, albeit artificial and still fruitless, paths. In order to overcome this situation, we have to examine what Kant’s “theory of definitions” actually says more carefully. In other words, we have to realize on what exact basis we check the definition *in connection with* the intuition of the possible object(s) of the subject-concept. Has Kant given us such a detailed theory? Not exactly, but we have enough clues regarding its basic directions. Here is what Kant writes in the Methodology division of the *CPR*.

[To articulate a definition means] to present originally the complete [*ausfürlich*] concept *of a thing* within the limits of its concept (A727/B755), [that is, to present it with] clarity and sufficiency [*Klarheit und Zulänglichkeit*] of [only those] characteristics [*Merkmale*] [...] that *belong to* the complete concept [...] [according to] limits [that are] not derived from anything else, and therefore does not require any proof [...] [that the

result stands] at the head of all the judgments regarding *its object*. (A727/B755 n.; emphases added).²⁵

A page later Kant makes it even clearer that in order to be sure that the distinct (*deutlich*) presentation of some—as yet confused (*verworren*)—concept indeed constitutes its complete unfolding, i.e., in order to be sure that we have its definition, we must also know that this presentation is commensurate or homologous or adequate (*adäquat*) with the *object*.²⁶

²⁵ Thus, it goes without saying that on this very basis, I can't help but disagree with Anderson, who says that in the *CPR* Kant remains silent on the issue of how someone could defend claims regarding what is and what is not included in a concept (Anderson 2004, 502). Anderson stops at the point where he advocates the *intensionalist* approach to analyticity in Kant (*ibid.*, 513), on the basis of the traditional division of concepts into genera and species. (See also note 32 below.) Here, as we will see, we can *go on* and *justify* the content of the intension of the concepts under analysis, overcoming the received view that, in Kant, *any connection of a concept with an intuition of the object results in syntheticity* (cf., e.g., *ibid.*, 513 n. 28, 529). If we can't do this, i.e., if we can't show how we can have definitions of concepts with (Kantian) meaning, Kant appears unforgivably negligent on this crucial pillar of his philosophy, i.e., on idea of a priori analytic truths over against a priori synthetic ones, and the pillar itself seems incurably dark and dogmatic. We will see that this is not the case. Kant is sufficiently clear on what he means by analytic truth, although he may be wrong in believing that his suggestion actually does the work that it should be doing.

²⁶ See A728/B756. Moreover, in §§105-8 of the text known as the *Jäsche Logik* (*Ak.* IX, 142-4), which comprises Kant's lecture transcripts, etc., we find important clarifications of the issues we have touched upon until this point. We read that whereas the *nominal* definition gives us only the nominal meaning of a *term*, i.e., its "logical essence," which makes it distinct from other terms, the *real* definition suffices for the knowledge of the *object* of the concept *in accordance with its internal determinations*. In the same sections, we also find some additional restrictions that have to be fulfilled in order to formulate a good definition. On the one hand, we find restrictions connected with the Table of the Categories. The quantity of a definition concerns the "sphere of the definition," the quality of its "completeness" and its "exactness," the relation of its not being identical, and the mode of its being necessary. On the other hand, Kant gives us some rules for testing the good quality of a definition that seem to have been inspired by Wolff. With these tests, it is supposed, we check whether a definition is true, distinct, complete, and adequate (or homologous) *to its object*.

Thus, we see that in Kant, definitions unfold what is meant in the concept, and that as regards their soundness and sufficiency, they are checked over against the possible *object* of the subject-concept, i.e., through some connection with *intuition* that presents us with this object. The clue that resolves the tantalizing difficulties we met in the preceding sections is precisely this connection with intuition. But how this connection solves the problem without leading us to a blatant interpretive fallacy is admittedly not yet clear. To cut a long road short, what I will maintain here is that Kant's view regarding analyticity and definitions seems to be based on the following simple implicit presupposition. If we are to accept that we give precise *definitions* of concepts with (Kantian) meaning, i.e., if we define sound or cognitively interesting concepts, it is necessary that we have the *object* of the concept under definition in a *simple presence* within our intuition. For Kant and for the mentality of his era (or, rather, for the spirit of the philosophical tradition he was conversant with), this presupposition was self-understandable — even if not fully unproblematic — and thus in no actual need of any specific further thematization. Here I refer, of course, to the notorious and today forgotten notion of *apprehensio simplex*. This notion was intensely at play in the later Scholastics (and, more specially, in Duns Scotus), all of who were, of course, working on corresponding fundamental ideas in Aristotle's philosophy.²⁷

²⁷ See the ideas developed in Aristotle *De Anima*, C.6-8; *Analytica Posteriora* B.7-10. We will come back to this terminological expression later on, at the close of §8. I claim that a deeper examination of the line of thought leading from Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, Duns Scotus and, from them, to Wolff's *Rational Philosophy as Logic* (1728) will further underpin the central claim offered in the present paper, especially since Kant learnt his Logic from Wolf. Unfortunately, the historical interest in approaching key issues in modern and contemporary philosophy, which also informs the reading under development here, has been led almost to extinction by the pressure of the 20th century's strictly analytical methods of philosophical interpretation. Philosophical problems were not created by yesterday's fiat. Only a few, like Katz (1990, 1997), de Jong (1995), and Natterer (2003) (the latter, albeit,

It is true that in the *CPR*, in the very first place where Kant attempts to introduce us to the notion of analyticity, we read: “‘All bodies are extended’ [...] is an analytic judgment. [...] To meet with this predicate, I have merely to analyze the concept” (A7/B11). In an analytic judgment, we add “nothing through the predicate to the concept of the subject, but [we] merely break it up into those constituent concepts that have all along been thought in it, although [perhaps] confusedly” (ibid.). Nevertheless, some first indications in favor of the view under development here are already offered in the same context. To analyze a concept means “to become *conscious* to myself of the *manifold* which I always *think* in that concept [*des Mannigfaltigen, welches ich jederzeit in ihm <dem Begriff> denke, mir nur bewußt werden*]” (A7/B11; emphases added).

Before proceeding any further, I will rush to give two sets of clarificatory explications. I begin with the first set. To begin with, in order to avoid misunderstandings and related objections, it must be stressed that “sensing a content of the manifold in sensory intuition” is one thing, and “being *conscious* to myself of the *manifold*, which I always *think* in that concept” is another. Moreover, reading the last passage in the way suggested here does *not* mean that it applies only to empirical concepts. It only shows how the latter can also be the subject of analytic propositions. Additionally, we can observe that here, we get a glimpse of a difference that can be cast in terms of a “*real* essentialism” over against a merely “nominal” or “logical essentialism.” The first belongs to the jurisdiction of epistemology and ontology, the second only to that of Logic. More specifically, we realize (and this

not specifically in connection with analyticity) have shown aspects of the necessary historical sensitivity in their approaches. Absence of this factor leads to incomprehensibility, which is probably the case, especially after Carnap’s engagement with the issue at stake. Nevertheless, a fuller elucidation of the issue at stake behind this line of historical influence must be postponed for another occasion.

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will be further elucidated in the discussion that follows) that there are cases of concepts and of approaches to concepts in which: (i) there is only a logical essence (e.g., for “biangle,” or, *mutatis mutandis*, “Pegasus”), (ii) the logical essence is identical with the real one (e.g., for “triangle,” “moving matter,” “judgment”), (iii) the logical essence is an a posteriori conventional-pragmatic fixation of an open-textured real essence (e.g., for “gold,” “dog,” or “whale”). In each case, Kant’s analyses can be adjusted accordingly. Merely formal linguistic-analytic talk of “concepts,” i.e., neglect of the just mentioned necessary distinctions produces confusion.²⁸ Now, given that Kantian analyticity is easily explainable in the first case of concepts (the trivial case), we are here trying to decipher the meaning of Kantian analyticity in all the other really interesting cases. (Remember Eberhard’s objection and Kant’s reply, which is under discussion here.) Due to lack of space, however, we are going to focus almost exclusively on mathematical concepts and, to a certain extent, on empirical ones. The interpretation under development here can however be relatively easily extended to all the different cases of concepts and the corresponding analytic propositions offered by Kant.

I now pass on to the second set. The mistrustful reader, who naturally still balks at the as yet elementarily presented interpretation of Kant’s analyticity, may like to consider the above reference (to a “manifold” that must “become conscious” in the analysis of the relevant concept) ambiguous. Biased by the now current understanding of Kant’s analyticity, that possible reader may read this “manifold” as referring to the mere conceptual constituents of the concept under analysis. Analyticity, then, would still be a matter restricted within the “space of reasons.” Such a stance, however, would violently ignore the standard and systematic

²⁸ Cf. Meyer 2003, 81-2.

use of this term throughout the *CPR*: the manifold is *given* in an intuition or in an appearance, and is unitarily *apprehended* or thought through in or under a concept.²⁹ In any case, since in Kant the apperceptive and fully conscious “I think” *always* accompanies all my representations (both concepts and intuitions), there is no case of something like a fore-going ‘unconscious’ thinking of some concept that is then consciously thought of (either as such, or under another concept containing it as its part). When I *think* a concept, I am always conscious of it. I am conscious not of its mere name (the word), but also of what it *contains*, of its content. Of course, the situation can vary from the example of the competent user of the concept to the mere learner. If the last cited passage refers to the competent speaker and thinker, then, in the analysis of a concept, he or she just makes explicit the already conscious content of it. Naturally, the competent user was, at one time, a novice. In the beginning, the novice only supposes what the content of the concept might be. In cases like these, sooner or later the need for an explicit analysis of the concept arises. Then, analysis of the concept must for the first time fix the content of the concept (what is consciously thought in it). If the concept has some content (intension) at all, fixing this content is a process that ultimately checks whether it actually presents or not what (the object) the novice thought it was presenting. In the end,

²⁹ Consider this passage from the *CPR*: “[U]nderstanding unifies the *manifold in the object* by means of *concepts*, [...] reason unifies the *manifold of concepts* by means of *ideas*, positing a certain collective unity as the goal of the activities of the understanding.” (A643-4/B671-2; emphases added). To be sure, Kant certainly distinguishes between being contained in a concept and being contained under a concept. But being contained is not the same as being conscious of. The passage concerns our being conscious of the manifold that is thought in the concept, not the making explicit of what is already conceptually contained in it. To think the manifold and, thus, to become conscious of it, is something that is expected to refer to the way a concept (by itself or via its inhering constituents) recognizes cognitively what until then was only sensorially registered.

that is, this check cannot be done in any way other than by a thorough inspection of whether:

- I. The content the novice had tentatively introjected to the concept actually corresponds or refers to the sensory content (*sensory manifold*) offered in our intuition (whenever we intuit what he or she thought the concept presents), and/or
- II. The content of the concept thus secured agrees with the content all competent users of that concept have normally connected with it.

All of this will hopefully reassure us that the first rough exposition of the above basic idea is not threatened by the supposed possibility of thinking that the “manifold” in the last citation from Kant’s *CPR* was not the *manifold of an intuition*. This means that we can move further with our just above drafted reading of Kant’s analyticity, of course seeking additional support for it and explicating it in further detail.

The point we have reached can be summarized as follows. Kant appears to suggest that analytic truth is what characterizes propositions that unpack what is definitionally meant in their subject-concept (in the case of the specifically logical analyticity the concept can be considered as containing its self). In the epistemologically interesting case of the specifically (Kantianly) *meaningful* subject concepts, what is meant is the minimum necessary characteristics that allow us to apprehend the object of the subject-concept as what it is. These characteristics, the theory says, are offered to us ‘by themselves,’ as it were, when the object is presented to us in a simple intuition (of it). When this happens, we precisely say that we apprehend or recognize the object that appears to us. The analytic proposition that has a meaningful subject-concept, then, just expresses in the form of a

definition the characteristics of the object offered in a simple intuition, which enable us to apprehend or recognize it under, in, or by this concept. It is this *simple presence* of the object (in a not necessarily currently actual sensory intuition of it) that assures us that we do not just twaddle meaninglessly in empty concept-words, but grasp an appearing object in the world and can treasure and disseminate its essential identity.

In what follows, I will further examine and defend this idea. I will then develop an answer to the question that has been left in suspension: why does the above described involvement of intuition, defended above as a prerequisite for articulating analytic truths with meaningful subject-concepts, turn them into synthetic truths? I will deal with the latter question in §7.

6. Further examination and evidence (with an emphasis on mathematical concepts)

We already said that in Kant, cognitively interesting talk of analyticity goes beyond the analysis of what is meant within merely non-contradictorily constructed arbitrary concepts (e.g., “bi-angle”). Analyticity is trivial here (e.g., it is analytically true that “biangles are closed, level geometrical shapes having two internal angles.”). The interesting case of analyticity is connected with concepts that have Kantian meaning (*Bedeutung*), i.e., under which objects fall. But how can Kant restrict talk only to concepts with meaning? Isn’t it possible that, at some point of a cognitively significant discourse, we also use constructed concepts that are only subsequently connected with specific objects given to an intuition? A relevant discussion in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science (MF)* (1786) can help us elucidate this point. For example, with regard to a priori

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knowledge and concepts, we read there that to know something a priori is to know it simply from its *possibility*; a possibility, though, that is not discerned by mere logical analysis of the relevant concept, i.e., analysis from the point of view of its non-contradictoriness. Non-contradictoriness secures only that which could be called “possibility of the *concept*,” but not the “possibility of the *object*” of that concept. In order to diagnose the possibility of the object of some concept as something presentable in an intuition (outside thinking) and, hence, in order to know it a priori, we demand that the object be (*a priori*) *constructible* in intuition.³⁰ In this case, we can again say that our definition is a definition of a concept *with meaning*. This can be suitably and easily extended so as to apply even in the case of given or made empirical (or quasi-empirical) concepts, i.e., even in the case where the object meant (reference) may at first or always remain merely imaginary, as is the case, e.g., with “centaur” or “phlogiston.” The specific ontological character of that object, then, may be decided by an open process of empirical research. Of course, the situation is much simpler in the case of *given* empirical concepts, where the object is already present and recognized; in such cases, we want to know only the minimum necessary characteristics that make this intuitionally possible (definition).³¹

We can now pass on to some important references that further confirm the approach under development here.

³⁰ See *Ak. IV*, 470. See also, e.g., A158/B197, A220-1/B267-8.

³¹ From this point of view, I agree with the semantic criticism—of Quinean inspiration—that the naturalists Lawrence and Margolis level against the approach—of Carnapian inspiration—to analyticity proposed by Jackson (see Lawrence and Margolis 2003, §3; cf. also Massey 1991). However, I disagree with the implicit thesis of both sides that “intuition” has merely and solely the meaning of “clairvoyance”—a completely un-philosophical meaning that nowadays seems to prevail in what has come to be called “experimental philosophy!” Nonetheless, an appeal to intuition of the here suggested sort in fact always hides behind each supposedly pure “conceptual analysis.”

6.1. Logical and mathematical principles are valid because they can be exhibited in intuition

To begin with, in the second Introduction to the *CPR*, Kant develops the following idea.

Some few fundamental propositions, presupposed by the geometrician, are, indeed, really analytic, and rest on the principle of contradiction. But, as identical propositions, they serve only as links in the chain of method and not as principles; for instance, “ $a = a$ ”; the whole is equal to itself; or “ $(a \ \& \ b) > a$,” that is, the whole is greater than its part. And *even these* propositions, though they are valid according to pure concepts [i.e., merely due to their logical possibility], *are only admitted in Mathematics* because they can be *exhibited in intuition* [weil sie in der Anschauung können dargestellt worden] [i.e., because they also have meaning or real possibility]. (B17; emphases added)³²

This means that the aforementioned analytic truths do not, indeed, contain any conceptual (logical) contradiction. However, this can also happen with judgments containing merely made subject-concepts that do not have any meaning, e.g., with “biangle” and the analytic truth “biantles have two (internal) angles.” Mathematics (at least Euclidean Mathematics), though, would simply laugh at such meaningless (reference-less) concepts and the corresponding analytic truths. And the cause of this response can be deciphered only if we recognize our implicit demand that cognitively interesting discourse contains only subject-concepts with intuitional possibility, i.e., with apprehensible and recog-

³² See also the exactly parallel passage in *Prolegomena* §2.c.

nizable *objects* falling under them. And, indeed, the propositions in the latter citation are not only analytic but also cognitively meaningful, i.e., *really true* with reference to their corresponding *objects* in (pure, but also—*mutatis mutandis*—empirical) intuition.

6.2. Analytic judgments extend knowledge *formaliter*

In Kantian scholarship, it is standard to say that analytic judgments are not ampliative; they do not extend knowledge. However, in Kant's *Jäsche Logik*, we find a quite remarkable statement. We read there that of course synthetic judgments extend knowledge *contently* or *materially* (*materialiter*), but analytic ones extend it too, albeit only *formally* (*formaliter*).³³ The example Kant uses there, the proposition “all bodies are extended,” moves within the spirit of what I tried to set forth earlier in this paper. Under certain conditions, the character “*formaliter*” can be recognized as applying to analytic judgments, without this meaning the empty “formality” we recognize in General Logic's way of thematizing things. The very example from the aforementioned *Logik* (“all bodies are extended”) does not leave any room for interpreting this “formality” in the way we understand it in the context of General Logic.

I will try to be more specific. In a letter to Reinhold from May 12, 1789,³⁴ Kant writes the following. On the basis of the merely *logical* axiom of “sufficient reason” or principle

³³ *Ak.* IX, 111.

³⁴ *Ak.* XI, 33ff. Here, Kant uses the formal/material distinction in order to deal with the problem posed by Eberhard regarding the possibility of distinguishing between analytic and synthetic judgments. In a short letter to Reinhold, Kant considers both “formality” and “materiality” (as discussed there) as epistemic characters exclusively concerning *synthetic* judgments. In the following lines, though, I try to show that we can charitably make this reference to formality compatible with the one under discussion (from the *Jäsche Logik*).

of “ground (or reason) and consequence” (which pertains only to the mode of representing, i.e., here, with the way we already understand the concepts involved), the consequence can be deduced from the principle of non-contradiction. Of course, this means that this axiom offers us only *analytic* grounds (or reasons). For example, from the way we already understand the concept “extension,” the latter is a logically sufficient reason for the concept of divisibility, because we already represent the concept of extension as containing the concept of divisibility. Thus, the proposition “everything extended is divisible” is analytic. However, Kant remarks, there is also a *real* version of the principle of sufficient reason, which has to do with the *very things* (*objects*). This principle is twofold: it can refer either to a formal ground (reason) or to a material (contentful) ground (reason). And here is how Kant explains the texture and the possibility of these two latter grounds. The real *material* ground has to do with the *existence* (*Existenz*) of the things.³⁵ But the real *formal* ground has to do simply with the *intuition* (*Anschauung*) of the *object*. This is very important. Kant’s ignored explicative idea that analytic propositions extend our knowledge formally means that analytic judgments with cognitively interesting subject-concepts are built on real formal reasons or grounds, i.e., on the basis of the *intuition* (albeit *not* with existence) of the objects of the subject-concept. In this case, we may suppose that even if we cannot accept that the *sides* of a triangle can constitute a (real) formal analytic reason for the angles (I will return to this subtle point below in §7), then at least the intuited three *angles* constitute a (real) formal analytic basis for the a priori truth that “triangles have three (internal) angles.” Put in

³⁵ See *Ak.* XI, 36. Everything containing or being a material real ground is what we call “cause” (in its transcendental or, better, metaphysical sense). In the same context, nevertheless, Kant adds that real grounds in general constitute the basis for *synthetic* judgments.

terms of my approach to Kant's analyticity, the analytic truth of the latter proposition is accepted on the basis of the *simple intuition* of a triangle, i.e., of the simple intuitional presence of the object of the concept "triangle" with its three angles.

Naturally, from the phenomenological point of view, we would like Kant to have referred here not to the intuition of a single specimen of the concept, but rather to the quasi-universal schema of the concept. For the time being, however, let us not make the whole issue more complicated than it already is.

6.3 Real definitions define objects (not concepts)

Another important passage asserting the essential interconnectedness of analyticity, definition of a concept (with meaning), and intuition, is Kant's weighty footnote on A242 of the *CPR*. We read there:

[By] "real definition" [*Realdefinition*] I here mean [the one] which does not merely substitute for the *name* of a thing other more intelligible *words* [as is the case with the merely nominal definition], but contains a clear enough property [*so ein klares Merkmal*] by which the defined *object* can always be *known* with *certainty* [*sicher erkannt werden kann*], and which makes the *explained* [*erklärten*] concept serviceable *for an application* [*zur Anwendung brauchbar macht*]. [Hence, r]eal *explanation* [*Realerklärung*] would be the one that not only makes *clear* the concept, but that also makes [evident] its *objective reality*. Mathematical explanations [of concepts] which *present* [*darstellen*] *the object in intuition, in conformity with the concept* [precisely as real definitions should do] are of this latter kind [of definitions, i.e., of the real ones]. (translation slightly modified; emphases added).

That is, real definitions explicate—and, to be sure, they explicate *substantially*—the objective reality of the subject-concept, by containing the characteristics (*Merkmale*) that suffice for the *simple presentation of its object* (and not of some other) in *pure* (here) *intuition* according to that concept. Put differently, in its simple presentation, the object defined is recognized as necessarily containing what the concept says with reference to it.³⁶ In this way, however, i.e., if in Mathematics (at least in Geometry) the truths introducing the knowledge of their very objects (as being constituted necessarily in the way they are apprehended in a — simple — intuition of them) is treasured in analytic judgments, the issue arises as to how well the generally accepted claim then stands, that in Kant all mathematical judgments are *synthetic a priori*. I will deal with this question in §7.

6.4. Kant's own reference to the *apprehensio simplex*

Kant's own verbatim references to the expression *apprehensio simplex* in his *Opus Postumum* and the so-called *Dohna-Wundlacken Logik* (1790s) are, of course, also important; unfortunately, these are the only places where, to my knowledge, Kant uses this expression.³⁷ If we overcome the fragmentariness and the

³⁶ A730/B758. In §2.c of the *Prolegomena*, moreover, Kant says that we can in fact speak about analyticity even with reference to a definition that is not characterized by clarity and distinctness but is “blurred.” In these cases, that which we conceive in a concept is probably accompanied by confusion. This, most certainly, concerns the *empirical* concepts. The resulting being-blurred of the intension of the concept, however, *does not* disturb the analyticity of its definition. This should be remembered in the following.

³⁷ Ak. XXII, 43, 89, 91, 93, 96, 102, 115, 413, 416; Ak. XXIV, 701. Natterer has especially connected Kant's concerns in his theoretical philosophy with

difference in emphasis contained in the relevant passages, we can see that in his use of the expression, Kant means something very close to what is suggested here by “simple intuition.” In sum, *apprehensio simplex* is there presented as our most elementary way of *comprehending something* (an object). To simply apprehend an object, we read there, means to undividedly take its manifold and put it under a concept, through which from then on we recognize the object in its self-identity, i.e., through which we universally represent the object in our thinking and communication. Moreover, it is remarked, the judgment expressing the conceptual content under which the object is recognized in the *apprehensio simplex* is indeed “tautological,” i.e., analytic.³⁸

6.5. The tradition of *Port-Royal's Logic*

Finally, if we double-check the connection suggested here between Kant’s analyticity, non-contradictoriness, definition, and the special concern for the concept’s capacity to ‘recognize’ or ‘comprehend’ (as it were) its object, then the special way in which the famous *Port-Royal Logic* (1662), which lies in the background of Kant’s education in Logic, develops these issues in Part I, chapters II, V, VIII, XI and XII, will make the difficult skeptical reader re-think the reading suggested here more favorably. I will briefly discuss the roots of this background in §8.

the notion of *apprehensio simplex* in Aquinas and Aristotle, though not in connection with the issue of analyticity (see Natterer 2003, ch. 10.2).

³⁸ Ak. XXII, 96-7; see also *ibid.*, 91.

7. Appeal to “simple intuition” does not imply syntheticity

Before anything else, at this point we need to deal with some representative apparent counter-evidence. In *Reflexion* 4674, Kant writes that in an analytic judgment, the object of the subject-concept is very likely to exist as the-something-else *X* that is found beyond the concept. He also makes this clear in the examination of the analytic proposition “*das X fällt weg*.”³⁹ This, however, does *not* mean that the *X* is simply useless in the (analytic) definition of its concept. It is useless only in the sense that, from the moment we *already have* the definition of a meaningful concept, every *other* such appeal to that object is otiose and can be neglected. The original problem is how we found ourselves having a concept *with* a given (substantial) content.⁴⁰

We can now return to the central concern of this section: why the here suggested appeal to “simple intuition” of the object of a subject-concept does not render the judgment defining it synthetic. Two things have to be made clear. Firstly, *not all* mathematical judgments are, after all, a priori synthetic in Kant’s philosophy. For Kant, only the properly

³⁹ Allison interprets this as follows. In an analytic judgment, the relative predicate is connected with an object *X* (the subject of the judgment), due to the fact that the predicate is contained already (as a characteristic) in the subject-concept. Analytic judgments are thus judgments about an object: they have a logical subject and, as Kant’s examples show, they can also have a real subject. “Nevertheless, since the *truth* or *falsity* of the judgment can be determined *merely by analyzing the concept* of the subject, the *reference to the object X is otiose*.” (Allison 1983, 75; emphases added). The meaning of this ‘otiosity’ is, however, catachrestic or improper. Allison does not tell us *on what basis we found ourselves having* a subject-concept with specific *content* that is also capable of having a *real* reference.

⁴⁰ We get no answer from Anderson to this problem either (see Anderson 2004, 513-4). Of course, this situation sets obstacles to our understanding of the *aprioricity* of analytic propositions (see Proops 2005, 600). The discussion following here and in §8 will answer this.

so-called mathematical judgments, i.e., the really ampliative ones, are synthetic a priori. More specifically, in the latter category of propositions, only the first principles (axioms) and, of course, all the resulting theorems are included. This means that mathematical *definitions* as such are not synthetic a priori. Mathematical definitions, like all other possible definitions, are simply analytic and comprise the content of the mathesis Kant calls “*philosophia definitiva*.” When the case concerns cognitively interesting concepts, *philosophia definitiva* works in the way here suggested. Further, despite the fact that the concepts defined in Mathematics (and especially in Geometry) are concepts with (Kantian) meaning, which means that they get their sound definition in connection with the simple presentation of their object in (pure) intuition, this appeal does not turn the relevant definitions into (a priori) *synthetic* propositions. The definition somehow poses its object ‘in front’ of us, but exactly *and solely* in the way the definition means it; nothing less and nothing more. With the definition of the triangle, I have the very triangle as recognized simply and solely in its triangularity. Put another way, this appeal to intuition, with the *particular and strictly restricted* “going beyond the concept,” does not automatically render the proposition that explicates the subject-concept (even if it is a real definition) *synthetic*.⁴¹

Here is the explanation for this. The latter does not happen since the definition of a concept with meaning is one thing, and a proposition that predicates of (but even in) a thing several additional or further predicables is a totally

⁴¹ It is important here to note that we must not confuse the *process* (method) of developing a definition with the truth-quality of the proposition expressing this definition. This process may be either synthetic (in the case of a posteriori or a priori made concepts) or analytic (in the case of a posteriori or a priori given concepts). See *Jäsche Logik, Ak. IX*, §§99ff. That is, a synthetically developed definition can be analytically true! Cf., though, the so-called “Beth-Hintikka interpretation of Kant’s ‘analytic’” (see Peijnenburg 1994, 165, 169-70, 176-7).

different thing. The first is accompanied by an appeal to what we called “simple intuition” of the object of the concept. The second, however, demands a phenomenologically distinguishable intentional modification of our original mental gaze that simply apprehended the object. Instead of merely gazing at it, as it appears to those of us who simply recognize it, we now move further than the thus accomplished recognition. We begin from the recognized object and start *examining* or *exploring* it as to what it may *also*—necessarily or accidentally—be. Definitions manifest the minimum necessary multitude of characteristics that must be gathered in order for us to *simply have* (“discern”) the object of the subject-concept, to have it simply recognized. Here, we are concerned with a process in which *the very object, somehow, reports the bundle of the elements constituting its identity*, i.e., the content of its concept. Thus, Kant supposes, in the definition we simply make explicit that which is imposed to us by the very object, as it were. This is what makes the definition of a meaningful concept analytic. In the second case, however, the proposition registering what we thus discover of the object adds on (or even in) *extra* elements (contingent or even necessary) to the concept, beyond the elementary ones that come with the simple presence of the object. In Kant, the factor that makes the relevant proposition *synthetic* is this ‘ad hoc’ explorative survey of the originally recognized object, which lets its ‘extra’ characteristics be traced and pop up from obscurity.

The proposition that defines or explicates the subject-concept—in the limited sense explained earlier—is analytic, *no matter whether it is nominal or real* (even though the case that most interests us here is the latter). For a proposition to be synthetic, it must ascribe to the subject-concept predicates collected after scrutiny of the already recognized object of the concept. In this scrutiny, I examine and discover what *else*, what *in addition* happens or holds

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with reference to the simply apprehended object of the concept. I examine what is found in the object ‘on top,’ as it were, of that which makes it simply recognizable in the definition of its concept. For example, my definition of the (Kantianly) meaningful concept “triangle,” i.e., the proposition “triangles have three (internal) angles” is an analytic truth. But, having thus recognized what a triangle is, or that this intuited object is a triangle, I can further explore what holds true of it and discover that it necessarily also has angles the sum of which are equal to the sum of two right angles. The resulting report of this discovery, then, i.e., the proposition “the sum of the internal angles of a triangle equals the sum of two right angles” is a priori synthetic. This truth was *not* at our disposal while we were just gazing at the object in its simple presence, in order simply to recognize it. It requires the extra examination described above.⁴²

Wherever we have definitions, all of them must, *qua definitions*, be *analytic* propositions (their truth is decidable analytically). They analyze the subject-concept. This also holds in the case of concepts with (Kantian) meaning, the definitions of which are formed in connection with the simple intuitional presence of the object of the concept defined. This connection does not render the definition synthetic. Otherwise, we would have the paradox of having to accept the proposition “all biangles have two angles” as analytic, and the proposition “all triangles have three angles”

⁴² In §7 of the *Prolegomena* too, we read that, at first, Mathematics must present its concepts in intuition. The syntheticity of the a priori synthetic truths, however, is not due to the fact that we realize that objects (in pure intuition) indeed fall under these concepts. This syntheticity names the fact that the examination of the objects of these concepts, offered in pure intuition, makes us discover what *more* is to be *necessarily* included in the concept, in addition to what we know of them from their analytic definition. There, Kant in fact makes the remark that the process is entirely similar to that of building synthetic knowledge in sensory experience. In the latter, he writes there, we can collect “new [contingent here] predicates [...] in the concept of the object, which was formed through the [empirical] intuition.”

as synthetic, just because the first is articulated ‘exclusively in the sphere of concepts’ (there is no intuited object for a ‘triangle’), whereas the second contains the concept “triangle” that happens to have an object in (pure) intuition. To put it otherwise, the fact that we know that objects in (pure) intuition are presentable and presentable precisely in the way the definition of their concept states they are does *not* suffice to render this definition an (a priori) synthetic truth. This tested possibility of the object in a simple presentation of it makes the true definition *real* but not also *synthetic*.⁴³

In order not to allow two obvious questions to pass by unanswered, let me quickly add this much. Firstly, in the case under discussion, and in all other similar cases, Kant considers the propositions “triangles exist in pure intuition” or “triangles are constructible in pure intuition” to be synthetic. Secondly, all the above can finally help us realize on what grounds Kant makes the seemingly astonishing claim that not only “ $A = A$,” “all red roses are red,” and “all bodies are extended” but also “gold is a yellow metal” belongs to the class of analytic truths. Of course, the proposition that “gold exists” would again be an (a posteriori) synthetic truth.

⁴³ Kant, then, also wants *mathematical* definitions to be analytic. Additional passages supporting the possibility of the interpretation proposed here can be found, e.g., in the *CPR*, B17-8, A20-1/B34-5, A47/B64-5; also A291/B348, A277/B333, A283/B339, A284/B340, A279/B335, A719/B747. The standard view, though, seems to be the opposite, e.g., Capozzi, just like Beck, thinks that mathematical definitions are synthetic (Capozzi 1980, 427-8). This is also the view that has prevailed more recently; see, e.g., Shabel 2006, §2, Carson 1999, and Anderson 2004, especially 525-6; cf. also Meyer 2003, 78. By the way, especially with reference to Anderson (2004), note that Kant of course says that the arithmetical proposition “ $7 + 5 = 12$ ” is synthetic; but *not as the definition* of “12,” since according to the citations above, especially A727/B755 n., this proposition does *not* qualify for definition. Allison too, just like Beck et al., considers *all* mathematical propositions, i.e., also the definitions, and especially those of Geometry, to be synthetic (Allison 1983, 77).

8. Recapitulation and positioning of the idea in its historical context

Kant's notions of "analyticity" and of "analytic truth" play a fundamental role in his system of critical philosophy, and in the overall issue regarding the possibility and merit of philosophical truths. As is often stressed, however, the actual textual evidence we have does not suffice for an unambiguous understanding of this notion. The interpretation offered here has tried to re-assemble this evidence and to better explicate its meaning. In Kant, contrary to what is generally believed, epistemologically and ontologically interesting analytic truths are not decidable on the basis of a total restriction within the bounds of the concepts alone. From the point of view of the present paper, such analytic truths can only be decided by means of a peculiar appeal to intuition: that which was here called "simple intuition," the intuition offering us the object of the concept in its simple presence. The application of this approach to the case of mathematical concepts (and, in brevity, to empirical concepts) was proven to be not only possible, but also useful and fruitful. In all the above cases, the interpretation suggested here was found to work in a proper and promising way. Thus, the road is paved for a future discussion of the categories and of metaphysical concepts along the lines of this same idea.⁴⁴

In fact, we realize here how crucial and how fertile the connection between analyticity and *apprehensio simplex* appears to be. On the one hand, it necessarily brings us back

⁴⁴ To be sure, further elucidation on the empirical concepts would be appropriate here. For instance, I have in mind Kant's peculiar remark concerning the concept "*Schiffuhr*" (A729/B757). In addition, concern should also be shown for the issue of concepts with dis-intuitable objects, e.g., "chiliagon," etc. The development of all these points would take us much further than the restricted extension of this first preparation.

to Aristotle's philosophy and, more specifically, to the celebrated dictum that:

“οὐδέποτε νοεῖ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἢ ψυχῆ. [...] τὰ μὲν οὖν εἶδη τὸ νοητικὸν ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι νοεῖ” (“We only make sense of whatever can be accompanied by a self-given presentation in intuition. [...] And what we make sense of in what is thus intuitionally offered is nothing other than its species,” Aristotle: *De Anima*, 431a16-17, 431b2, my translation).⁴⁵

And

“ἔστι δ' ἡ μὲν φάσις τι κατὰ τινος, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ ἀπόφασις, καὶ ἀληθῆς ἢ ψευδῆς πᾶσα· ὁ δὲ νοῦς οὐ πᾶς [ἀληθῆς ἢ ψευδῆς], ἀλλ' ὁ τοῦ τί ἐστι κατὰ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι ἀληθῆς [πάντα.]” (“Our saying something about something is always either true or false, precisely as our assertions. But our making sense of something is not always either true or false, since when we make sense of what something is, i.e., of what its essence is, we are always true.” Aristotle: *De Anima* 430b26-29, my translation.)

That is, we can only make sense of a concept in case we also recognize its object in intuition. And what is primordially understood of that object is its basic constitution, meant in the concept and expressible in the relevant definition. Negation of the definition, of course, results in self-cancellation

⁴⁵ It is this ancient quest for the *eidos* or the *idea* (ἰδέα), which, combined with the agenda of the Greek mathematical researchers for discovering definitions (ὀρισμούς), codified in works like that of Pappus as a method of “analysis” (ἀνάλυσις), which informed the philosophical endeavors of the later middle ages and passed into the concerns of the Paduan logicians, Descartes, the Logic of Port-Royal, and then into Wolff's *Logic* and to Kant's philosophy. Some evidence for this can be found in Beck 1964.

or self-conflict of some kind, but does the negation of any definition, e.g., also of the definition “gold is a yellow metal,” amount to a *logical* contradiction?

With this, we are led, on the other hand, to wonder about the following. We have, hopefully, managed to make sense of Kant’s idea about analyticity and analytic truth, but is it at all possible to conceive of a priori truths, grounded on the basis of the principle of non-contradiction, as also containing concepts immediately or subsequently referring to sensory or pure contents offered in intuition (even if in the simple way described above)? I think that two lines of thought have arisen out of this enigmatic aporia, which has puzzled philosophy for centuries: Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology.

The first accepted that philosophical knowledge could only be analytic, and that truths of this sort are the trivial truths of Logic, probably the truths of Mathematics (most certainly those of Arithmetic), and perhaps the *uninterpreted* semantic rules of formal linguistic systems (“bachelors are unmarried men,” “Color terms are attributable only to terms indicating extended surfaces,” “Crows are black,” etc.). Naturalized epistemology re-surfaced and started to prevail as a result of such exaggerations (“if experience shows to us, e.g., some white crow, then so much the worst for the crow” or “we can construct an interpretation of color terms in which non-dimensional mathematical points are colored”) and the unclarities characterizing this approach to language, to analyticity, and to experience at large.

The second disengaged analytic truths from any reference to sensory contents and connected them with the empty forms of our thinking and intuiting. That is, Phenomenology considered as analytic only the truths of Formal Apophantics and Formal Ontology (e.g., “ $A = A$,” “All red roses are red,” “A whole is comprised out of its parts,” etc.). It also insisted that there are also necessary connections among the possible

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contents of intuition, but that these must be acknowledged as a priori *synthetic* (e.g., “all bodies are extended,” “the same surface cannot be blue and green all over at the same time,” etc.). Those that remain are just a posteriori synthetic (“gold is a yellow metal,” etc.).

A fuller account of these matters may have important consequences for the possibility and fate of Western Metaphysics (First Philosophy). This is, nonetheless, a totally different story, which surpasses the limitations of this occasion.

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