MINDING OUR LANGUAGE

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The Philosophical Forum, Volume 49, Issue 4, Winter 2018, Pages 449–466

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The hegemony of mind over the field of philosophy is a phenomenon generally noted and frequently lamented. There have been revolts and insurrections aplenty; there have even been attempts upon the life of the mind. But all would-be assassins have thus far been foiled. Richard Rorty stigmatized mind as a dispensable invention,[1] Gilbert Ryle attacked mind as a "ghost in the machine,"[2] William James[3] declared the inexistence of mind as consciousness, and Hegel devoted the whole of his first book[4] to the elimination of consciousness as a principle of philosophy. But these and many others have failed. I list Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a great (I should say the greatest) failure in the attempt to unseat mind from her place on the pinnacle of modern thought for the very simple reason that philosophy since Hegel—even among "Hegelians"—has continued upon its mentalistic ways. Whether a Hegelian elimination of mind from philosophy might someday be effective is here beside the point. By standards which Hegel would surely acknowledge, his efforts to eliminate mind—like those of James, Ryle, Rorty, and numberless others—failed because they have not yet fundamentally altered the course of philosophy in the modern world.

Clearly there is something both persistent and elusive about mind. And yet the intimation also persists that philosophy would somehow be better off if mind-talk could be got rid of. But we seem to be in a vicious hermeneutic circle with regard to mind; it bounces back from decapitations like the poly-headed hydra of antique legend. Most recently there has been a spate of "linguistic turns" from talk about mind. Yet in case after case, the proposed linguistic surrogate has shown itself to be mind by another name.

Given this state of affairs, it would be comic for anyone, at this or any other gathering of philosophy's friends, to propose to do (in a one-hour lecture) what such illustrious predecessors failed to accomplish during their entire lifetimes. Under the circumstances, we can, on this topic, only entertain hypotheses and tell stories. The hypothesis I propose for your entertainment today is directly suggested by the failure of recent attempts to replace mind or consciousness by language. It is that mind *is* language internalized or, if you will, "minded." My story will attempt to make plausible how and why this happened. If the story is any good, it will also point toward a strategy for out-flanking the hermeneutic circle of mentalism. But plausibility is all we can aim for; at best this will be a likely story, something like a fairy tale. And, in the end, I'll have to ask for considerable help from my muse. Perhaps that is why it is fitting for this story to appear under a light-hearted title, "Minding our Language," which is at least a threefold pun.[5] Please accept my remarks as a modest proposal, an

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1 Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), 17–69.

2 Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1949), 11–24.

3 William James, "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?," *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912), 1–38.

4 G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Bamberg: Joseph Anton Goebhardt, 1807).

5 The phrase "minding our language" can be said in many ways. That's why it's a potential pun. Ian Hacking, *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975), 94, was able to detect in the title of Peter Strawson's Kant book, *The Bounds of Sense*, a quadruple pun, observing that the words "bound" and "sense" each have a dual meaning, but Strawson gives small hint of this. Is this the British way with puns? Is there an American way? If there were, it would probably be more straightforward, less witty. Let's give it a shot. Let's see what happens if we treat the phrase "minding our language" as an unwitty pun. Wit loves to hide. Maybe the best way to take any possible wit out

exercise in aim-taking on philosophy's reigning monarch, the mind. But please do not expect that anything like a fatal shot will be assayed. It will be enough if we can plausibly identify our hero's birth and chart the principal stages of his rule over us.

Assuming for the moment that our eponymous pun is threefold, and that there is a story to tell, the word-play in the middle will have to be most telling. And, I believe, it is. Consider "minding" as a transitive verb: mind got invented when language got "minded"—get the pun? That's the heart of the story or fable. And that's also why this pun is central to our story, the middle of the triptych, so to speak. It follows from this that the left panel of the triptych displays the state of affairs before language got minded and that the right panel shows what happened to language once minded. We can, following excellent precedent, unpack this polysemy by using adverbs. By this narrative technique, we can distinguish between, first, minding our language *aristotelianly*, then, minding our language *stoically*, and, finally, minding our language *kantianly* (or, if you like—it's all the same to me—Fregeanly or Davidsonianly).

That's the basic plot outline of the fable. But to add just a bit of interest, the story will be told in reverse order.

A good reason for reversing chronological order in our fable is that many of the more recent Kantian language-minders—one thinks of such seemingly diverse figures as Michael Dummett[6] and Karl-Otto Apel[7]—have argued that the philosophy of language—especially since Frege or Pierce—has "transformed" philosophy by shifting its preoccupation from mind or consciousness to language. Without wishing to deny the impact of this proposal[8]—it has generated a wealth of literature—I must say that it has been systematically misleading. For, if this fable ever gets taken seriously, it will be clear that language—far from being an alternative to mind as the framework of philosophy—is mind's very point of origin and sustenance.

Those who mind language *kantianly* use the verb "mind" in the sense of "pay attention to"—as in the parental phrase "mind your manners now," said perhaps to dissuade children from their spontaneous ways during a visit with the duchess, the Kantian counterpart being to dissuade "Cartesians" from their habitual method of making everything into an object of consciousness. Here the Kantian ploy—to be unpacked in the fable—is to argue that the conditions necessary for anything's being an object of consciousness are, *eo ipso*, linguistic conditions, and therewith conditions sufficient for the achievement of objectively valid knowledge. In one word, the Kantian language-

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of our phrase, to Americanize it, would be to perform a linguistic analysis upon it, as Hacking has done for Strawson's. That's why I propose that we explicate three ways of using the richly polysemic phrase which has—at least in part—drawn us together for this meeting.

As to Hacking's title, and recalling the stale Ox/bridge saw about mind/matter, why not consider (as I shall in the sequel) "Why Does Language *Mind* to Philosophy?"

6 Michael Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (London: Duckworth, 1973).

7 Karl-Otto Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), 2 vols.

8 In less modest days, this modest proposal was dubbed a "revolution," most notably by the contributors to the BBC talk show, "The Revolution in Philosophy," later published as A.J. Ayer *et al.*, *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1956).

minder tries to show that the elementary unit of meaning and knowing is the linguistically modeled sentence or proposition; that objects, to be known, must be given propositional forms; and that there are objectively valid rules, very much like grammatical rules, for the transformation of pre-epistemic "terms" into epistemic "propositions."

To the *Kantian* language-minder, the mind to be avoided by minding our language is the mind for which everything is (erroneously taken to be) term-like, singular or monadic object for consciousness, whereas, seen in its correctly linguistic light, everything knowable actually has the conceptual structure of a well-formed proposition—in its more expansive Habermasian form, this still-Kantian linguistic structure is said to embrace the pattern of discursive interaction implicitly postulated by all serious proposition utterers. That is why the Kantian is constantly at pains to transform monadic term-like "mental" intuitions (*Anschauungen*) into dyadic proposition-like concepts (*Begriffe*) and into a polyadic, communicative, action (*Diskurs*) that "should," ultimately, involve just about everybody.

But all this, so the fable goes, is an intra-mental mistake. Kantians in general fail to recognize that language is only instrumental, they fail to "mind language" *aristotelianly*, they fail to heed the difference between theory and language. Whether the structure be understood as polyadic (discursive), as dyadic (propositional), or as monadic (termist), the implicit frame of reference remains linguistic *and therefore* (since mind *is* stoically-minded language) mental. To see this, we must become better acquainted with the last phase of our fable, minding our language *aristotelianly*, which would be, of course, first if taken in chronological order. For this turn of our phrase, we must lean upon a largely British use of the verb "mind," as when children in a busy holiday kitchen are told to "mind the hot stove," which serves to warn them lest they burn their little fingers. To mind our language aristotelianly is to beware that there is a fundamental difference between theory and logic, that there is an unbridgeable chasm between the structure of real entities and the structure of linguistic expressions, and that we must, at all costs, avoid any conflation of the two.[9]

Well, that's the basic plot outline. The main point is that language can be minded in three ways—kantianly, stoically, and aristotelianly—to which we may helpfully add that *each way is* (*today at least*) *only intelligible when viewed in contrast with the other two*. The moral of the story—or at least the hypothesis I should like you to entertain—is that the Aristotelian is ultimately the best way of minding our language. But "ultimately" must here serve as an important caveat: we cannot today mind language in an Aristotelian manner if we do not see that the immediate historical and political context for Aristotle's language-minding is either unavailable or (in its degraded, "cultural," form, as epitomized

[9] This reading of Aristotle, as the philosopher who systematically distinguishes between theory and logic, is admittedly at variance with the dominant contemporary reading, perhaps best epitomized by Jonathan Barnes, "Aristotle's Theory of Demonstration," *Phronesis* 14 (1969): 123–52—revised and reprinted in *Articles on Aristotle*, ed. Barnes, Schofield, & Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1975) vol. I: 65–87—and in *Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982). The fabled reading detailed in this essay has largely been stimulated by Hegel (*passim*), Eric Weil, "La place de la logique dans la pensée aristotélicienne," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 56 (1951): 283–315—tr. J. & J. Barnes as "The Place of Logic in Aristotle's Thought," in *Articles on Aristotle*, vol. I, 88–112, Wolfgang Wieland, in *Die aristotelische Physik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), and David R. Lachterman, in various unpublished essays.

by Rorty) hopelessly "ethnocentric."[10] There is, in short, as Bernard Williams has argued in a related context, need for "some extension of ancient [sc., Aristotelian] thought, greatly modified" to meet "the demands of the modern world,"[11] or, as Wilfrid Sellars once put it,[12] for "an Aristotle of the modern world." Mind was invented (or stoically minded out of language) to fill the gap between the "ethnocentric" world of Aristotle and our planetary society of today. Since this is a rather large gap—embracing most of what we call western civilization—you'll probably want to know what purpose our fable assigns to mind during its extended period of hegemony. Clearly, the story would be gappy without some such account,[13] though only a hint can be given here. It is that mind has been the "great emancipator," the principal and indispensable means by which worth and dignity has come to be ascribed to all members of our biological species. Mind has been the lowest common denominator—for mental man is "a little lower than the angels"—registering our equality and freedom. But, like so many insensible agents of significant change in our past, mind is a fiction, and a fiction no longer needed in the modern world. Learning to mind our language might be a first step toward making Aristotle safe for the modern world, a step that can appear worth taking if we could see that the prevailing mentalist philosophy is susceptible of supersession (e.g., via Hegel's *Phenomenology*—or this fable) and that not all attempts to renew our classical philosophical roots need be (like Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind*) reactionary. Of course that is a tall order, and to fill it today one would have to tell a tall tale. Well, that's just what our fable is. So let's get on with it.

I. MINDING OUR LANGUAGE KANTIANLY

"Now language is the subject!" This phrase, uttered by some Frenchman in response to Michel Foucault, elegantly captures the Kantian ideal in minding our language. The Kantian problem is that the traditional subject, mind as Cartesian consciousness, has proved bankrupt. No object for this subject can prove itself creditworthy. Epistemic nihilism threatens. The Kantian solution is to go on talking about subjects but to replace the traditional subject, mind, with a "new" one, language—to "mind language" in the sense of taking language as the proper substitution instance for mind.

This general strategy takes two forms, according to whether one takes a formal or an informal view of language. To resolve problems in the theory of truth[14] and to eliminate the paradoxes of reference, the informalist Kantian avails himself of the performative skills (the Rylean know-*how*) available to any competent speaker of any natural language. This route is perhaps most elegantly traversed by Donald Davidson in his Rylean twist upon Tarski which he calls "Convention T."[15] Somewhat more messy versions of the strategy have been done up—in much more delightful prose—by Ryle, Strawson, and others. It would be pleasant to include an adequate account of the many

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[10] Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?," *Post-Analytic Philosophy*, ed. J. Rajchman & C. West (New York: Columbia UP, 1985), 3–19.

[11] Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985), vii.

[12] Wilfrid Sellars, during a Yale graduate seminar on Wittgenstein, sometime in the late 1950s.

[13] It is an amazing feature of analogous stories that they often neglect to say why mind got invented; when they do, the accounts can be amazingly psychological, especially of Descartes' *psyche*, as in Ryle, *Concept of Mind*, 18ff.

[14] Minding language *aristotelianly*, there could never be a "theory" of truth; at best there could be a "logic" of truth.

[15] Donald Davidson, "In Defence of Convention T," in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984), 65ff.

informalist dimensions of Kantian language-minding in this fable, had we but world enough and time. Since we don't, I'll leave just hinted and unsupported my alleged parallelism between the informalist and the formalist versions of Kantian language-minding and proceed directly to an interpretation of its original, clearest, and still most coherent formulation—Kant's. That our fable finds the most sophisticated philosophy based on linguistic forms in Kant only becomes evident when his first *Critique* is unequivocally[16] seen to be organized on the basis of two principal distinctions: (1) the *logical* difference between intuitions and concepts,[17] and (2) the *metaphysical* difference between receptivity and spontaneity. The point of his argument is to show how our objects of knowledge may be objectively valid. His strategy is to demonstrate that the conditions necessary for the possibility of our having any objects of knowledge whatever are at the same time conditions for the possibility of our having objectively valid knowledge. The demonstration consists in a deployment of his logical and metaphysical distinctions.

Both of Kant's principal distinctions pertain to what he calls *Vorstellungen* ("representations," as in the standard translations, or "ideas," as in Lockean English, or "perceptions," as in Hume). The logical distinction between *intuitions* and *concepts* is that between (1) a simple representation (an unrepresented representation) and (2) a compound representation (a represented representation). The metaphysical distinction between *receptivity* and *spontaneity* is used to differentiate between the mental capacities of (1) receiving what is represented as outside the mind and of (2) producing representations within the mind. The logical and metaphysical elements are joined in the axioms (1) that the (human) mind is only capable of sensibly receiving unrepresented representations (a metaphysical species of logical intuitions, *always plural*, a manifold) and (2) that the (human) mind is only capable of producing thought and known represented representations (a metaphysical species of logical concepts, *always unitary*, the result of a combination).

Ordinarily we do not project the structure of our medium for communication into the subject matter we seek to communicate. But, thanks in large part to Kant (and to those who share the "Fregean faith"),[18] this has now become a standard move in philosophy. Perhaps such temptations were once innocent (e.g., in Heraclitus' notion of the "*logos*"), before philosophers developed an explicit understanding of language's formal structures. But once there developed a reflective awareness of such grammatical differences as those between nouns and verbs (first discovered by Plato), subjects and predicates (Aristotle), and terms and propositions (Aristotle and the Stoics), it became tempting to introject the formal aspect of these distinctions into the topics of our discourse. Some general names for this pervasive philosophical temptation might be "linguistic formalism," "epistemic logicism," or, more traditionally, "applied formal logic" (sometimes simply "logic") and when a philosopher has fully succumbed to the temptation (or, if you insist, "the faith"), his very theory becomes a "transcendental logic."

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[16] Most interpretations of Kant equivocate between the logical and the metaphysical aspects of his argument.

[17] Kant, *Logik*, Part I, Allgemeine Elementarlehre, in *Kants Werke*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1968), vol. 5, 521ff.

[18] The phrase "Fregean faith" derives from Dummett, *Frege: The Philosophy of Language*, 474.

Logic is formal because the place-holders in a "logical" argument are variables. These may be either term-variables, as in syllogistic logic, or propositional-variables, as in Stoic (and, later, Kantian transcendental and Fregean mathematical) logic. The distinctive feature of a propositional variable is that its substitution instances are the minimal bearers of truth or falsity (it makes no sense to assert that a mere term is true or false). Propositional logic in turn makes it intelligible to speak in general terms about an asserter (of truth) or a negator (of falsity) in a proposition. Such a general capacity of asserting (or negating) propositional variables, independent of the content of what is asserted, the Stoics called the "*hegemonikon*,"[19] the ruling part of the soul, or what the tradition has come to call mental activity or simply "mind." Hence, the development of formalism in logic may be seen to have facilitated the invention of a new metaphysical entity, the mind (but all this unduly anticipates the next phase of our fable, minding language stoically).

Reason, Kant's generic term for mental activity, stands in need of a critique because of a propensity in philosophy, as a general theory of the mind, to presume to know things in general as the special sciences presume to know particular kinds of things. But, as a general theory of mind, philosophy's claims to know must be constrained by the nature of its distinctive subject matter, things in general. A philosophical theory of knowing must therefore be geared to this generality. Hence, the topics of philosophy are like the subject matter of traditional formal logic, sc., variables. Given the twofold nature of variables in traditional formal logic, terms and propositions, the question immediately arises as to which provides the paradigm for knowable things according to a philosophical, that is, a general, theory of knowing.

Prior to Kant, the *tacit* assumption had been that the logical paradigm for the object of philosophical knowing was the term variable, hence Locke's notion of the "idea" and Hume's of the "perception" (subdivided into "impressions" and "ideas"). As this tacit assumption became more *explicit*, skepticism about any theory of knowledge grew. If the things to be known are like logical terms, there is no way that these can be shown to be related to one another in any but an adventitious manner. Why?

Because the mind would have to "receive" from the extra-mental sphere not merely the representation of a thing at "this" space-time, but also of the connection between the thing at "this" and "that" space-time. While acknowledging that we customarily do make such connections in our special fields of inquiry, a general basis for them could not be derived from our receptivity to what is "outside" us (our minds). For if it is assumed that what we know has the logical form of the term, then we are systematically removed from any possibility of receiving any idea of any connection between terms. Any such connection would have to be added by the mind on the basis of the contingent expectations to which any particular (not the general) mind had been habituated in its

[19] "The 'commanding faculty' (a new term [coined by the Stoics] for the centre of consciousness, which is sometimes called mind (*nous*) … ," *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, ed. A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), vol. I, 320.

subjective career of experience. Clearly no general account of truth in knowing could be based upon such foundations.

The point of departure for Kantian language-minding is an acceptance of this skeptical conclusion and a generalization from it. For, Kantians argue, it is not merely the case that the mind cannot *objectively* connect this and that representation or idea as, say, a cause and its effect; the very idea of a mind knowingly receptive to a (single) representation is logically unsupportable. To be known, a representation must be represented. But intuition, as the *logical* term for that to which mind is (*metaphysically* speaking) receptive, is an unrepresented representation, which is implicitly plural because infinitely (not divided but) divisible. What we *can* say about such an intuition is that it is divisible in just two ways, spatially and temporally. As non-unitary, intuition is particular and, as a divisible particularity, it must be divisible in terms of either synchronic (spatial) or diachronic (temporal) juxtaposition. It follows that something *can* be known about the intuition (logical) to which we are receptive (metaphysically): human *receptivity* or sensibility is conditioned by the two forms of divisibility, space and time.

The linguistic paradigm for the Kantian notion of an intuition is, not the subject place-holder but, more generally, the term variable in syllogistic logic. The linguistic paradigm for a concept is indeed the predicate place-holder—from Greek, the "*category*"—but only as the function of unity in a judgment. The logical form of a judgment, "the representation of a representation,"[20] is not a predicate (or category) but a sentence or proposition (the word "*Satz*" does duty for both in German), what is variable in propositional logic,[21] and whose Kantian paradigm is the transcendental unity of apperception. But the concept as function of unity in judgments or propositions pertains not merely to the formation of atomic propositions (the quantitative and qualitative aspects of predication—the first of Kant's six "categories") but also to molecular propositions (resulting from the conjunction, if-then-conditioning, and disjunction of atomic propositions—the "categories" of Relation), that is, propositions compounded, and to modal propositions (as possible, asserted, or necessary—"categories" 10 through 12 on Kant's table).

Hence, the key move in Kantian language-minding: to be an object of knowledge is not primarily to be an object *for mind*; its precondition is to be an object *in language*; at the critical minimum, it is to have the linguistic form of a sentence. Objects of knowledge are not objects of mental reference; for Kantian language-minders there is, in Davidson's elegant phrase, "reality without reference"[22]—having minded language, reality is made intra-linguistic, a "category." As that most influential of Kantian language-minders, Frege, put it, "We are all too ready to invoke inner intuition,[23] whenever

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20 Kant, *CPR*, A68=B93.

21 Despite Frege's disagreement with Kant on the synthetic vs. analytic character of arithmetic, the component of propositional logic in Kant's first *Critique* parallels that in Frege's *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik. Eine logisch mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl* (Breslau: Wilhelm Koebner, 1884)—tr. J.L. Austin as *The Foundations of Arithmetic: A logico-mathematical enquiry into the concept of number* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1950). Compare *CPR*, A67–69 and *GA* §62.

22 Donald Davidson, "Reality Without Reference," *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 215ff.

23 With this phrase, "inner intuition," Frege has most succinctly captured the concept of mind to be eliminated by *Kantian* language-minding.

we cannot produce any other ground of knowledge. But we have no business, in doing so, to lose sight altogether of the [Kantian] sense of the word 'intuition,'"[24] not as that to which mind is receptive—that is, a *sensible* intuition, with emphasis upon the *metaphysical* contrast receptivity/spontaneity—but as a "*repraesentatio singularis*," a singular or unrepresented representation, which may be a sensible *intuition*, with emphasis here upon the *logical* contrast, intuition/concept.

Frege stresses that intuition *per se* is defined by Kant without any mention of sensibility. He is right. In fact, Frege gives us the principal clue to all the forms of Kantian language-minding. Mind is putatively eliminated and the paradoxes of reference are avoided when the object of traditional, for example, Cartesian, mentation, the *cogitationis* or "idea," is seen to have the logical form of an unrepresented representation. But to be even a candidate for serving as bearer of truth or falsity, the object of knowledge must be at least a represented representation, that is, it must have the linguistic form of a sentence.

Since all knowledgeable representing is governed by epistemic rules (just as all sentential predication and combination is governed by grammatical rules), and these rules are *concepts*, there is a necessary linguistic (i.e., conceptual/propositional) component in all objects of knowledge whatsoever. So just as some unrepresented representations (sensible *intuitions*) are necessarily divisible in just two ways, representations may be representable (combined into atomic propositional judgments) and propositions may be compounded (combined into molecular propositional judgments—through the use of the linguistic operators: conjunctors, if-then-conditionals, and disjunctors) in a finite number of ways. Since the proposition (whether atomic or molecular) is the linguistic form for any possible object of knowledge, to specify the functions of propositional unity (the *concepts*), together with the forms of all possible unrepresented representations (*intuitions*), would be to give a *complete*[25] inventory of the formal aspects of knowledge.[26]

The longest-standing objection to Kant's strategy is Jacobi's:[27] that it both requires and eliminates the notion of a thing-in-itself.[28] Put in the more technical vocabulary of Kantian language-minding, this objection amounts to the observation that Kant *metaphysically* requires determinate input via sensible *receptivity* for the content of knowledge, whereas his *logical* doctrine of sensible *intuition* allows him only to claim that the deliverances of sensibility are divisible in spatial and temporal ways, hence determinable but not determinate. It is clear that determinate things-in-themselves cannot be known qua determinate according to Kant's strategy; they can only be known qua appearances, that

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24 Frege, *GA*, §12.

25 "*Completeness*" (*Vollständigkeit*) is the principal "*clue*" (*Leitfaden*) to Kant's transcendental proof-structure.

26 Aware that this is a very bare-bones and indeterminate proof, the Kantian holds out hope that the formal aspects of intuition and concept should, when considered together, yield more determinate constraints (what Kant calls "principles," Kant, *CPR*, A148ff.) upon our knowledge. Thence he hopes a way will have been found to use yet more determinate forms of language (as in Cassirer's "symbolic forms"), again to replace the traditional concept of mind, and thus legitimate the more determinate contents of our knowledge. This strategy is suggested by the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* and by the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*.

27 *Jacobis Ausspruch*' serves as the organizing principle for Richard Kroner's monumental two-volume study, *Von Kant bis Hegel* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1921/24).

28 In Anglophone Kant criticism this objection has been put forward most forcefully by Prichard.

is, as indeterminate.[29] If there were a Kantian response to this objection, it would have to depend upon the layered fashion in which sensible *intuitions* are integrated into *conceptual* unifications (the counterparts of linguistic propositions). The Kantian requires some way to introduce empirical determinacy without having to stamp it with the seal of objective validity as it is immediately delivered, or *received* (for this would be to claim to have an "intellectual intuition," a sensible representation which itself represented something beyond mind—which would be, for Kant, a contradiction and, for Davidson, "reality *with* reference"). Hence, to avoid going beyond mind in its traditional (Cartesian) form, one "minds language" and takes what has seemed, to most philosophers over the past 200 years, the most plausible escape from the paradoxes of Cartesian mentalism.

This escape route would be even more plausible if not for the unfortunate fact that mind itself was a product of minded language. But that is the story of minding language stoically, the next phase of our fable.

II. MINDING LANGUAGE STOICALLY

If the Kantian phase dominates our fable for two centuries, the Stoic hegemony has persisted for more than two millennia. In truth to our fable, we would have to say that Kantian language-minding is but a sub-species of the Stoic, or, better, Stoicism defines the genus of making mind out of language and Kantianism is the corrective species which purifies and clarifies the linguistic nature of mind after an extended "psychologistic"[30] detour. The only possible excuse for dwelling upon the Kantian sub-phase of Stoic language-minding is that we are still in the midst of it and the texts are more available and familiar. As an audience to a fable, we also should be grateful that this parallelism obtains, for it will help keep the length of our story down to a reasonable telling. If our Kantian episode was plausible, the Stoic can be mostly a recapitulation. Only the emphases need to be altered—or, if you like musical metaphors, the meter, keynote, melodies, and basic modulations are the same; only the rhythm is different.

That difference is most manifest when the critical Kantian is explicitly asked about mind. His answer: "it doesn't matter" or "never mind." What matters to philosophy is language, either in the form of meanings (sc., propositions) or sentences (uttered propositions). Mind-talk is paralogism. "The heyday of ideas"[31] is over. Husserlians and Fregeans; structuralists, deconstructionists, and ethnocentric partisans of parochial speech, all exhale a huge sigh of relief. Cartesian mind is dead! Long live language! Let's get on with our language games!

"O," our fabulous muse whispers, "if only it were so simple. Then the Kantian injunction to mind language and never mind mind might have been heeded. Then one or another of the many

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29 See Kant, *CPR*, A20=B34, *et passim*.

30 The term "psychologism" is used in the sense given it by Gottlob Frege and F.H. Bradley.

31 "The heyday of ideas" names the first of three phases in the Foucauldian fable told by Ian Hacking, *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?* to which reference has already been made.

Kantian assaults upon mind might have hit its mark. But mind loves to hide. And Cartesian mind, together with all its ideas, was just a mask—albeit a sturdy one. Assassination unsuccessful."[32]

So what is the real difference between Stoic and Kantian language-minding? Here is the shortest answer my muse can fabulate. "Stoic language-minding marked the genuine 'Copernican revolution' in philosophy—and in many other spheres of life as well. It transformed philosophy, which had been born and nurtured in the bosom of the *polis*, and enabled it to endure the death of the *polis*. For the sake of our story at least, this death may be dated rather precisely, with Antipater's suppression of the Athenian insurrection fomented by Demosthenes upon receiving word of the death of Alexander (ca. 323 BC). To be sure, the Athenian *polis* had been, especially during the second residency of Aristotle, a mere shadow of its Periclean self. But it had—perhaps with the benefit of Aristotle's Macedonian connections[33]—persisted. Now it was gone, absorbed into the European fragment of the Alexandrian empire."

The muse insists that these little bits of historical detail are critical to a fable on the theme "Minding our Language." If the standard Hellenistic reading of Aristotle were on the mark, their irrelevancy to the Stoic/Aristotle connection would have to be acknowledged. But our third way of language-minding, the Aristotelian, deeply depends upon the life of the *polis*. To anticipate, the Aristotelian counterpart for what we call mind is *nous*. Hellenistic translators of Aristotle (sc., nearly all of them) usually render this Greek word as "mind," or "intuition." Thus, they deprive the Stoics of their rightful honor—as inventors of mind—by retrojecting their invention back upon Aristotle, by reading Plato's dialogues as if they were treatises, and even, in the case of Nietzsche and others, carrying this retrojection of mentality back to the first recorded user of "*nous*," Anaxagoras. Now our muse is becoming excited. She cries from the housetops at such an outrage against her favorite forgotten heroes, the Stoics. Asked for the cause of her excitement, she gives a reason. "Listen," she says, "no philosopher of the *polis* ever thought that there was some common, vulgar (or *koinê*) agency of action[34] and intellection in all human beings, at hand just by virtue of membership in the biological species mankind.[35] When a Pythagorean was asked by a father how to make his son a man of good

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[32] It might be quibbled, by the J.L. Austinian variety of akribious (ἀκρίβεια) Kantian language-minders, that "assassination" is a performative and that "assassination unsuccessful" is a practical contradiction. They're probably right. But my muse was unmoved. She likes the phrase.

[33] Some historians suggest that Aristotle's Lyceum had been funded with Macedonian monies channeled through Antipater, a friend of Aristotle's. This friendship may have been the source of suspicion for those who, in 323, served Aristotle an indictment on the charge of impiety and thus occasioned his final departure from his beloved city.

[34] See Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind,* tr. T.G. Rosenmeyer (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1953), 182: "We are accustomed to look upon the will as the mainspring of action. But the will, ever straining and champing at the bit, is a notion foreign to the Greeks; they do not even have a word for it." Compare my essay, "A Brief History of the Will," first given as a lecture at the University of Lübeck at the 2006 meeting of the Arbeitskreis Naturphilosophie.

[35] The muse asks for a footnote to register a caveat for akribious auditors: "Yes, it is true that there are some seeming anticipations of Stoic mentalism among the *politan* philosophers. For instance, at 518c in Book VII of the *Republic*, Plato allows Socrates, in a moment of near ecstasy, to say that 'the present argument [or "language," ***nun logos***] indicates that this power is in the soul of *each* … ' [tr. Allan Bloom, emphasis added]." Since the argument, or language, concerns the nurturing of what the interlocutors have called that *rarest* of natures, the philosophical, it is a bit odd to find it seemingly attributed to *all* mankind. There is plenty in the immediate and wider contexts of the dialogue to suggest a non-Stoic reading of this passage. But the clear possibility for a Stoic reading of the words quoted by the muse is indeed—to one who has heard the muse's message about minding our language—startling. On this issue see

character, he was told to make him the citizen of a good *polis*. Ethical virtues were economic and political habits, acquired exclusively within the context of the *oikos* and the *polis* by performing actions in accord with these institutions and in imitation of good (or, as the case may be, bad) householders and citizens. Similarly, intellectual virtues—as Aristotle called them—were also matters of habit. Indeed, for Aristotle, ***nous*** itself was a habit of inquiry, intellection, and (ultimately) of divine thinking, cultivated among certain friends in the city—say, at the Lyceum[36]—and utterly unthinkable in the world beyond the *polis*, in the all-too-human world of the barbarians."

Now really quite agitated, the muse continues: "The Stoics' most glorious revolution,[37] minding our language in the most literal sense, made philosophy (and much else, including the chance to become good) available to *their* fellow 'barbarians' in the Hellenistic world, to anyone who could master GSL (Greek as a Second Language), and, ultimately (in our century), to all mankind, regardless of natural language, conditioned only by the availability of higher education."

A skeptic raises his voice: "Are you trying to tell us that the Stoic minding of language has been the most significant revolution in philosophy since the rise of philosophy itself? that it gave philosophy an entirely new world? that it transformed philosophy-in-the-world-of-the-*polis* into philosophy-in-the-world-of-language? that the so-called Kantian revolution has been a mere footnote to the Stoic? and that the numerous schools of Kantian language-minders in our century—Continental, Anglophone, or Antipodean—have been just so many hypo-footnotes? Don't you realize what outrageous claims these are? How do you expect to get out of these academic halls with your life?"

"I see you nodding with confidence" the skeptic continues, "but I have yet to hear a word from you about the mechanism of this 'great revolution.' Just how did your heroic Stoics manage 'to mind language' as you allege? What could it conceivably mean to make mind out of language? I think I've understood pretty well what's meant by minding language kantianly. Not that I agree with you, but you—and your spokesperson here—have at least told a 'plausible' (I use his word) story. I've also heard you say that the Stoic revolution had the same basic form as the Kantian—especially as interpreted by Fregean Kantians (my personal favorites)—but you and your sidekick have yet to make good on the promise to show that Cartesian consciousness was just a deviant mode of Stoic mentality. So, once you've tried to show just how the Stoics were able 'to mind language,' I'd appreciate a few words on how language, once 'minded,' got taken to be the sort of faculty that thinks it knows—like a subject opposed to an object—in the form of monadic 'ideas' instead of dyadic propositions. Well, that's my request. Do you think you can handle it?"

"Yes," she says, with an almost palpable sense of pleasure in her voice, "yours are most reasonable questions. I'm delighted to see that your natural desire to know has been reawakened—

J.H. Kells, "Assimilation of Predicate Material to the Object," *Philologus* 108, No. 1½, (1964)—cited by Bloom in his translation of the *Republic* at p. 465.

36 Carlo Natali, *Bios theoretikos*: *la vita di Aristotele e l'organizzazione della sua scuola* (Bologna, 1991).

37 An amusing aside: "Minding our language Stoically has produced more emancipatory impact than was ever imagined by your Habermasians."

not that it was ever really asleep, but your words tended to give that impression. Now you seem to be asking just the right questions. I won't be able to answer them to your complete satisfaction on this occasion, but I'm sure from what you are now saying that we will meet again. For now, let me say that it seems to have been in response to just such a skeptic as you that the ancient Stoics came round to minding language."

"It was a subject much discussed in the Hellenistic world—as by your linguists such as Chomsky today—just what it is that sets off man from the other animals. In a world where innumerable non-Greeks sought and succeeded in learning Greek as a second language it is not surprising that competence in this language came to be regarded as a mark of human excellence. Ultimately, with the full-scale formulation of a grammar in Alexandria,[38] especially at the hands of Dionysius Thrax in the late 2nd century BC, the formal structure of Greek was made evident and comparisons with the grammatical structures of other Mediterranean languages were made possible. In any event, it appears that the practice of acquiring a common (*koinê*) Greek and the discovery of common grammatical structures in a wider variety of languages led our Stoic philosophers to postulate linguistic competence as what sets man apart from the other animals."

"Of course," the muse continues, "there were skeptics like your former self among these ancient Stoics, although our best evidence of conversations between Stoics and Skeptics on the question of a distinctively human semiotic is, I admit, rather late. It comes from the skeptic Sextus Empiricus, sometime in the late 2nd century AD. But since it will no doubt serve as the point of departure for our upcoming conversations, let me cite it by way of anticipation: Apparently in response to a skeptic who observed that there are other animals, most notably birds, who also exhibit a kind of linguistic competence in uttering phrases, Sextus reports, '(1) They [the Stoics] say that it is not *uttered speech* but *internal speech* by which man differs from non-rational animals; for crows and parrots and jays utter articulate sounds. (2) Nor is it by the merely simple impression that he differs (for they too [the muse adds "like proleptic Cartesians"] receive impressions), but by impressions produced by inference and combination [to which the muse adds: "as any good Kantian would argue"]. (3) This amounts to his possessing the conception of 'following' and directly grasping, on account of 'following,' the idea of a sign. For sign is itself of the kind 'If this, then that.' (4) Therefore the existence of signs follows from man's nature and constitution.'"[39]

"Now," the muse continues, "I'm sure you'll agree that there's much to discuss in this remnant of ancient conversation between Stoic and Skeptic. But what I'm sure you also noticed was the critical distinction drawn between 'uttered' and 'internal' speech or language. As I see it, the Stoic revolution consists in drawing just this distinction. Here is your requested 'mechanism' for Stoic language-

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[38] The muse again footnotes a qualification: "In fairness, I must admit that the Athenian Stoics seem to have developed something like a grammar. This, at least, seems to be the plausible contention of Michael Frede ["Principles of Stoic Grammar," in *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987), 301ff.]. But on the topic of grammar I must admit great fascination—and deep ignorance—concerning the extraordinary grammar of Sanskrit by Panini, who, it seems, worked quite independently of the Greek tradition and also (though the dates are uncertain) earlier."

[39] Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, 8.275 (in *SVF* 2.223), tr. Long & Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 317–18, emphases added.

minding. Language got minded when it was internalized.[40] Then, as the Sextus passage also indicates, and as Benson Mates has shown in far greater detail,[41] the Stoics developed a logic of inner speech (in Russellian vocabulary, a logic of propositional meanings) which clearly parallels the Kantian propositional logic that was finally made generally intelligible by Frege, Russell, and Whitehead. So, as you can see we've got a lot to talk about."

"All right," the skeptic replies, "and can I also be confident that you'll be willing to discuss the transformation of the stoically minded language and logic of propositions into the internalized logic of terms—a logic which, it seems to me now, must also be a variation upon the Aristotelian syllogistic?"

"Yes, you can be sure of that too. And just to give you a foretaste I'll mention that stoically minded language was just what provided Jews and Christians, beginning with Philo of Alexandria, with their model for saying that God 'created' the world out of nothing. Although Philo was the first to say this,[42] Clement of Alexandria was the first to give reasons,[43] and his contemporary Tertullian was the first to acknowledge that *creatio ex nihilo* was not 'explicitly stated' in the Bible, but only 'implied.'[44] By the time of Augustine, all this Christian discussion in light of Stoic models had been found dangerous and had been, indeed, officially suppressed at the synod of Sirmium in 351. But by that time the Stoic revolution of minding language had been fully internalized into Christian doctrine, and it was thanks to the Christian movement in the Mediterranean world that the Stoic minding of language became deeply sedimented in the 'mental' life of western civilization. Thus, with the ultimate agent of Stoic intellection transported to a realm of almost absolute transcendence and irresistibly efficacious soteriological grace, the prima facie absurdity of regarding monadic ideas as possibly true[45] came, as by a miracle, to seem plausible. It was this plausibility that was undone by Kant, who thus facilitated (inadvertently, of course) a reappropriation of the original Stoic version of language-minding. The main weakness of the Kantian tradition—up to, and including, Davidson—is that it has insufficiently appreciated the provincially anti-Cartesian focus of Kantian language-minding."

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[40] Another cautionary footnote from our muse: "In anticipation of our next conversations I'm sure you'll want to consider certain passages in Plato and Aristotle which seem to anticipate the critical, indeed revolutionary, minding of language by the invention of internal speech. Some of these are Plato, *Sophist*, 263 and Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 76b24. You may also want to consult the article by Max Mühl, "Der **logos endiathetos** und **prophorikos** von der älteren Stoa bis zur Synode von Sirmium 351," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 7 (1962): 7–56, where these and many other texts are discussed."

[41] Benson Mates, *Stoic Logic* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1953).

[42] Philo of Alexandria, *On the Account of the World's Creation Given by Moses*, tr. F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker (Cambridge: Loeb, 1956), vol. I, §2.

[43] As contended by Eric Francis Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1957), 33, cited by Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (*100–600*) (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1971), 36.

[44] See Pelikan, Ibid.

[45] This accreditation of monadic terms, despite the long-standing tradition, going back at least to Aristotle, that propositions constituted the minimal bearers of truth and falsity, is one of the more remarkable accomplishments of the Christian tradition. For a general orientation see Gabriel Nuchelmans, *Theories of the Proposition: Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of the Bearers of Truth and Falsity* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1973).

"Well," says the skeptic, "that was quite an anticipatory mouthful. Are you sure we'll ever have time to go into all of this?"

"O sure," says the muse, "once we get the drift of this argument, it will carry us along, as if on its own accord. Now I'm sure you'll next ask what all of this might have to do with the final promised topic of our discussion today."

"What's that?"

III. MINDING LANGUAGE ARISTOTELIANLY

"Why, minding language aristotelianly, of course." "Indeed, I forgot," he answered.

"Well, given the absurdities of the theologically certified Cartesian consciousness, and the unfortunate paradoxes of kantianly minded language, it seems almost inevitable that we'll have to ask something like Bernard Williams' question—whether modern philosophy, if it is not to continue along its pathways of Nietzschean-Heideggerian-Derridean nihilism, and if it is not to slumber into some variation of Rortean ethnocentrism, will have to recover something like the 'main structures' of ancient thought."

"But wouldn't that require that we discover some dimensions of habituation in the modern world that are analogous to the institutions of ethical and intellectual habituation outlined by Aristotle—the aristocratic *oikos* and *polis*—and differing only in that these modern institutions happen to habituate any member of the human species?"

"And," he continued, "that would suggest that this *praxis*—ethical life in the modern world—happens to coincide with *theory*, and pertains to any member of the theoretically studied animal-species man. If so, I'm beginning to see what was at stake when Stoic language-minding was called a stop-gap, a stop to fill the rather large gap in western civilization between the death of the ethnocentric *polis* and the emergence of *universal* institutions of ethical and intellectual habituation, what you have called 'the modern world.' Apparently the problem with the Stoic stop-gap, mind, is that its basic operations—predication, conjunction, disjunction, conditional implication, and the like—are derived from language and, hence, under-determined or, what I guess is the same thing expressed in Kantian jargon, 'transcendental.' But if you were right in insisting upon Aristotle's sharp line of demarcation between the basic structures of language (logic) and the structures of real entities ('seen' in theory), then this stop-gap, stoically minded language—however instrumental it has been in emancipating the human species from the invidious ethical distinctions of the ethnocentric and aristocratic *polis* (servitude, sexism, racism, and the like—and the similarly invidious but more pathological distinctions drawn by a *polis*-aping and now obviously nihilistic 'high-culture')—has nevertheless perpetrated a model for theory and *praxis* that is too course-grained, too indeterminate, too lofty,[46] too

[46] The muse's last footnote for today: "In the stop-gap world of stoically minded language, man came to appear to himself as 'a little lower than the angels,' as blessed or burdened with an immortal soul, as an 'a-cosmic' pilgrim here on earth. But Aristotle's man is, by contrast, 'the fairest of the animals,' with his feet firmly planted on earth and—in a post-cultural modern world—with his character nurtured in harmony with modern ethical institutions—the family,

transcendental, too 'moral.' If we were somehow able, in this post-cultural modern world, to mind the difference between theory and practice, on the one hand, and language and logic, on the other, then the seemingly limitless power of language to deconstruct all of our artifacts, our ethical institutions, our knowledge, and even ourselves, could be held in check. I'm beginning to see why we had to spend so much of our time talking about minding our language kantianly. But, tell me, is this holding language in check what you and your ventriloquist here had (dare I say it?) 'in mind' when you spoke of minding our language aristotelianly?"

"Exactly. I'm now certain that we're embarked upon a series of most fruitful conversations."[47]

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civil society, and the constitutional state—now becoming (the struggle continues) the habituating home for all human life on this beloved planet."

[47] The conversation, begun in 1987, continues in *The Philosophical Forum*: "Words and Things in Aristotle and Hegel," Summer 2002, and "Logic and Theory in Aristotle, Stoicism, Hegel," Fall 2006.