

Transcendentalism as a Special Type of Philosophizing: Kant's transcendental Shift, Dasein–Analysis of Heidegger and *Sachverhalt*–Ontology of Wittgenstein¹

Abstract. In this paper we attempted to consider Kant's transcendental philosophy as a special type of philosophizing (resp. new transcendental paradigm), which differs both from the 'object' metaphysics of Antiquity and 'subject' metaphysics of the Modern Age (transcendent — transcendental — immanent metaphysics). For this purpose, we introduce such methodological terms as transcendental shift [B 25] and transcendental perspective. The basis for such representation of transcendentalism is cognitive and semantic reading of the *Critique* and theory of 'two aspects'. While in classical metaphysics, cognition is interpreted as a relation between empirical subject and object, in transcendental metaphysics, 'possible experience' (*Erfahrung*) shall be understood as a relation between transcendental subject and object. However, Kant considers the subject and the object uncritically, in the substance modus and their transcendental rethinking in existential (*Dasein*; Heidegger) and event-ness (*Sachverhalt*; Wittgenstein) mode will allow taking the next important step towards development of transcendental paradigm of philosophizing.

In the second half of the XXth century the second (after Neo-Kantianism) 'discovery' of Kant, associated with conceptual change in the understanding of transcendentalism — the transition from the traditional *ontological* theory of "two objects/worlds" to the theory of "two aspects" (Rohlf, 2010) based on epistemic reading of *Critique*, arises. In this regard, R.Hanna writes that the development of contemporary philosophy (in the face of two major traditions: analytic and continental ones) is largely predetermined by Kant's transcendentalism, and the XXth century may be named as the post-Kantian century (Hanna, 2007). M.Foucault echoes him; he says that Kant "stands at the beginning of a new method of philosophizing." This allows us to consider Kant's transcendentalism not just as one of the particular philosophical theory, but as the basis of a *new — transcendental — paradigm of philosophy (philosophizing)*².

As the starting point for our interpretation of the transcendentalism we take the classical paradigm of epistemology, for which the main question is the relation of a subject to an object what can be represented in binary scheme **S**(ubject) – **O**(bject). On this scale we also mark the result of our knowledge or of the interaction between the subject (**S**) and the object (**O**) in the process of cognition – the *experience* (or *experienced* knowledge; germ. *Erfahrung*)³, which is located in the middle of the scale. In this case the original binary scheme turns into a ternary one: **S** — *Erfahrung* — **O**.

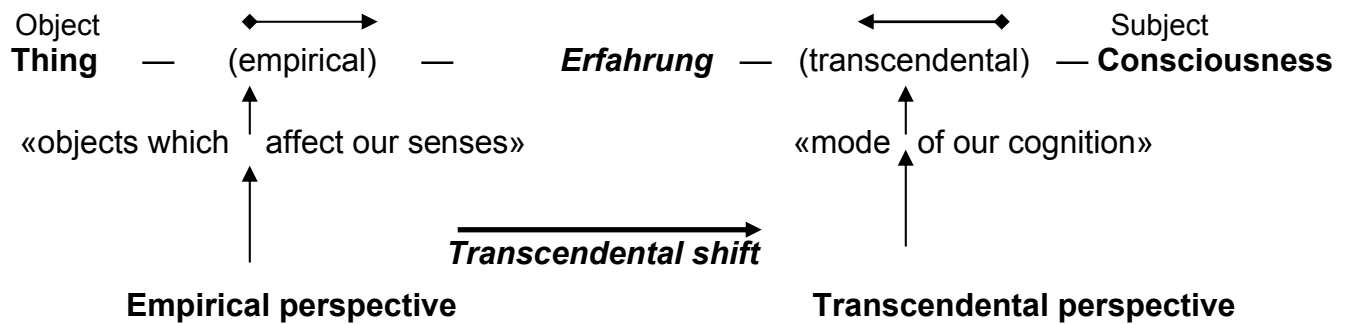
According to key [B 25] of *Critique*, where transcendental philosophy (TPh) is defined as "...knowledge which is not so much occupied with objects as with the mode of our cognition of these objects, so far as this mode of cognition is possible a priori", the transition to **transcendentalism** is based on **transcendental 'shift'** from [empirical] studies of the *objects* (things) to the right side of the scale in the direction to the *subject*, but rather into the intermediate between subject and object area of *experienced knowledge*, — which is the area of the transcendental-ness. In this case the transcendental shift does not displace the intention of study to the right limit to the analysis of the [empirical] subject, i.e. does not immerse us in the study of the content of consciousness, but stops at the middle area of the transcendental-ness, which Kant calls "the mode of cognition" or "faculty of cognition"⁴. On the epistemic scale it is represented as follows:

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² The following discussion board is devoted to development of the contemporary transcendentalism: <http://transcendental.ucoz.ru/forum/>.

³ Kant equates *Erfahrung* and *Empirische Erkenntnis* [B147–8].

⁴ Also see Kant's notes from *Prolegomena*: «The word "transcendental," which with me means a reference of our cognition, i.e., not to things, but only to the cognitive faculty...».



The comparison of the transcendental with the empirical or the distinction between empirical and transcendental *perspectives* (H.Allison) is crucial for the understanding of the transcendental-ness. If empirical perspective believes the knowledge we get to be the result of affection of our sensibility, the *transcendental perspective* believes the knowledge to be the result of our faculty of cognition.

In this case the crucial thesis of transcendentalism should be noticed, that our [empirical] *knowledge* contains some a priori components, i.e. any experience comprises both experienced and inexperienced components. Therefore, it should be considered a more subtle distinction between the a priori and the transcendental. In this regard it worth mentioning the change in the definition of TPh: in the 2nd ed. of *Critique* not *a priori concepts* (1st ed.) but our *a priori mode of cognition* is the object of TPh. Thus "late" Kant does not equate *transcendental* to a priori, but understands it as the possibility of a priori [knowledge]. In this regard we should pay attention to Kant's remark in [B80–1], which states that "not all a priori knowledge should be [included]" in the area of transcendental, but only the knowledge of its (1) possibility and (2) use in the experience, i.e. objective significance of a priori. Although Kant understands *the possibility* of a priori, inter alia, as its *epigenesis* [B 91, 118–9, 127–8, 167], but the essence of transcendental-ness is associated with (2), i.e. with opportunity to apply a priori in empirical cognition. Therefore, if a priori can be correlated with the subjective realm of consciousness, the transcendental correlates with the area of 'Erfahrung': this is not Cartesian "innate ideas" but trans-subjective principles which constitute our "mode of cognition":



Thus Kant's characteristic of transcendentalism as the research of our "mode of cognition" should be understood not *subjective-psychologically*, in terms of analysis of our faculties of cognition and/or solution of the problem of (epi)genesis of a priori, but *cognitive-semantically* as a solution of the problem of *objectiveness* of a priori representations, i.e. the possibility of their use in experience. Kant tells about the semantic orientation of transcendentalism in a letter to M. Herz (21.02.1772), in which he at the first time explicates the idea of his *Critique* as a response to the following 'semantic' question: "What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call 'representation' to the object?" Thus the Kant's position or transcendentalism in the narrow sense is connected with the solution of "the main transcendental question" about the **objectivity of a priori representations**, which are located in the middle of the epistemic scale⁵, while the metaphysics developed by Kant's appears as *metaphysics of possible experience*.

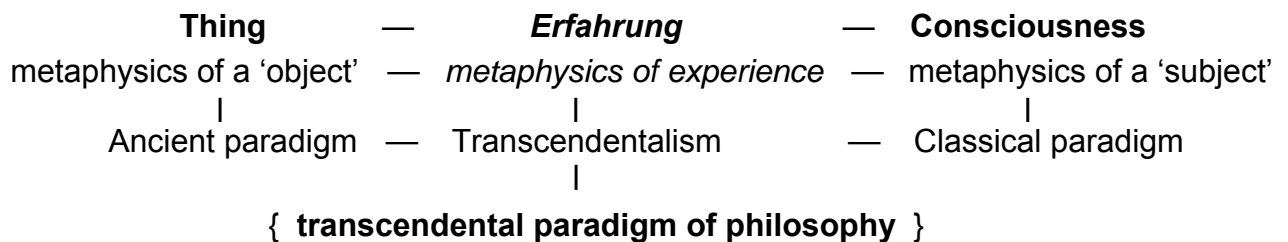
However, the described first phase of the *transcendental shift* does not yet characterize the specifics of Kant's transcendentalism, but sets a range of a *la* transcendental concepts. This "with-

⁵ This complies with the theory of "two aspects" in which the Kantian thing-in-itself and thing-as-it-appears-to-us are considered not as two distinct ontological entities, but as "two sides" [B XIX footnote] or "two modes of representation (the sensible and the intellectual)" ([B XXVII]; resp. empirical and transcendental perspectives) of the same thing.

drawal” of subject and object in favor of some primary in respect of the subject and object givenness occurs, for example, in Empirio-criticism, Marxism, Popper’s three-worlds-theory and other non-classical philosophical systems. Thus Kant stands at the origins of the *transcendental paradigm of philosophizing*, the transition to which is connected with overcoming both *objectal* (Antiquity) and a *subjectal* (Modern Era) points of view and moving of intention of research to the middle between object and subject area which Kant associates with *experience/Erfahrung*.

It worth noting that the concept of the mature Plato is the first ancestor of this type of philosophizing, where ideas are postulated as a necessary component of cognition without which a person “will have nothing on which his mind can rest; and so he will utterly destroy the power of reasoning” (Parmenides, 135c). Further this intention was developed by Husserl as Kant’s *transcendental shift* can be interpreted as a return to some pre-reflective state of mind in the act of cognition, in which neither subject nor opposing to it object are not differed yet, and although the intention of our [intentional according to Husserl] consciousness is directed on an object, but the phenomenal givenness of experience, which is the inception of our knowledge, is the primary givenness for it⁶. Accordingly, subject and object presuming by classical paradigm as primary ones appear as secondary entities in transcendental paradigm of philosophizing.

If the *thing* appears to be the main object of the study of ancient paradigm of philosophy, i.e. the metaphysics of a thing/object is developing (transcendent metaphysics; meta-physics), and the consciousness/cogito appears to be the object of the classical paradigm of Modern Era (respectively, the metaphysics of a ‘subject’ (immanent metaphysics; meta-psychology) is developing), than the middle area of ‘*Erfahrung*’ is the object of transcendental type of philosophizing, which is exemplified in the transcendentalism (transcendental metaphysics) of Kant:



We now proceed to further analysis of Kant’s transcendental shift, to the analysis of his second — metaphysical — phase, with which the specifics of Kant’s own transcendentalism should be linked. This specifics is largely predetermined by Kant to build his “experimental” metaphysics (by analogy with the experimental science of Modern Era) “new method of thought” (B XVIII), or *transcendental method* (Cohen, Natorp).

Like any metaphysical method, the transcendental method is in the universalization of the empirically given by its liberation from particular conditions. Actually beginning from Antiquity (Plato, Aristotle, etc) any field of science (meta-physics) deals with the kind of “overcoming of empirical”, but the specific of “scientific” *transcendental metaphysics* comparing with the previous “school” metaphysics⁷, is largely (though not completely) predetermined by the fact that the object of its generalizations is not a thing or consciousness, but *experience*. Transcendentalism acts as *meta-physics of experience*.

However, the determining thing for the ‘new method of thought’ of the Kantian transcendentalism that distinguishes it from traditional metaphysics is that this is not only the subject which changes, but also *the style of philosophizing* and foremost, the way of introducing metaphysical abstractions. Traditional metaphysics, being traced back to Aristotle, is a doctrine about *essence*, which is positioned as something meta-physical, i.e. as fundamentally unobservable under-lyingness in the base (‘sub-stance’) of the sensuously given. For Kantian “experimental” metaphysics

⁶ Accordingly, the Kantian shift could be called the transcendental-phenomenological one, and Kantian *Erfahrung* can be correlated with Husserl’s “intentional reality”.

⁷ “Critique stands in the same relation to the common metaphysics of the schools, as chemistry does to alchemy, or as astronomy to the astrology...” (Kant, Prolegomena).

the methodological differentiation of ‘real — possible’ is the essential one. The transcendental-ness, unlike the empirical-actual-ness, acts as *possible*. In this sense, Kant builds the metaphysics of *possible experience*, which acts as the transcendental generalization of empirical experience. Such status of the transcendental-ness ensures its apodictic character: transcendental principles are correct not only for our, but for any of the possible worlds. Transcendental-metaphysical, unlike essential-metaphysical, acts as a “horizontal” functional *generalization* of given empirical pattern that brings transcendentalism close not to physics, but mathematics.

As a result of this, the empirical subject and object are converted to, respectively, the **transcendental subject** (transcendental unity of apperception; TUA) and **transcendental thing/object** (TO), the relation between which predefines the *possible experience*. Or, considering the primacy of experience, *the possible experience* is conceptualized by Kant as “interaction” of transcendental object and subject. In this case TUA and TO are introduced by Kant in a correlative manner: «the transcendental unity of apperception that all the manifold, given in intuition is united into a conception of the [transcendental] object» [B140]⁸. Schematically the full transcendental ‘shift’ can be represented as follows:

[empirical] **Thing** — [possible] **Erfahrung** — [empirical] **Consciousness**
 (the area of the transcendental-ness)



transcendental thing/object — **transcendental subject**
 (“consciousness generally”; TUA)

In this case the transition to the transcendental perspective is associated with transcendental generalization of empirical experience, in the result of which the structure of “**transcendental S — transcendental O**”, encompassing the empirical relation **S — O**, is formed:

transcendental S — { empirical **S** — empirical **O** } — **transcendental O**

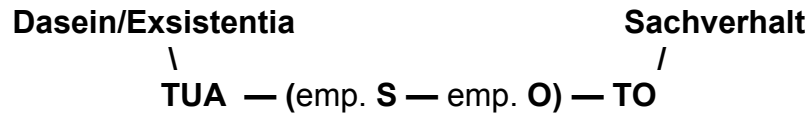
However, Kant’s “subjective” and “objective” things-in-themselves, which act as kind of left and right limits of the epistemic scale, should be distinguished from transcendental subject and object. The thing-in-itself and noumenal ‘I’ are not *transcendental* but *transcendent*. According to Kant, their function is negative and is to specify all the cognitive scale the same way as a numerical scale is given through marks “plus” and “minus” of infinity (+∞ and −∞), i.e. to mark the *limits* of our possible cognition. At the same time they are inaccessible for cognition. Transcendental subject (TUA) and object (TO) as the constitutive elements of the possible experience on the scale are between empirical-phenomenal (immanent) and transcendent. Considering this, the Kantian transcendental shift can be represented as follows:

{ **transcendent** { **transcendental** { empirical } **transcendental** } **transcendent** }
noumenal ‘I’ — {TUA — (**emp. S** — **emp. O**) — TO} — **thing-in-itself**
 (**empirical experience**)
 { area of the transcendental-ness }
 (*possible experience*)

In conclusion, we outline one of the possible lines of development of Kantian transcendentalism. Despite the attractiveness of his approach, Kant was unable to avoid “dogmatic” directives, the

⁸ Comp. with characteristics [A 250–1]. Let us note that the Kantian *transcendental thing/object* stands as objective function of our representation of the world and lies (together with categories) as a base of the *transcendental ontology*, the essence of which can be expressed by the thesis: “*We cognize not [physical] things, but we cognize the phenomena ‘thing-ly’ [objectively]*” (E. Cassirer).

chief of which is connected with the substantial understanding of both subject and the object (of cognition). And so, following Kant, we should raise the question of their transcendental conditions (“How is the subject (object) possible?”). Heidegger, his Dasein–analysis, answers the first of these questions. The subject does not exist on its own, but in its existential “environment.” Wittgenstein answers the second of these questions in his “Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus”, where he develops Sachverhalt–ontology (Katrechko, 2009). And Wittgenstein’s thought surprisingly resonates with Heidegger’s: the thing does not exist on its own, the ontological “environment” of other things is the condition of its existence, embeddedness of a thing in co-existence⁹. In the light of the TUA and TO Kant should be re-understood in existential and event-ness (Sachverhalt) modes, which will enable us to make the next important step in the development of the transcendental paradigm of philosophy (see the scheme below).



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⁹ That is why, by the way, the analytic and continental philosophies are compatible with each other!