Indian Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XIX, No.4
October, 1992

CATEGORIES AND REALITIES

A very central concern of philosophy - both Western and Indian - has long been that of becoming clear about the more basic features of our thought and talk about the world. These 'more basic features' I call (following the tradition established by Aristotle and Kant) our 'categories', and among such categories a central place must be given to those which concern physical reality- such categories as substance, *kind* (natural and otherwise), *cause* and *effect*, and of *space* and *time*. Even if philosophy has interests far wider than this, it has always had much to say about these basic, physical world concepts, the basic features of our thought and talk about reality. [1]

The question I want to address first concerns this very activity of describing our categories. In answering this question, I will be led into a second which goes in to rather deep waters, a question about the existence and nature of a reality independent of our concepts. Do we have to - and *can* we- make sense of a reality existing *prior* to (logically and temporally prior to) any conceptualisation in terms (*inter alia*-and most basically) of our categories?

Aristotle and Kant

I start with what is - relatively speaking - the easier question: Is a philosopher who engages in the activity of categorial description more properly construed as attempting to describe the basic features of reality itself, or as attempting to spell out the basic features of our *thinking and talking* about reality? The contrast can be put nicely in terms of the two philosophers already mentioned - Aristotle and Kant. In the work now known as *The Categories*, Aristotle lists ten different categories or 'predicables' as follows :

> Of things said... each signifies either substance or quantity or qualification or a relative or where or when or being-in-a-position or having or doing or being-affected. To give a rough

RECEIVED : 06/08/91

> idea, examples of substance are man, horse; of quantity: four-foot, five-foot; of qualification : white, grammatical; of a relative: double, half, larger; of where: in the Lyceum, in the market-place; of when: yesterday, last year; of being-in-a-position: is lying, is sitting; of having: has-shoes-on, has-armour-on; of doing: cutting, burning; of being-affected: being-cut, being-burned. [2]

Aristotle's categories are 'predicables' because they are things predicated of something: when we say, for example, that 'Socrates is a man' we are predicating being-a-man of Socrates, i.e. a certain kind of substance. Again when we say that 'Aristotle is in the Lyceum' we are predicating being-in-the-Lyceum of Aristotle, i.e. a certain place, physical location. The ten predicables are the ten kinds of 'things' that can be said of something.

I use 'thing' here intentionally, to convey the fact that Aristotle is talking about the world and not about language or thought. It is being-in-the-Lyceum *as such* that is predicated of (or said of) Aristotle, not the *expression* 'in the Lyceum' which is (if at all, and certainly in a different sense of 'said of') said of 'Aristotle' the name. But I use 'thing' *also* to convey another fact about Aristotle's predicables, namely that the list involves a division into ten t*ypes* or *kinds* of what can be variously called 'things', 'entities', 'existents' or 'beings'. Socrates is one kind of thing, a substance, and so is Aristotle; in-the-Lyceum is another kind of entity, a place or location; four foot is a quantity, white is a quality, yesterday is a time, and so on. Aristotle, in drawing up a list of ten different kinds of things predicable of something else, is drawing up a list of the ten different kinds of beings, entities, existents or things.

Kant's list of categories differs widely in form and content from Aristotle's. Yet there is sufficient reason for Kant to borrow the term 'category' from Aristotle: their primary purpose was the same, identified by Kant as that of listing the fundamental concepts employed by us about reality. [3]

For Kant, there are twelve categories to be listed, and he divides them into four groups: the categories of quantity are unity, plurality and totality; the categories of quality are reality, negation and limitation; those of relation are substance and accident, cause and effect, and reciprocal interaction; while those of modality are possibility, existence and necessity. [4]

Now wherever Aristotle gets his categories from, Kant certainly does not look for his in the world lying outside of and independent of our thought about it, for his official view of *such* reality

is that it lies totally outside our knowledge. There is no way whereby we can attain any knowledge whatsoever about such thought-independent reality, so the source of the list of categories must be within ourselves. This source is logic, the study of the different forms of propositions (or 'judgments' in Kant's more psychological terminology). Borrowing (and somewhat modifying) the list of forms of Judgment from traditional logic, Kant generates his list of categories to match. For example, in making the judgment 'Socrates is wise' the predicate is being related to the subject categorically, hence (says Kant) we are applying the category of *substance* (and attribute). Again, in the judgment 'If you press that spot, I will feel pain' we are using the hypothetical judgment form, and so (according to Kant) we are applying the category of cause (and effect).

I will not stop to question this derivation of categories from logic: the point to stress is rather that Kant - in stark opposition to Aristotle - treats the categories as the fundamental forms of *thought,* embedded in the forms of judgment. For Aristotle, they were *natural, real* divisions among things in the world. Kant could be called a 'categorial conceptualist' and Aristotle a 'categorial realist', marking precisely this distinction. And now, the first of my two questions, which can be put in these terms. Should we look upon philosophers engaged in categorial description through Aristotle's eyes or through Kant's? Do the categories mark real kinds to be found in the things which collectively make up reality, or are they rather the fundamental features of our conceptual scheme, of our thought (and we can add 'of our talk') about reality? Should we be *categorial realists* or *categorial conceptualists?*

Undermining the distinction

My answer to this first question is that it offers a *false dichotomy.* I think I can show that we do not have to make a choice between these two, for the simple reason that a description of our thought and talk about reality *is* a description of reality itself. In order to mark this collapse of the false dichotomy of 'categorial realism' and 'categorial conceptualism' I will call the view to be argued for by the name of 'conceptual realism'. It is the view that to conceptualise is to bring about reality itself, so that the basic features of our conceptualising (of our thinking and talking) are the basic features of reality itself.

I want to provide an argument for conceptual realism by a slightly indirect route, by criticising an *alternative argument* which has

been constructed by David Hamlyn.[5] I will take away from Hamlyn's argument whatever seems to be unsupportable elements, and then build upon what is left. This in fact reconstructs the route my own thoughts have followed. It represents a logical set of steps towards an attractively 'intuitively-correct' perception of the facts.)

Hamlyn's argument for conceptual realism centrally links *facts* with the notion of *what people agree to be the case.* Since (with certain reservations to be sure) Hamlyn thinks that general agreement makes the facts in the world, for him the thesis of conceptual realism is established by an easy and direct move: people agree in their thought and talk about what there is, hence what they say constitutes *the facts.* Features of our thought and talk - our concepts, including our categories - are reflected in features of reality itself. The question must therefore be: how does Hamlyn get to this powerful premiss, that links *fact* with *general agreement?* He does so by borrowing two ideas from Wittgenstein and adapting them in a way not to be found in Wittgenstein's published works.

The first Wittgensteinian idea borrowed is that there is a link between language being usable as a device for communication, and there being (broad) agreement in judgments between would-be communicators. This thought is expressed in the well-known passage 242 of *Philosophical Investigations* :

> If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so. It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call 'measuring' is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement. [6]

In this passage Wittegenstein is offering a quite *plausible* thought: if people do not agree on this use of language, how can they communicate? A little more accurately, Wittgenstein is saying something more than that. What more? That there is a connection between people communicating with each other and their not falling out over *all* the facts. Take Wittgenstein's own example. If there is going to be a *practice* of using terms for the lengths of things, then this requires that people in general agree on the results of the process of measuring. For the (communicative) language of measurement to exist, there needs to be fairly general agreement over the facts concerning length.

It will be obvious that there is a large gap between this Wittgensteinian idea and Hamlyn's claim that general agreement is

(except exceptionally) definitive of fact. To bridge the gap Hamlyn borrows a second Wittgensteinian idea, expressed in the dictum 'an inner process stands in need of outward criteria' [7] The source of this idea is Wittgenstein's own earlier discussion of the language we use for talking about people's pains, hopes, fears, thoughts and so on. I refer to the set of comments known as 'the private language argument' [8] the gist of these comments is that the practice of describing other people's 'inner processes' (and, as it turns out, one's *own* too) presupposes that there are *criteria* for establishing their existence and nature. Furthermore, these criteria are *public* in kind, making use of features of behaviour and demeanor that are publicly available. For example, if a man is in pain he exhibits this in characteristic ways - ways quite different from what he does when happy, or contented with life.

The notion of 'criterion' at work here is a term of art introduced by Wittgenstein which expresses the *special* relationship between, in this example, pain and the characteristic manifestations of it. The relationship is loose enough to permit the 'manifestation' of pain when 'pain' is absent and contrariwise the presence of pain 'without' the characteristic manifestations. The phrase used by Wittgenstein's interpreters is that '*normally* pain and pain behaviour go together'. What precisely 'normally' comes to has been a matter of some long-standing perplexity, since it is not here used as equivalent to 'usually', a *statistical* notion. Moreover, it is generally said (by Wittgenstein's interpreters) not to be equivalent to an epistemic notion, such that it implies that pain behaviour is good evidence for the presence of pain, and its absence *good evidence* for the absence of the latter. One can only surmise that the relationship is somewhat stronger than an epistemic one.[9]

So far, this is the second Wittgensteinian idea only; it becomes Hamlyn's own adaptation when he generalises the theme that inner processes - hence concepts concerning a person's *inner* life - stand in need of *outer* criteria, too : *all* concepts stand in need of criteria. This implies (which the original idea did not) that even such concepts as *observational* ones require them too. The concepts 'red', for example, Hamlyn takes [10] to have a 'criterion' which is that of 'looking red' : normally if something *looks* red then it *is* red.

To stay true to the spirit of Wittgenstein's approach, the criterion for a given concept must have the relevant kind of distance from the concept: in this case, obviously something can *look* red yet not *be* red and vice versa. What of the concept of *fact* (and *truth* and

objectivity, which are intimately connected to *fact)*? what is the criterion of fact? Hamlyn's answer is this : general agreement.[11] Normally, if people agree on something it is true, it is a fact. Public agreement might *not* exist, for some special reason, on some particular facts, and public agreement for some reason exist where fact does not. Nevertheless public agreement is closely attached to the concept of fact in a manner which goes merely beyond the merely inductive.

How do the two Wittgensteinian ideas come together to yield Hamlyn's conclusion? In the first place, Hamlyn seems to be relying not only on the 'private language argument' passages for the notion of a criterion which he duly extends to all concepts; he also relies on the general conclusion of that section of *Philosophical Investigations*, namely that *all* language is communicative since there cannot be a *private* language which could not be used for communication. The flow of Hamlyn's thinking seems to be as follows.

The concept of fact must have a 'criterion'. This must have the relevant distance from the concept to constitute a 'criterion' in the Wittgensteinian sense: and public agreement seems to fit the bill. But how can we justify saying that public agreement is the criterion, rather than some other phenomenon? What has public (intersubjective) agreement got to do with fact, truth and objectivity anyway? True enough, the notion of objectivity implies that something is the case independently of one person's saying so, it implies the idea of that which is intersubjective in the sense of not *subjectively* judged to be the case - yet this does not get us to intersubjective *agreement* in the sense of *general* acceptance of the fact in question. However, language is essentially public, can always be used for communication, and there is a general connection between this feature of language and agreement in judgments. *This* provides the missing link. Agreement must be the criterion we are looking for; general agreement is the criterion of fact (and of truth and of objectivity).

A New Argument for Conceptual Realism

I have t tried to bring out the manner in which Hamlyn adopts and adapts two of Wittgenstein's ideas, to yield his proof of the thesis I have called 'conceptual realism'. It essentially turns on the claim that general agreement is the criterion of fact, that normally if people agree on something, it is the case. I hope I have said enough to indicate where my major reservations lie: Hamlyn makes double use of the so-called 'private language argument', one to adopt the notion of 'criterion' and

the other to put to work the idea of a link between communication and public agreement. I will not criticise the private language argument itself here, only note that it has received much criticism from others.[12] If it cannot be said to obviously pass through those criticisms unscathed, then Hamlyn's argument must be thereby weakened. I will briefly note some reservations, however, about his generalisation of the use of the notion of a criterion.

The *first* objection is that no *justification* is offered for this generalisation beyond Wittgenstein's use of it in connection with our language of inner processes. *Secondly*, it appears to lead to an infinite regress, since every concept involved in the criterion for one given concept will need a criterion too. The concept of pain, for example, is provided with a criterion involving a set of alternative descriptions of behaviour and demeanor the satisfaction of any of which normally ensures the existence of pain - but each description makes use of concepts which themselves require criteria, such as 'clutching the stomach while emitting a moan'. *Thirdly*, when we get down to observational terms like 'red' and 'sour' there seems to be an imminent circularity: the criteria offered by Hamlyn involve those very terms - the criterion of being red is looking red, the very concept of redness appearing in its own criterion.

To come to my own argument for conceptual realism I take Hamlyn's thesis that public agreement is the criterion of fact, and drop the notion of 'criterion'. Is there some other connection, then, between public agreement and fact?

Public agreement cannot be a *necessary condition* for a fact to exist, since there are obviously many facts which people have not yet agreed upon or perhaps never will. Examples should spring readily to mind. Nor, equally obviously, can public agreement be said to be a *sufficient* condition for fact, since there are a great many falsehoods which have been a matter of general conviction.

Perhaps, instead of 'public agreement on the individual fact' we take public agreement on *what would constitue* a particular fact, or *what would count as establishing* the fact in question as the necessary or sufficient condition for that fact. Something like rules for carrying out an investigation or for saying something is the case, something is a fact, of a publicly agreed kind.

There are at least two changes to be made to this idea, however, to make it acceptable. In the first place we must drop the requirement for *publicly agreed* rules, since this is a demand

consequent on the 'private language argument' considerations. If we are not to rely on that notion, we can offer instead the thesis that *rules* (whether public or private) for carrying out investigations and for saying when something is the case are necessary and sufficient for facts to exist.

And finally, it is surely wholly implausible to say that the existence of a procedure or rule of this kind is *sufficient*, on its own, to bring about a fact. Surely it is at best a *necessary* condition, for example, that there be rules for counting and individuating chairs, for it to be fact that there are three chairs in the room next door: whether there are three chairs depends also on the outcome of applying these rules. Let us say, therefore, that rules or procedures are necessary conditions for facts.

If that is acceptable, I can now give my proof of conceptual realism. Rules or procedures such as I have indicated are nothing other than concepts. A concept is something which permits its possessor to see the world in a certain way, to recognise an instance of a kind when presented with one in reality or to conceive of a kind in thought. When someone has the concept of an F he knows one when he sees one, and can expect, hope for, imagine and contemplate an F too. Having the concept of a dog involves knowing what dogs are, and that brings with it all those skills. There are facts of a certain kind only when there are rules or procedures for investigating and deciding on those facts. There are facts of a certain kind, therefore, only when there is the relevant concept. Conceptual realism is therefore established.

Conceptual Realism and the 'Status Rerum'

Conceptual realism is not without its problems, I will admit. There are little ones (like the need to spell out the different kinds of failure of reference between a concept such as 'phlogiston' and a concept such as 'unicorn') which little problems provide a spur for further enrichment of the theory. But there is a very large problem looming, which I must not turn to and which seems to threaten the theory of conceptual realism at its core. This is the second question which I said at the very start leads us into very deep waters, the question about the existence of a 'reality' independent of our concepts.

What could such a 'reality' be? What I have in mind is the sort of thing referred to by Kant as the noumenal world, the level of un-conceptualised reality occupied by things-as-they-are-in-themselves (things-in-themselves-or perhaps thing-in-itself). [13] *Noumena* are what according to transcendental idealism 'affect' the human sensibility to produce, when filtered through the forms of sensitivity

and of understanding, the *phenomena* of which we are aware. *Phenomena* constitute conceptualised reality, *noumena* the prior unconceptualised reality. There are some parallels here in Śaṅkara's notion of *Brahman - nirguna Brahman* - as that which is real and untainted by human conceptualisations. [14] A similar reference is made much more recently by the phrase '*status rerum*', the state of things as such, a phrase introduced by C.K. Ogden and adopted by D.J. O'Connor in his book *The Corespondence Theory of Truth* [15] In O'Connor's words, this *status rerum* is a 'raw unexperienced welter of objects and events' which predates and inevitably far exceeds the concepts we have for its description. *Noumenon, nirguṇa Brahman* or *status rerum* - that is the idea of reality I have in mind as posing a threat to conceptual realism.

But why should the thesis of conceptual realism be threatened by such an idea - in what way is this a large problem for conceptual realism? Because (a) the claim that a necessary condition for the existence of facts, of reality, is the existence of a conceptual scheme, that facts, are in a sense made by the concepts, appears to imply that there is a level of preconceptualised reality on which to apply our concepts; and (b) the very idea of such a preconceptualised reality appears to *be incoherent.* The thesis of conceptual realism therefore apparently has an incoherent implication, and that would be sufficient to refute that thesis.

I think this issue of an unconceptualised reality is one of the most difficult in metaphysics, one of the easiest to propound confused ideas about, and one of the most perennial and most pressing. I will try to explain my own thoughts about it which led me to discount the idea, and hence the threat, in the first instance. And then I will try to explain why I now feel tempted to reinstate the idea as a necessary ingredient in any metaphysics, and *a fortiori in* the metaphysics of conceptual realism. If I am correct in my present suspicion that the idea must be taken seriously, that to some extent reduces the threat to conceptual realism as such (as one alternative in the arena) - unless, of course, conceptual realism is in direct conflict with such an idea.

I will rebut this last thought immediately. Why should conceptual realism conflict with the idea of unconceptualised reality? Claim (a) above - that conceptual realism apparently implies the existence of such a reality - says the exact opposite! The answer is that conceptual realism is precisely the thesis that reality is conceptualised for reality is dependent on the existence of a conceptual scheme. I

suggest we clear up this confusion by making a distinction between 'reality' as involving the facts, things, events, qualities and so on which we deal with in experience, in thought and in action, and that other 'reality' intended by Kant, Śaṅkara and O'Connor. Let us reserve the term 'reality' for the first, consistent with the spirit of conceptual realism, and adopt O'Connor's term '*status rerum*' for the second. Conceptual realism is now reinstatable as the thesis that reality is the world of facts, things, events, qualities and so on and is dependent on our conceptualising activity: that cannot be taken as *inconsistent* with the thesis that there is a level of *status rerum*.

But does it imply it? And is that latter idea, as claimed in (b) above. an *incoherent* one? Well, what conceptual realism implies is that we cannot make coherent claims *about* the *status rerum*. It is easy enough to see that we cannot state any *facts* about it, if fact and concept go together; but what about the things, events, process and so on? Cannot it be said to contain these at least? If the facts in reality are concept dependent does this not at least hold open the plausibility that things etc. are not? 'The world is the totality of facts, not of things' said Wittgenstein in the opening passage of the *Tractatus*.[16]

But that is a false dichotomy if ever there was one: facts and things etc are not to be contrasted ontologically like that. Of course a fact is not the same type of being as a thing, or a quality or an event; but their existence is nevertheless intimately involved with that of each other. If Big Ben is taller than 60 feet, then Big Ben the thing exists, and so does its property of being taller than 60 feet - but *so* does the fact that it has this property. If Big Ben *exists* even, then the fact of Big Ben's existing also exists. Take away the fact and you take away the thing; take away the fact and you take away the property. One more peculiar feature of facts, to be sure! And - if this is right - we can now see that the *status rerum* cannot be said to have, if not facts, then at least things with properties, engaging in events and processes, and so on. The *status rerum* cannot be described in these terms at all. We can offer no coherent descriptions of the *status rerum* since we are debarred from the machinery of our conceptual scheme in a big way. It is not just that *facts* are absent from the *status rerum*, but that no conceptual devices can be put to work in that area at all. We are reduced to the unhelpful 'neither this, nor that'!

If by the way, the *status rerum* is as indescribable as this, O'Connor's description of it as 'raw welter of objects and events' must be rejected. There are no objects or events in it, since these follow only

from our conceptualishing activity. But why does O'Connor want it to be? Because he thinks it demanded in the context of a defence of whatever truth there is in the empiricists' favourite theory of truth, the correspondence theory.

O'Connor distinguishes indeed not between two 'realities' or 'worlds' but three.[17] The 'A-world' is the *status rerum*, the unconceptualised flux of things and events; the 'B-world' is one of things and their properties, situations and events as experiences and conceptualised - the B-world we inhabit being dependent on such contigencies as our peculiar sensory apparatus and the limits of our conceptualising abilities, so that there are different B-worlds for different species and different subgroups of the same species. There are also, says O'Connor, different 'C-worlds', worlds articulated and described in different languages which hence form or structure those worlds diferently.

My quarrel with O'Connor is primarily one concerning his description of the A-world of the *status rerum*. His reason for giving it the kind of richness of conceptual structure which he does is that only in that way can our thoughts, sentences and beliefs be said to 'correspond' to reality or fail to correspond to reality, as the correspondence theory requires. The A-world reality is mind-independent, and linguistically independent, and provides an independent original against which to match our beliefs etc. But he cannot have it both ways. As David Cooper has recently written :

> If it is to be really 'untainted' by our concepts, *status rerum* must be a mere welter or flux (though not in any literal sense of these terms, for then we would again be conceptulising). But if it is to serve as the world which true statements 'model' or 'map', then it must possess sufficient order and structure to be 'transmitted' to these statements. Unfortunately, *status rerum* cannot satify both conditions. Either it is conceptually ordered, in which case it does not take us out of the tainted universe of B-worlds; or it is featureless Being-in-itself of which nothing counts as a map.[18]

I add to Cooper's comment, that the correspondence theory really doesn't need to have a 'modelling' or 'mapping' relation between thought and language and reality. If it did, it would be doomed to failure anyway.[19]

Now does the fact that we can give no coherent description of the *status rerum* imply that the very idea is incoherent? Is the idea of that which cannot be coherently described an incoherent idea? It is not at all obvious what to say here, except perhaps to rely on analogy.

What would we say about the idea of an inconsistent idea - is it inconsisten? I think not. We are quite in philosophical discussion to describe ideas of others as inconsistent, and presumable we are not always involved thereby in a kind of pragmatic paradox which undermines our claim. If the idea of an inconsisten idea can itself be a consistent one, perhaps by analogy the idea of an incoherent idea is a coherent one. And then by analogy again, the idea of that which cannot be given a coherent description is perhaps a coherent description of an idea. The suspicion remains though that there is something of a paradoxical air about it, and certainly we seem to be able to give little content to it except in negative terms. It reminds us of Locke's notion of substance which is 'a something, we know not what' which underlies qualities, and which Berkeley took to be a damning description of the very thought.

My original position about conceptual realism[20] was that it did not in fact have such a presupposition, and still I think that the reasons I had for that position have some weight.

I do not, for example, think that conceptual realism need say of the world predating or postdating alll animal life - and hence all conceptualising- that it existed or will exist as the *status rerum*. A feature of concepts is their applicability beyond what is directly given, now, in experience: a concept allows us to describe and think about things lying beyond the here and now, and that includes things existing before or after anything possesses that concept. We can talk about facts temporally and spatially far distant from us, and of facts of a general nature such as the speed of light and the nature of gravitation. A conceptual scheme therefore need not be limited to the place and time of those that have it, so conceptual realism is not committed to the *status rerum* before and after conceptualising beings exist.

What, however, of that part of O'Connor's description of the *status rerums* as its 'inevitably far exceeding the concepts we have for its description'? How could that be said to follow from the thesis of conceptual realism, since conceptual realism does not contain a clause about our concepts limiting reality in any way. Looked at from this angle, however, it could be claimed that conceptual realism has to have the machinery to make sense of a world exceeding the concepts we have for its description for there certainly is a limit to the conceptual scheme we do in fact have. The limit requires we make sense of what lies beyond it.

I think, once more, that conceptual realism is faced with no insuperable problem here, for the following reason. Conceptual realism

is quite consistent with the idea of a change in conceptual schemes over time, and hence can easily take on board the idea of facts becoming available later on which are not dreamt of at the moment. Indeed, we have got to our present scheme by a painful enrichment and alteration of what previous generations had-and the individual too goes through a period of such conceptual growth. This relativity of conceptual schemes allows conceptual realism to avoid a commitment to the *status rerum* as wider than any conceptualisation we may have. True, there is the thought that our concepts are a limited means for grasping reality but what this comes to from the conceptual realist's point of view is the thought that our conceptual scheme needs and will need continued enrichment and change. It is not the thought that the world avoids capture in a conceptual net, that a *status rerum* lies above or below or beyond the facts reflecting conceptualisation: rather, it is the thought that the world exceeds the concepts we now have or have had in the past. Maybe it exceeds the concepts we will have, too, in the future - or even that any animal life will have either. But that too is only a limit on the actualisation of the whole range of possible concepts, for facts might lie forever unrevealed because concepts are not developed for their investigation.

I conclude that conceptual realism has not been shown to be committed to the *status rerum*, either as going beyond whatever concepts there might be, or as predating or postdating the activity of conceptualising. Is not conceptual realism nevertheless logically committed to the *status rerum* as follows? A concept is a tool for making sense of what is thought of as experienced, it is something which is applied to that which is said to be thereby conceptualised. There is therefore something prior to this conceptualised end-product, something logically prior to the act of applying the concept. What is prior to conceptualising is the *status rerum*.

The first response to this has to be that, of course, facts have their constituents, concepts are applied to something to make up those facts. But what is the concept, for example of a table applied to if not the table, the category of a particular or the concept of spatial proximity if not to the table and the chairs? As far as what it is that concepts (including categories) applied to it is concerned there seems no reason to look for anything other than the world of tables and chairs, particulars, space and time and so on.

Secondly, it can be admitted that there is a sense in which a concept produces out of *something else* that which it then gets applied

to. New facts are made our of old facts. One example is the application of the concept of a dining room suite, which brings together the table and the chairs under this new term; the latter things pre-eexist the new thing, the suite. Again, two people can be brought in relation to one another as employer and emmployee, this new concept creating a relation out of two pre-existing particulars. These very examples show, however, that the something else, out of which the concept produces the fact need not itself be construed as a *status rerum*. What becomes an ingredient is a new fact, through the introduction of a new conceptualisation, is a particular, a relation, a table, a spatial proximity, and so on. No *status rerum* has been introduced into the account of conceptual realism, even when the metaphor of 'producing a fact' is taken literally.

Yet if conceptual realism is not committed to the *status rerum* because of the account of the fact-concept relationship, surely it is when we get down to the fundamental level of categories. The fact-category relationship is surely the point at which a preconcepuralised ingredient must be introduced into the picture? So thirdly, I offer the following thought. The categories, being the most fundamental features of our thought and talk about the world, might seem to occupy a position on the bottom of a ladder of conceptualisation. Once the 'raw data' of the *status rerum* has received its original 'working up' in terms of space, time, substance and so on, other more detailed concepts such as 'act'or 'table' or 'dining room suite' can be brought in to play, providing a richer tapestry, a richer reality, for us to inhabit.

But this whole metaphor of ladder of conceptualisation is totally suspect. Categories *are* fundamental concepts, to be sure, but we do not apply them *first* and then go on apply, for example, 'act' or 'table'. (Kant seems to have been in the grip of this mistake, by the way.) Categories are fundamental concepts, but not at the bottom of a ladder. This should be obvious from the examples recently quoted, since the *dining room suit* is a *particular*. The particular emerges at the higher level of 'table plus chairs gives suite.' The *relation* of *employer-employee* is something that rides on the particulars which are the two persons involved, and both category and concept get applied at this higher level. Furthermore. natural kinds are a quarry for scientific investigators, who are already *au fait* with a complex world of particular, relational and spatio-temporal facts. Where is the implication of a preconceptualised world, a *status rerum*? Where, indeed, is the *room* for such a notion?

These are the thoughts which originally led me to discount the idea of the *status rerum* as - if at least a coherent one - not one which is required by the thesis of conceptual realism. Maybe there are ingredients in that thesis which remain suspiciously close to generating a *status rerum* concept, but I think they are not those which I have just discounted. These responses to the claim that the *status rerum* is prior to conceptualisation I still believe to have some force. To explain my present suspicion that any metaphysical theory - including conceptual realism - ought to take the *status rerum* idea seriously I need to refer to Kant once more.

What reasons did Kant have for introducing his *noumenal* world, his world of things-in-themselves, things as they really are in themselves independently of the features of the human (or any) mind (bar a non-discursive, creative mind such as God's)? This question is equivalent to the question, why did Kant adopt the metaphysics of transcendental idealism? His official response is that transcendental idealism is required to give a satisfactory account of a *priori* knowledge - of our possessing, prior to and independently of experience, such a *priori* concepts as he calls 'the categories', and such a *priori* pieces of information as the principle that every event has a cause, or that through every event there e xists a substance to which the change of properties can be attributed.[21] Moreover, he takes transcendental idealism to be required for an adequate explanation of the status of arithmetic and geometry [22], and for a resolution of metaphysical puzzles such as the conflict between freedom of the will and physical determinism. [23] The greater part of this group of problems needs no more than the idea of conceptual realism, however. If we can take the human mind itself as contributing substantially to the form which experience takes for us, then we have provided sufficient explanation of a *priori* knowledge. From this point of view, Kant has reason enough to introduce the notion of *phenomena* - things as we experience them - but no reason to introduce the other idea central to transcendental idealism - viz. *noumena*. If my reasoning above is right, *phenomena* do not presuppose noumena.

The other 'official' reason Kant acknowledges for introducing the noumenal as well as the phenomenal world is in the context of traditional (i.e., pre-Kantian) metaphysics and moral philosophy. In an attempt to make room for faith in God, freedom and the immortality of the soul, the transcendent world is put outside of the reach of human knowledge. [24] The phenomenal - noumenal divide is

the knowledge-faith divide, which traditional metaphysics has always tried to cross. The phenomenal - noumenal divide is, among other things, the key to resolving the metaphysical problem of freewill in a world of rigid causal laws.

I will not stop to criticise this aspect of Kant's philosophy, which in my opinion is by far the weakest area of his metaphysical and epistemological thinking. I think Kant had a far better reason to introduce *noumena* as well as *phenomena*, though he did not make this plain to himself in his official philosophy. There is a clue to it, nevertheless, in what he says about the *regulative* use of the 'ideas of pure reason' such as the idea of the *cosmos* - the world as a whole - and the idea of God - the *ens realissimum* or most real being. [25]

The function of the ideas of pure reason is, if not as 'constitutive' of human knowledge as the concepts of the understanding, at least a positive one in relation to our knowledge. Their function is to offer an ideal of human knowledge, an end to which we can strive, and 'objective' control on our endeavours. Within the context of our knowledge-acquisition activity, the noumenal does indeed have a role to play, on Kant's approach. I don't believe he spelled it out as fully as he might have done, nevertheless. The point I have in mind is this.

Let us assume that conceptual realism is correct, that facts are in the relevat sense a product of our conceptualising, and hence that concepts are a ncessary condition for the existence of phenomenal reality. What guarantees, however, that you and I and the rest of us manage to conceptualise a world in common? And what constraints are there on each of us, to conceptualise in one way rather than another? Perhaps the answer to each of these questions is to be found in the same direction, namely in a world which is not dependent on your or my activity of conceptualising. If Kant had taken Berkeley's position instead of transcendental ideal he would have looked to our creator as the guarantor of objectivity in our ideas about the world. As it is, he tries to present us with one of the earliest non-God-centred metaphysical and epistemological accounts and needs, therefore, an alternative account of the *control* exercised over our conceptual schemes. You and I and the rest come to share a reality, conceptualied though it be as conceptual realism requires, because we share a constraint on our conceptualising activity. The 'ideas of pure reason' as Kant calls them are a reflection of this preconceptual or concept-transcending *status rerum*, the noumenal reality which our concepts are to make up into the world as we experience it and as we think about it.

The most telling way I can think of putting this is to effect a reversal of focus of Kant's philosophical preoccupations. For Kant the primary question was to explain how it is that we can have some striking a *priori* concepts and an awareness a *priori* of some striking principles. There is a question which is Kantian in spirit yet quite the converse of Kant's own: how to explain how it is that we can have even the most mundane of empirical concpets and a knowledge of even the simplest of empirical facts? The idea of a phenomenal world was introduced by Kant to answer the question he posed, and as we saw it need not - at least in connection with *that* question - have brought in its train the idea of the noumenal world, the *status rerum*. The idea of the noumenal is required, however, to provide an answer to the Kantian - like question about our ability to have *empirical* knowledge.

Returning now to the thesis of conceptual realism. Is there anything in that thesis which leaves open scope for the noumenal - or indeed which positively demand such a notion? I suggest that there is. It was claimed that concepts are a *necessary* condition of fact, that they are fact generators in that sense, but not that they are *sufficient* conditions. Developing concepts, be it a category of a full-blown conceptual scheme, provides no guarantee that they will latch onto anything at all. The world has to provide that material to which our concepts can be applied,and we are often called upon to revise, to think again, to try another route. There isn't phlogiston simply because there is the concept, nor witches because people use the term, nor unicorns. The *status rerum* is needed as a control on the knowledge-gathering activity of science and everyday life, our conceptualising and hence 'fact-making' cognitive activity.

If I am anywhere near the truth, the notion of a *status rerum* is needed to give an adequate account of our relationship to the world. Not only is the idea coherent, but an account of facts which left it out would be incomplete. Whereas my original thoughts were to attempt a defence of conceptual realism against this implication of a *status rerum,* my present conclusion is that it would have been defective without it. I hope I am now a little closer to the way things are.

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NOTES

1. A version of this paper was delivered at the University of Delhi in April 1990, in the Indian U.G.C. sponsored seminar series. Thanks are due to Professor S. R. Bhatt for organising and hosting the occasion. I am grateful too for the very helpful comments from those at the seminar, especially Vijay Bharadwaja, Margaret Chatterjee and Indira Mahalingam.
2. Aristotle. *Categories* 1b25: from J.L. Ackrill. *Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione*, Oxford University Press, 1963, p.5
3. I. Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason* A79/B105: see Norman Kemp Smith (ed.), *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd edition, 1787, Macmillan, London, 1964, pp.112-114.
4. I. Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason* A80/B106: see Kemp Smith edition, p. 113.
5. D.W. Hamlyn, *Theory of Knowledge*, Macmillan, London, 1970, pp. 68-75, 136-42. See also his inaugural lecture at Birkbeck College, London University, 'Seeing Things As they Are', 1965
6. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953; 2nd edition, Blackwell, Oxford, 1963, paragraph 242.
7. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, paragraph 580.
8. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, paragraphs 240-315.
9. See, e.g., R. Albritton, 'On Wittgenstein's Use of the Term "Criterion"', *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. LXI, 1959.
10. D.W. Hamlyn, *Theory of Knowledge*, p. 71.
11. D.W. Hamlyn, *Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 141-142.
12. See, e.g., S. Holtzman and C. Leich (eds), *Wittgenstein : To Follow a Rule*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981.
13. I. Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A235/B294 ff.
14. See, e.g., Śaṅkarācārya. *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāsya*, Chapter III Section II. I explore these parallels in my article on Śaṅkara in the forthcoming I. Mahalingam and B. Carr (eds), *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*, Routledge, London.
15. D.J. O'Connor, *The Correspondence Theory of Truth*, Hutchinson, London, 1975; the phrase '*status rerum*' is introduced on p.130. See also D.J. O'Connor and Brian Carr, *Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Harvester Press, Brighton, 1982, Chapter VII.
16. L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1921; Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961.
17. D.J. O'Connor, *The Correspondence Theory of Truth*, p. 130.
18. David E. Cooper, 'Truth and *Status Rerum*' in Indira Mahalingam and Brian Carr (eds), *Logical Foundations*, Macmillan, London, 1991, p. 59.
19. Cf. Brian Carr, 'Truth' in G.H.R. Parkinson (ed.), An *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Routledge, London, 1988.
20. Brian Carr, *Metaphysics*, pp. 154-157.
21. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Introduction.
22. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Aesthetic.
23. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Antinomies, esp. A444/B472 ff.
24. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the Second Edition, Bxxx.
25. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, A642/B670 ff.