A Defence of Transcendentalism

We will now look into the rationale of transcendentalism and its field of concepts as postulated by Plato and Kant. Also, in this connection we will see the early Wittgenstein’s conceptual field as a version of transcendentalism. What Plato has done in Republic is the offering of a solution to the scepticism that he envisages as to the knowledge and possibility of the world in general in his Theaetetus. Kant and Wittgenstein also articulate a solution to this sceptical outlook in their own ways.

Scepticism of Theaetetus

In Theaetetus Socrates considers several views on knowledge and the world. And he finds them unsatisfactory and subsequently rejects them. But he does not in his turn offer in it a valid definition of knowledge or the world and what we feel at (he end of the dialogue is that we have no certain knowledge of the world and that the being of the world itself may be a myth. It is not that we will understand Theaetetus only in its given way here but see the profound implications of it along with the given form of it.

Socrates first examines the view that knowledge is nothing but perception. He says that this view is generally considered as allied to the notion that world is a flux and also the one that says that man is the measure of all things. He further states that this view has been held by Heraclitus, Protagoras and Empedocles in Greek then. Once world is a flux we will not be able to talk anything of it and it will have no identity and Socrates says that objects and creatures cannot have existence in such a flux. This view of Heraclitus leads Protagoras to say that if anything exists then it must be understood as an illusion of man, who himself is an illusion. And this is the reason why he says that man is the measure of everything that there is and that which is not there. If everything
is a flux, how can man have an objective view of the world? Socrates says that man becomes the measure of existence and being not through an objective means for the followers of this outlook but through perception that vary from one man to another. Socrates finds that this outlook makes everything illogical and irrational and asks whether such view can sustain itself.

What is the nature of knowledge that Socrates wants it to have to prove the certainty of it? Suppose I say that I know for sure that there is an objective world. Socrates' question here is how far this knowledge is reliable so that the objective world is a reality without doubt. For Socrates knowledge of any kind ought to be self-evident and it is on this basis that he refutes the definitions of knowledge offered in Theaetetus.

Socrates finds that Protagoras makes each individual the measure of the world by his dictum that man is the measure of everything. The reason for Protagoras to say this is the conviction that when I perceive, for example, through touch the water in front of me to be hot you perceive through touch that it is cold or not as hot as I make it to be. Here Socrates asks how in such a situation we can say that the world is objective independent of us. Another example Socrates cites in favour of this view as stated by its followers is that a sick man tastes the wine sour and a healthy man sweet. Socrates finds that the message of such a view is that we cannot ever know whether there is anything called wine independent of our sense experience or perception. So we have to conclude on the above view that each individual is the measure of everything that is there and that which is not.

Socrates now examines this view to see whether this definition of knowledge is self-evident or not. He then states the outcome of such a definition as follows. There will not be an objective world independent of a man. And Heraclitus has already stated that there is no world of objectivity and what there is is a flux. Our illusion makes us believe that there is an objective world and in
this illusion knowledge cannot be anything other than perception. Perception in turn is always about a thing and in that there is a mutual dependence of the one who perceives and what is perceived and we cannot say what each one of them is in itself independent of the other. This outcome as put forward by Socrates is as follows:

"The conclusion from all this is, as we said at the outset, that nothing is one thing just by itself, but is always in process of becoming for some one, and being is to be ruled out altogether, though, needless to say, we have been betrayed by habit and inobservance into using the word more than once only just now. But that was wrong, these wise men tell us, and we must not admit the expressions 'something' or 'somebody's' or 'mine' or 'this' or 'that' or any other word that brings things to a standstill, but rather speak, in accordance with nature, of what is 'becoming,' 'being produced,' 'perishing,' 'changing.' For anyone who talks so as to bring things to a standstill is easily refuted. So we must express ourselves in each individual case and in speaking of an assemblage of many—to which assemblage people give the name of 'man' or 'stone' or of any living creature or kind."¹

Nothing is at standstill and everything is becoming. And perception is about this becoming and this becoming does not result in the creation of anything that is in itself and by itself. Heraclitus-Protagoras view in a way anticipates Derrida's differance. Socrates wishes to know whether the view that man through his perception is the measure of everything is a sound definition of the world and the knowledge of it and whether it does justice to the practical world of ours. We must quote here Socrates' description of Protagoras' view before we go on to the way he criticises it:

"Socrates: Then my perception is true for me, for its object at any moment is my reality, and I am, as Protagoras says, a judge of what is for me, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not."²
Before Socrates examines perception and its nature he asks whether it is true to say each man is the measure of everything that is and that which is not. He shows that this view of Protagoras leads to a contradiction in that view itself. Suppose someone thinks based on his perceptions or thoughts that Protagoras is wrong in his assumption. Since, according to Protagoras, each man is the measure of everything, he cannot say that that man is wrong and he has to admit the truth of his thought that contradicts his own. Another important objection he raises to the view is that though it may be admitted for the sake of argument that my health at present is a matter of my present perception and I am the measure of its being, can I, who is not a physician, predict its future based on certain problems or symptoms it has now? This prediction can be done only by a physician in a true manner (and, of course, it is not the case that this prediction will always be true but as long as it is objective in the case under consideration it will turn out true) and it shows that I cannot be the measure of everything related to me. Now Socrates asks: Can perception through which each man is the measure of everything be the source of true knowledge of the world?

It is here that he questions the very notion that knowledge is perception in the backdrop of its allied notion that everything is in change. If everything changes without any permanence, which makes it identifiable in some way, is any being possible? When I am about to name my perception called "seeing", I understand that it is not there and only change is left without a name. I understand it as seeing at this moment, but its reality is change and it destroys itself into something else next moment. Even I cannot call a moment “moment” as it changes into something else immediately and nothing is permanent and identifiable in it. Change makes everything its not-being every moment and so being becomes is and is not at the same time. So perception is non-perception at the same time and knowledge non-knowledge. Socrates concludes that the definition that knowledge is perception in its relation with the theory of flux not only makes knowledge impossible but also being in general. He understands that
perception cannot point to any permanent being as it is about changing phenomena and in that respect it fails to account for knowledge. Why the same wine is sour and sweet for the same person? The reason for this is that the person changes and accordingly the wine also. On the basis of this view it is surmised that even when the wine is sweet it does not have a permanent quality, nor the person who tastes it because he also changes. Socrates says that the view of change and perception explained above cannot explain either knowledge or being of the world of which knowledge is.

Perception is always sense perception. And one sense cannot do the work of another. Eyes cannot smell and nose cannot see. And the organ of touch cannot either smell or hear. Colour is the object of the perception called sight and sound that of hearing. Socrates points out that sound is different from colour and there is no sense through which we perceive this difference. And we know one sense organ cannot do the work of another and there are no senses to perceive not only difference between objects but also their existence, number, likeness, unlikeness, etc. I can hear sound and see colour. Can we see anything called difference or number or existence, or can I hear any one of them?

Knowledge is about objects that exist. There cannot be knowledge about something to which existence is not an attribute. Existence is the truth of an object and knowledge is truth. If perception cannot reach existence, then it does not reach truth and as a result it cannot be called knowledge. It is mind without the help of senses that contemplate the truth of things which is equal to their existence. It also contemplates their differences, identity of each of them with itself, their number, etc. without the help of the senses. Socrates shows the difference between what the mind achieves through its senses and what it achieves by itself in the following way before he concludes that bare perceptions cannot amount to knowledge:
“Socrates: Wait a moment. The hardness of something hard and the softness of something soft will be perceived by the mind through touch, will they not?

Theactetus: Yes.

Socrates: But their existence and the fact that they both exist, and their contrariety to one another and again the existence of this contrariety are things which the mind itself undertakes to judge for us, when it reflects upon them and compares one with another.”

In Republic Plato shows that over and above the world of sense perception that is uncertain there is a world of certainty, which is that of ideas and is related to the ordinary world in providing it with its being that cannot be questioned by the uncertainty of contingent matters of fact. He there makes it clear that it is not senses that see the being of the world but the mind as a copy of the original and transcendental existence and being. We will discuss this point after a while. Let us now concentrate on Theaetetus.

After rejecting the notion that knowledge is perception for the above reasons Socrates now examines the suggestion by Theaetetus that true judgment is knowledge. This takes Socrates to wonder whether there can be anything called false judgments so that knowledge is not what it is. Socrates' question now is: How false judgment is possible? False judgment cannot be mistaking a thing we know for another thing we know because the very fact that we know both the things makes it impossible. It cannot be our mistaking a thing we do not know for another thing we do not know as it is impossible to mistake a thing unknown to us for another thing unknown to us. The other way of looking at the false judgment is to take it for mistaking a thing we know for another thing we do not know or vice versa. Socrates asks: how it is possible at all? Once we know a thing we know and once we do not know it we do not know it and how there can be a mistake about it.
Socrates now examines whether false judgment is to think about something which is not there. His rejection of this view is that we cannot think about something that is not. So false judgment is not about something which is not there. If I mistake a cow for buffalo this mistake cannot be about something that is not there as the being of what I think in any manner is and not is not. Socrates finds it difficult to find what a false judgment is. In this context Socrates examines the view that false judgment is thinking a thing that exists as another thing that exists. Socrates says about this possibility:

"Socrates: Do you suppose anyone else, mad or sane, ever goes so far as to talk himself over, in his own mind, into stating seriously that an ox must be horse or that two must be one?"4

If there are no false judgments all judgment will be of the same nature and we cannot tell the true ones from the false ones. Socrates says that this will make knowledge an impossibility. Therefore, according to him, we have to show that false judgments exist as distinguished from the true ones. Let us see what will come of his attempt in this direction.

Socrates now talks of false judgment as something arising out of ill-fitting of knowledge or thoughts and perception. The difference between knowledge and perception is that the former is an activity of the mind and the latter that of senses. One must not lose sight here of the fact that Socrates here takes knowledge for granted without defining it to understand whether false judgment is possible at all. I know a thing only when beyond its being perceived I recognise its existence though the instrumentality of my mind. And Socrates has not explained so far what this recognition consists in but takes it for granted. His point now is that I may know you and this knowledge is an imprint in my mind, but when my senses perceive someone else whom I may or may not know I mistake him for you because of the imprint of you in my mind goes on to this perception to fit that. But it turns out to be an ill-fitting. There are different
ways in which such an ill-fitting can take place and Socrates summarises it in the following remark:

"Socrates: Take things you know. You can suppose them to be other things, which you both know and perceive, or to be things you do not know, but do perceive, or you can confuse two things which you both know and perceive."\(^5\)

Socrates explains these possibilities and we will not elaborate upon them now. There are mainly two problems with this account of false judgment. One is that even after we have knowledge of certain things we are prone to be mistaken about them in the presence of perception. Then how far this knowledge is reliable? Another problem with this definition of false judgment is that it takes for granted what we have in the mind as imprints, are true and self-evident. However, the fact is that we sometimes make mistakes in the realm of what we-consider in this realm of self-evidence itself. For example, some people who know both 5+6 (11) and 12 will judge that the one is the same as the other. If they really know both of them, then this misjudgment should not occur under any circumstances. What these factors show is that the ill-fitting of thoughts or knowledge to perception cannot account for this false judgment and we really do not know whether it is a definition of false judgment at all.

To account for false judgment Socrates now makes a distinction between possessing knowledge and having it. When I possess a coat it does not mean that I always have it about me by wearing it. Similarly, when I possess knowledge it does not mean that I have it about me. An arithmetic teacher possesses his knowledge in arithmetic always and when he explains it to a student he has it about him. So Socrates says that when one possesses knowledge there is no possibility for mistake in it. For example, there 5 + 3 + 3 will always remain 11, but when we engage ourselves with it for some purpose even at the level of reflection it may be thought as 12. Socrates now raises the question: how can 11 be considered 12 in the handling of them to make a false judgment as they are
two different pieces of knowledge? It is like saying that when combined two rays of light will give rise to a dark ray. Socrates is still faced with the same difficulty of not having a way to distinguish a true judgment from a false one or knowledge from falsehood.

Let us conclude our engagement with *Theaetetus* with a look at how Socrates rejects the suggestion that knowledge is a true belief with an account added to it. A true belief without an account cannot be knowledge. It is evident from the predicament of a judge in a court who has a true belief when he passes a judgment based on the arguments he is presented with and he knows very well that what he believes is true in all probability. Our knowledge of the world is not like this, if at all we have it. We know that it is day now for sure and also that $5 + 6 = 11$ with certainty. If what we have thus is knowledge then it must be a true belief with an account. The basis of this notion is that if we cannot give an account of a thing it is not knowable. Socrates finds an example of such a notion in the saying that we can know the world because it is complex and can be given account but the simples of which it is made up cannot be known but only thought of since no account can be given to them. Socrates refutes this particular saying of some by pointing out that when one knows the name ‘Socrates’ one knows the letters of which it is made up. For him if you know the world you know at the same time its essences or what it is made up of. So he rejects the view that we know the world without knowing its ultimate elements.

There is a conviction that an account of a thing is the getting hold of the difference it has from other things and when this account is added to true notion of it it will become knowledge of it. But Socrates dismisses this view by saying that when we have true notion or belief of a thing its differentness in relation with other things is already given in that notion or belief and that by getting hold of differentness of a thing one is not going to know it as it is not an account added to it but a part of the same notion or belief of it. So the view that
knowledge is a true belief with an account added to it does not show what knowing or knowledge is.

The sceptical questions that Socrates throws up about knowledge are applicable to the being of the world as well. The question in its ontological perspective in connection with the scepticism of Theaetetus is that if knowledge is not possible as self-evident how do we know that we have a world at all, or if we have it how do we know its real nature? Plato understands in Republic that only a transcendental approach to the being of the world can do justice to it and that sceptical views about it are not integral in their nature but base themselves on certain evasive features of the reality.

Transcendentalism and Being of the world

The fundamental problem of Theaetetus is how we know that we have a world and if we have it how we know its real nature. Plato understands there that the ordinary world and a reflection on it provide us with the reason for doubting the being of the world. However, it is a fact that the world exists at least practically. And this practical existence ought to be the existence that we must concern ourselves with in our understanding of it. But the notion that takes the world as a flux questions the very identity of the world. If we think that reflection will show the being of the world, Socrates in Theaetetus shows that there is no guarantee that it is a reliable source of knowledge of the being. Nevertheless, in Republic Socrates finds a way to define the being of the world.

In Republic Socrates finds that the ordinary world is an enigma in a way. It is one and many, is and is not at the same time. But, for all practical purposes, we have a world that is identical with itself. Moreover, whatever may be the enigma that defines the nature of the world, it is hard to reject its being in general and the objectivity that it makes possible for us inspite of itself. Socrates understands the objectivity of that the world has in it about it cannot be its own
creation since whatever is viewed from within it is not certain. And this objectivity must be something provided to it from an ideal world that transcends it though it remains in relation with it in some manner. Socrates defines this ideal world by taking the ordinary world for granted in a way and he considers it inevitable and for him the rationale of doing so is the fact that we have the ordinary world not in a haphazard manner.

Hle admits that we do not know what hot or red or sweet or a being in itself is. But he asks whether what we feel ordinarily as hot or red or sweet or a being has something in common with its other instances. And it is this feature of objects that provides Socrates with the clue to define the relation between the transcendental essences called ideas and the ordinary world. Socrates shows that the one thing that is common to all beings in the world is existence. Everything exists. And this notion of common feature takes him to the idea of good that illuminates the entire being of the world. The lesson we have to learn from this Socratic postulation of the transcendental world is that an a priori and transcendental world has to be there to account for the being of the world as in its contingent spatio-temporal form it destroys itself beyond recognition. We have seen how Derrida explains this phenomenon of destruction about the world.

The early Wittgenstein is very much aware of the fact that the world in its ordinary contingent form is devoid of its being. He finds its being in objects that are prior to any combinations of them and therefore are a priori. And they are not in space and time also. In Kant we have a priori space and time over and above the ordinary non-identical space and time which, for Derrida, is spacing of time and temporalisation of space. Kant envisages a transcendental and a priori world that will be the ground for the being of the any world that a subject has. Tomorrow the sun may rise in the West, or what is considered cause so far may become effect or the entire world may change beyond recognition into a different order. But for Plato the essences of any world lie outside it and they provide it
with being in its **manifoldness**; for Kant the a priori intuitions of the sensibility and categories of the understanding of the human subject make the human world possible whatever may be its particular form at a given time; for the early Wittgenstein it is objects that form the essences of any world and that which are prior to any **existence**.

One may doubt that the tractarian view of the essences is transcendental. But this doubt is out of place for its objects or simples are essences that are similar to the transcendental essences of Plato and Kant. And they function in the same manner in their relation with the ordinary world. Wittgenstein himself realises the affinity they have with the Platonic and Kantian transcendental essences in the *Tractatus* itself and this leads him to call them there nonsensical like other metaphysical propositions. And we know that in *Principia* he objects to his notion of objects in the same way that he objects to transcendentalism in general.

The essence of transcendentalism is that the ordinary world cannot explain its essence in its own terms but has to do it in terms of the relation it has with a transcendental and a priori being. And it is this that the anti-transcendentalist views of the later Wittgenstein, Quine and Derrida call into question. We know that Derrida goes to the extent of saying that this world is not present at all originally. Let us now see where anti-transcendentalism advocated by these philosophers fail.

**Critique of Wittgenstein**

The later Wittgenstein believes that our desire to see the world having an ideal being is due to our being deceived by the transparency of the primitive uses of words where everything looks clear and distinct into thinking that the entire being must have an ideal and transparent being of that kind. He argues that even the relatively primitive uses of language are meaningful only through their indefinite functions and this **indefiniteness** is strikingly felt in the complex uses
of language. For him philosophers are like savages who wonder at complex phenomena in their ideal simplicity and this wonder takes them to see these complex phenomena in the light of their misplaced simple ideality.

Wittgenstein thinks that the blind necessity of the indefinite sense of the words takes care of the being of the world. There is no need of a search for a transcendental realm of being which is believed to be the source of the being of the ordinary world. What makes the being of a game possible is, according to Wittgenstein, the following of its rules blindly by its players. He believes that a use of language is a game, an activity that takes care of itself through its rules that are an inevitable part of it one way or other. And it is language that determines the being in general as a matter of our way of life that is expressed through it in its complexity and richness.

We have seen that Plato depends on the attributes such as ‘redness’, ‘hotness’, ‘table-ness’, etc., that are shared by several objects to find the relation between what is transcendental and what is bestowed being by it. Wittgenstein questions the world of attributes. He says that there are no attributes over and above the similarities or resemblances between things and beings. This standpoint is a rejection of essentialist notion of attributes. In Kant we have seen that what is common to the manifold beings become radically abstract and are few in number as a result of it. Wittgenstein's aversion to a priori essences and his favouring grammatical essences leads him to question the concept of a general being of the world. He himself in his early period believed in the general form of a proposition in relation with the whole gamut of states of affairs. And his notion of general form of a proposition is an imitation of Plato's idea of good and Kant's notion of the synthetic unity of apperception. But now Wittgenstein, being someone who is no more deceived by the illusory ideal being of transcendental philosophy, settles for the uses of words in their indefinite sense.
Wittgenstein, however, fails to give a cogent criticism of transcendentalism. Where does he fail in his attempt? To understand this we have to examine the three concepts that play the pivotal role in his criticism of transcendentalist concepts. They are: the notion of indefinite sense, the blind necessity of the use of a word or rule following and family resemblances of uses of words. We will start with the indefinite sense of the use of language.

It seems that Wittgenstein has taken the search of transcendentalism for ideal being in a literal sense though he himself has done it in *Tractatus*. As a criticism of transcendental ideality he asks: can we draw an exact and ideal boundary anywhere? But it is a fact that when Plato or Kant or for that matter his own early self has searched for ideal and pure being they have done it not for the sake of doing it? It was a search for an ideality that gives being to an ever-changing phenomenon called the ordinary world. What does it give its being? This is the question that guides that search. And this search was suggested by the ordinary world itself in its being self-identical inspite of the possibility of perpetual destruction of itself in the Heracletian flux. It is strange that Wittgenstein says now that since his earlier method of analysis was suggested by the phenomenon that a thing has its parts, it is not profound and is as ordinary as anything in the world. Wittgenstein misunderstands transcendentalism here. It is not a search for something extraordinary but for something that explains the being of the world in its objectivity. Plato's search for an ideal being is not as same as an attempt to draw an exact boundary on the earth. It has deeper and profound implications and we have explained them a while ago.

Wittgenstein contends that it is not an ideal being that provides the ordinary world with its being but that the blind necessity of the uses of words takes care of the being in question. It is this blindness that must prevent us from seeking the source of the objectivity of the world on a transcendental plane and must urge us to leave everything as it is. If this blind necessity has to be the ground of being it has to be either transcendental or it must fail in it. At times we
feel that Wittgenstein's use of this necessity makes it transcendental. If it is a
transcendental phenomenon it must be a priori, otherwise the contingency and
change that question the being of the ordinary world in general will push it also
into the abyss of non-identity that Derrida very ingenuously articulates. But once
Wittgenstein admits that it is transcendental then his criticism of transcendental
philosophy will come to a naught, for what he does then is shifting
transcendentalism from a Plato-Kantian plane to a new plane. And this move
will make PI another transcendental treatise and it will hardly be a criticism of
it. And we have no objection to a move that will make PI a transcendental
treatise this way, but we will admit it only as a version of transcendentalism with
its own differences with other versions of it.

If the blind necessity of Wittgenstein is not transcendental then it will not
be able to explain how the world retains its identity inspite of its being assailed
by the change and deconstruction caused by the spatio-temporal and other
related phenomena. Plato and Kant show that only what is beyond ordinary
space and time can save the world from its falling into the absence of its being. If
Wittgenstein thinks that the blind necessity of the ordinary language is
irreducible and it takes care of itself, then such an attitude of his will be that of
escapism. Plato, Kant and his early self at least point to the direction in which a
responsible and serious inquiry into being in general ought to move. Wittgenstein's concept of blind necessity in its anti-transcendentalist mode fails
to justify the being of the world as its being itself is assailed by differance as any
other object or sign in the world. And it is transcendentalism that shows how
being is the inevitable presupposition of even a talk about differance.

Wittgenstein says in PI that the uniform appearance of the words in their
written or spoken form deceive us into thinking that there is something that
underlies the different things in the world as a common factor. He is of the
opinion that when we look at the uses of words which testify to the fact that there
is no common origin or general form but only differences we will not ask what
underlies them as a common being. But it is strange then that in PI itself he makes statements that denote the common features of the uses of language. For example: he says that we follow rules blindly. He also talks about the sameness of pain that you and I have inspite of his arguing for differences between different things. In PI blind necessity is the force that unite the entire world into a whole. The blind necessity of Wittgenstein cannot be a similarity between different thing as redness or hotness between different red things or different hot substances but something more fundamental than that as it makes a rule what it is. So it seems that Wittgenstein is ambivalent in his rejection of common essence of language and the world.

Wittgenstein does not explain how family resemblances come into being. There is nothing strange in such an act of his for he wants to leave every thing as it is. But it goes without saying that if objects and beings are different in their material content it is a question of the being of the attributes: how are they shared among them? Wittgenstein sidesteps this question by taking family resemblance for an irreducible phenomenon that ought to be left alone. So at the end it comes to this: his criticism of transcendentalism is not coherent and if at all it is coherent it will not be able to do justice to the being that we live through in our existence in the world positively.

Critique of Quine

Quine's criticism of transcendentalism is an outcome of his theory of stimulus meaning. He argues that reference is inscrutable and meaning indeterminate. The reason for this inscrutability and indeterminacy is due to the fact that a set of stimulations can vouch for more than one referent at a time. In the case of statements that are situated away from stimulations we are in the dark about how they get their meaning in terms of stimulations. And for Quine there is only stimulus meaning. He says that statements situated away from stimulations get their meaning in indirect ways through their relations with
stimulations and therefore they lack a proper characterisation in terms of stimulations. In this picture of language and the world there is no way that we can make sense of an ideal being of them and here we have to settle for a pragmatic approach to our life and existence.

The founding stone of Quine's criticism of transcendentalism and his theory of inscrutability of reference and indeterminacy of meaning is his belief that sensory stimulations in their relation with language make our world possible. In PI Wittgenstein asks whether we cast a sidelong glance at stimulations when we use language. We will base our criticism of Quine on this question. But we will not follow Wittgenstein in this beyond a certain limit. For Wittgenstein, there are no a priori and transcendental essences that make the being in general possible. For him, blind necessity of the use of language is the beginning and the end of everything. We have already shown why we cannot agree with such a notion in its apparent formulation. If we ask Wittgenstein whether there will not be an ideal and essential ‘red’ that survives the disappearance of the entire particular instances of this colour, he will answer that the use of language or the behaviour of the people will take care of such an eventualty. He in his example of builder and his assistant envisages a scene where the builder asks for a tool that is broken and absent. In such a situation the assistant may shake his head or communicate to him the absence of the tool some way. And for Wittgenstein there are always different ways of coping with the problem of absence and presence in language.

What gives an object its being is not the blind necessity of the ordinary language which is itself assailed by the non-identity of the ordinary existence but a non spatio-temporal and transcendental world of essences as it only can explain being in general. We see that the starting point of our knowledge of the reality is not the stimulations but a publicly observed criterion of an ideal objectivity. And it is this objectivity that determines the objectivity of any kind
and even that of Quine's talk about indeterminacy and inscrutability. And we will see briefly how this transcendental presence is presupposed by Quine.

Quine says that our sensory stimulations originate from an outside agent. And for him this agent is not the physical objects but something we cannot know as we have no access to it. Is not there something transcendental about such an agency? Plato says that when all tables are destroyed the ideal table remains. By extension this argument is applicable to the agency that Quine presupposes as the origin of our sensory stimuli. It follows from this that an a priori and transcendental ideality ought to survive the possible disappearance of such an agency as the ideal presupposition of the source of stimulations. And this argument makes use of the structure of Quine's own argument for questioning it.

On the side of the sense organs also this quest for a priori ground persists. Here the question can be put more directly and in terms of a Heraclitus-Derrida jargon. How the field of stimulations will survive the movement of differance given the fact that they have no transcendental base for Quine? If Quine presupposes their being in any manner, then this presupposition can make sense only in a transcendental manner.

In our daily life we do not come across the indeterminacy and inscrutability that Quine adheres to. It is not on the language of science that our ordinary talk about the world is based. Rather, it is the other way round. If Quine's scientific theory of stimulations contradicts the objectivity of ordinary talk on which any objectivity is based, then Quine has to change his theory. And we always make sense of the world and life not in terms of our stimulus conditions but in terms of the objectivity that presupposes any objectivity whatever. It is here that Socrates' conviction in Theaetetus that bare sense perception cannot show us how a thing exists and that for it a much more fundamental sense of objectivity is required is in need of a renewed articulation.
Critique of Derrida

Derrida, we have seen, argues for the absence of being. He does it through the notion called *differance* which is neither absent nor present. If it is absent, then it cannot act as a factor that deconstructs presence into its absence. If it is present, it goes against Derrida's view that nothing is present anywhere. Derrida sees our world as an aberration and it determines its own absence in its presence. This is because of the fact that it is a play of 'is' and 'is not' in different ways. But, is it the case that we miss our being perpetually?

Derrida begins from the mistake of making absolute one dimension of the being to see that each entity is its presence and absence at the same time. The dimension that Derrida privileges about being is its spatio-temporal aspect. The destruction that the being faces in its contingent dimension is not something that is unknown to Plato, Kant and the early Wittgenstein. However, they realise that there is another dimension of the world that gives it its being in its transcendental determination. For Plato this determination is the relation of ordinary contingent being with the world of eternal ideas, for Kant the transcendental subject constructs the word in accordance with its a priori elements, and Wittgenstein finds the permanence of a priori elements provide being to the world in its perpetual change. And the transcendentalism they advocate is an articulation of the a priori being that we cannot escape in any manner.

Derrida believes that this conception of a priori being that transcendentalism makes its base has its roots in the aberration called our faith in the presence of the world we ordinarily have. But strangely this aberration makes everything possible including Derrida’s differance. And this is the reason why he says that his *grammatology* is still “wallied-in within presence”⁶. He describes there that it is a necessary trap to be in this presence but this presence

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is an illusion. In his discussion on differance we have seen that the articulation of this concept in the language of presence is a strategic move and it in principle cannot be articulated at all. The talk of strategy and of inevitable necessity of being in illusion of presence that Derrida indulges in shows that Derrida wants to save his view of absence and protowriting through a jugglery of words and play of vulgar logic, which has its sustenance in the one dimensional view of the world that takes into consideration only the contingent and changing aspect of it. Derrida's view communicates to us two important exigencies as lessons to be learned: One, we cannot deny the being of the world and it is of a priori nature and this is the reason why he has to find himself in it time and again after his rejection of the same; two, the need of formulating transcendentalism in new ways taking into account not only his theory of absence but also other anti-transcendentalist views that are allied or related to it one way or other.
REFERENCES


2 ibid., p. 866.

3 ibid., p. 891.

4 ibid., p. 896.

5 ibid., p. 899.