

Article

Not peer-reviewed version

On Limitations to Conceptual Knowledge in Kantian Categories and Postmodernist Philosophy

Isaac Penzance *

Posted Date: 8 January 2025

doi: 10.20944/preprints202412.1429.v2

Keywords: Categories; Ontology; Laplace's Demon; Human Knowledge; Qualifying Factors; Postmodernism; Derrida; Kant; Concept; Cognitivity; Conceivability



Preprints.org is a free multidisciplinary platform providing preprint service that is dedicated to making early versions of research outputs permanently available and citable. Preprints posted at Preprints.org appear in Web of Science, Crossref, Google Scholar, Scilit, Europe PMC.

Copyright: This open access article is published under a Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license, which permit the free download, distribution, and reuse, provided that the author and preprint are cited in any reuse.

Article

On *Limitations* to Conceptual Knowledge in Kantian Categories and Postmodernist Philosophy

Christian Panarello

Independent Researcher; christian.panarello@hotmail.com

Abstract: Chalmers' *Constructing the World* offers an exploration into *complete* bodies of information – for which he proposes that an entity such as Laplace's Demon has a *scrutable* interpretation over available information. However, Chalmers does not address a *true* realisation of what a complete knowledge should be; Laplace's Demon remains very much human. This article further suggests that information is limited – specifically in a post-modernist framework – because the limited number of perceptible differences (known as Categories) reduces the scale of differences such that the information *converges* into a common limitation. In order to qualify human concept, a “conceivability structure” is introduced to describe intellectual divisions on account of such Categories.

Keywords: Categories; Ontology; Laplace's Demon; Human Knowledge; Qualifying Factors; Postmodernism; Derrida; Kant; Concept; Cognition; Conceivability

1. Introduction

Qualifying such terms as “human knowledge” has too often been presented in the context of the “dasein” (Heidegger, 2008) or “experiential”, developmental (accumulated) knowledge – explicitly, what they cover is a “patterned” extrapolation from the original, *single* impetus that the “dasein”, among other such interpretations, describes. Each repetition is therefore formative of a larger and eventually complete human faculty. This, however, does not address intelligence in terms of specified boundaries.

Chalmers (Chalmers, 2014) interprets much of the same, the capacity for knowledge is made *from* known origins, where scrutability forms the potential, whole knowledge for a being. As such, in deriving that scrutable knowledge from the object is to remove – such a trap as Locke falls into where the falseness of “innate principles” (Locke, 1690) are described with respect to objects of thought, rather than Categorical inclusions of components.

First Thesis: that the difference, although, in accordance with Derrida's remarks (“there cannot be science of difference itself in its operation”), is compounded with the claim for absolutism, “as it is impossible to have a science of the origin of presence itself,”. However, this is true only for the immediate object(s), otherwise the entire knowledge base effectively converges among similarities because of these differences where the finite number of Categories must limit the expression of objects. Interestingly, as opposed to a more *standard* phenomenology¹, we therefore assume a *limit* to information.

As such, what Postmodernism (Sweetman, 1999) is individually capable of relative to a more traditional phenomenology is its point of dimensionality; in such a scope as sensibility, one may assume each *object* to, on account of its innately different location, to express a “continuous plane” of *objects*. Further, the most significant *exploratory* use of the *difference* is Deconstruction. With convergence in mind, we alter the plane to have an effective limit, a limit made by human sensibility and capacity for thought (such a capacity as is assumed in Kant's Categories).

¹ It is therefore assumed that, with the distinction between a certified limitation to information and a continuity, what *reality* must be is determinable between basic phenomenology and the postmodernist *difference*.

Unfortunately, Derrida and much of the postmodernist movement is limited by how it chooses to infer its case for phenomena: in theoretical pursuits, we are limited to such ideas as the Hyperreality or a formalisation of hermeneutics.

Second Thesis: because the difference is (almost explicitly) limited to human sensibility, an entirely different mode of philosophical reasoning is required to properly understand the *range* and *plane* of human thought.

1.1. The validity of Categories

As a merely propositional identity, the Categories' division of common thought is relatively controversial – a human experience is only reproducible in its *whole*, which is such a point that Gestalt psychologists do emphasise. However, it is further considered that such objects of the human condition, as are the laws of proximity, similarity (Koffka, 1935) are conditions of the mind rather than derivative on identities of imaginative pretexts.

1.2. Conditions of Humanity

This article intends to re-contextualise how we epistemologically interpret what it means to be “human”. Currently, we observe “human” traits in relation to experiential means – effectively foreign, individualised constructions that build knowledge bases into such ideals as “adulthood”, “nostalgia”, and “family”. Such ideals are, however, social and psychological conditions – effectively part of the Freudian/Lacanian condition – and are shown in this article to be extraneous to intrinsically and universally *human* formations (such formations that, unlike the Freudian/Lacanian condition because of their complexity, are easily comparable to other theoretical intelligences).

Human “Imagination” is – particularly on account of the dependency on the ontological – limited by its apprehension and transformation of the *thing* where the Categories contain expressible forms. Imagination cannot be constructive in itself, but expressive by nodal relations to objects.

2. Qualifying Factors and the Knowledge Base

Therefore, this text introduces the conceptual identity of the “qualifying factors” and the more theoretical “knowledge base” respectively to address the needs of human capacity for thought and the expectation of what knowledge unbounded by such qualifying factors should produce. Explicitly, the qualifying factors (of which are applicable simultaneously to sensibility and human thought; an effective unity²) are the limitation of human thought to one *focal point*³ of information (relative to multiple focal points⁴), the uniform objectification of thought (which is shown in Lowe's ontological categories), and the formation of higher-order constructions of knowledge that remain as uniform objects – these qualifying factors introduce, to assert the position of E.J. Lowe (Lowe, 2005), “what kind of things can exist and coexist”, and it is henceforth argued that the qualifying factors introduce

² The author notes that the “effective unity” is essentially a reduced and hence more plausible form of panpsychism.

³ Although common thought is more often a unity among the context and the thought itself, the individualised *focal point* can only be manifest on a single object.

⁴ The assumption that multiple focal points would allow for an expanded conceptual information is the dependence on the Ontological Categories – to use the object as the central identity is as perception. Granted that we derive such identities as Kant's “quantity” and “quality” in objects (further, we understand in later sections that the Categories are disjoint with physicalism) that are rendered in the context of their own existences, to have multiple focal points (given the former *singularity* of thought) is, for example, to expand the “observation” because the signification of multiple centralities, each that can be *weighted* while remaining central for an idea of perception that is foreign to us.

the categories⁵. Do note, however, that the qualifying factors are also *constructive* for human intelligence as well as *limiting* – that one's apprehension is limited equally by what constructs it is, hence, the absolute Duality of Being.

Further, the relationship between the qualifying factors and the Categories requires that the qualifying factors are generative of the Categories. Fortunately, the human qualitative factors are single-faceted (which is to assume that they are only physicalist⁶) with the exception of the focal point.

As a note, the idea of the Categories themselves have been subject to multiple interpretations, with such an aim as to pursue an “exhaustive” categorisation of human thoughtfulness. Often, however, this is not assumedly achieved (as addressed in this article), although relative approximations are diffuse to such an extent – between ontological categories such as Lowe's (Lowe, 2005) and an Aristotelian/Kantian inquiry – that their efficacy can be distinguished. For the purposes of this study, the Aristotelian/Kantian method is used for its relevance towards conceivability.

Third Thesis: the categorisation that we produce for human thought (Aristotelian/Kantian) does not entirely “mirror” phenomenological reality; likewise, as observed in the Categories, human thought adopts a meta-relation such that we can appropriate ontological objects in thoughtful contexts where they become “quantities”, “qualities”, and “attributes”⁷. However, where we consider “quantities”, et cetera, they are objects – our treatment of *categorical* thought also ends here; we cannot explicate beyond that *immediate* meta reality.

The “knowledge base” is the expression of an unrestricted frame of concept. Granted that human limitations strictly remove the capacity for violations of the set Categories, the controlling qualifying factors must be set in an effective superposition in a theoretically, maximally expanded qualifying factors that construct, yet do not limit conceptual frames.

What the author intends to persuade with a discussion of the limits of the conceptual nature is the inability to construct *like* modes of thought: for instance, we cannot have a second, wholly distinct Communism that achieves the same dictum on materialism and social product – just as we cannot have a higher modum of *science* (we may modify such ideas as the scientific method or import/export biases, but the *modum* is the same) – as a postulate, *levelled* understandings based on the upwards accumulation of knowledge are impossible by all scales of concept (driven by the qualifying factors) because all are simply *one*, individual state of being).

3. Disjunction between *performative* and *stationary* knowledge

Further, we must understand the distinction between performative and stationary knowledges. The *performative knowledge* is common thought that is *productive* – essentially just reasoning, while stationary knowledge is in the form of objects. In observing each, it is understood that – in how phenomenology or even the *differential* in Derrida's work only relates to an immediate perception – describing a whole knowledge on the same principle, yet repeated does not necessarily yield correct results.

Fourth Thesis: there exists a disjunction between the *performance* (non-meta thought processes, whereby meta concepts *do* fall within the following boundaries) of knowledge and knowledge as it

⁵ Of which is presented in the following paragraph.

⁶ Deriving human faculty from “physicalist” means is an already pronounced point (see “panpsychism”), yet *phenomenology* as it stands would render that conceptual faculty as a quite exactly direct replication of physicalist form – instead, assuming the physicalism to be transformative on the qualifying factors (further true with respect to Darwinian theory) and then for the qualifying factors to be supplicant for conceptual limits.

⁷ Interestingly, Sellars proposes the view that the “metaconceptual, second-order” nature of Categories is to allow for semantics to be generative, and that therefore the Categories vary on account of their second-order nature. However, given that boundaries of thought are, in this article, *always* applicable, then this only applies to lower order Categories, such as the Ontological.

is convergent to Categorical limitations. Therefore, the limits of thought are a meta-concept and performative thought exists within its own epistemological isolation.

3.1. Orientable Categories

Knowledge, in accordance with the Categories, must be oriented in the favour of some *dominating* Category. This is true because of the simple significance of the Ontological Categories (Westerhoff, 2002) over the bare irreducibility of Categories – this is understood as a bearing towards the *object*, further that modality, although it is irreducible, must be predicated on an object that allows for the modality's existence.

In assuming an orientable mind, the Category of *modality* particularly cannot *exclusively* be reckoned in producing a (conjectural) conceptual *world* because it is derivative on the ontological (quantity, quality) form of the object. As such, we orient our own conceptual knowledge against modality and towards quantity, quality.

3.2. Developments on *á Priori* Knowledge

Given that we restrict *á priori* knowledge to what is specifically available to human minds, then a different set of qualifying factors then produces a different capacity of *á priori* knowledge. With this information, we reach a problem of observation: what should the *á priori* be *recognisable* as between different minds (evidently, with their different qualifying factors)?

Á priori thought is recognisable (Kant, 2003) when it is formed by other humans whose minds are not the same as our own (as such, of the same qualifying factors and mind), and as such where an *á priori* thought is not recognisable where another mind would recognise it allows us to show a different set of qualifying factors.

As a conjectural point, contact with an intelligent “alien species” (our own artificial intelligence is unsuitable because it does not fulfill even a totality of faculties that constitute a human intelligence) that is sufficiently different to humans will yield an entirely incomprehensible pattern of thought: the governance that we apply to our philosophy is inapplicable to their (if it should exist) equivalent – that a Star Wars-like intergalactic pretext is a near impossibility for such special difference as evolutionary differences should inform.

4. Antithesis (Necessary Condition of Knowledge)

However, as one may assume, the qualifying factors that produce conceptual government are not simply limitations – instead, that thought among any faculty of mind is limited to the same conceptual constructions as would be expected otherwise – that *thought*, just generally, is only formative in the context of the ontologically-focused. Therefore, given that a Categorical organisation is only possible under the pretense of thought, our limitation of – in the Kantian/Aristotelian organisation – twelve categories and four groupings, particularly with a preference for ontological bases. As such, this defines a *Necessary Condition of Knowledge* that is requisite for a production of thought – we understand that human pretenses for knowledge have been uniquely capable of producing proper thought.

However, this view is primarily informed by our own understanding of *the manifestation of intelligence*, which is limited to our own strain of intelligence while we contend the probability of significant alien life. The following subsection interprets the generalisations of thought (a term used to describe such *searches for universality* as we understand them in the incompleteness of a true basis for the Philosophy of Mathematics) and provides its own conjecture for *universality* – the perceptible variety of concept (correct or incorrect) supports certainly potential modes of generative thought that would imply a diversity beyond the singularity that one would otherwise subscribe to.

The alternative is for thought to occupy a differentiable yet common space – where it is productive in its mental partition with the body but holds dependencies on varied Categorical forms.

4.1. Expression of Categories

In themselves, Categories are irreducible modes of human thought, however, aside from the qualifying factors, a generalised view must be developed that formulates the reconcilability of the Categories. Previously, one may have achieved this with the appropriation of *physicalism* (Stoljar, 2024) or *phenomenology* (Hegel, 1910) as a realisation of thought with one's manifest surroundings. However, a simple physicalism – as is observed with the same issue for the *inconceivability* for Quantum Physics (see “*God does not play dice*”) – does not fulfill the Category of *modality*, therefore, the *generalisation* of the production of the Categories is transcendental on the physicalism: as such, the particularly *human* view is dependent on the mind – or certainly at a minimum its application of memory in constructing a mode that is transcendental upon a direct transposition of *worldly* constructs – is not a physicalism, but a collative physicalism that is dependent on the monadic idea of the *event* as its derivative faculty.

Importantly, the necessities for any degree of thought (which include the *generation* of thoughtful material), must be related to the treatment of irreducible Categories – owing to the set-based nature of knowledge where it must be produced, therefore even a singular, collective entity of accumulated knowledge where it is non-derivative is therefore not represented by such alternative *category*, but is constrained within the same uni-Categorical frame.

5. Conceivability Structure

While the previous description of the “qualifying factor” was sufficient to describe the production of knowledge-based Categories, it does not, in itself, inform a model about the structural identity of categories. Instead, it achieves only a rendering of biological faculties on the basis of implications via one's functioning mind: to assert constructive differences in a non-abstract form. As such, a non-exclusive representation of Categorical identities is required to formulate what then becomes the conceptual space. It is important to understand that this argument does not contribute to the *Antithesis* nor the association of qualifying factors to Categories.

Contrary to the spaces employed for functional analysis: the Riemannian, Hilbert, et cetera, Categories cannot be intrinsically expressed with respect to *differences* unlike their constituent parts, and therefore they are inexpressible as number-like forms. Incidentally, they possess no degree of equality that would suggest that all are contained within the same set-like structure. On account of the fact that each is indifferntiable, dimensional quantities are also impossible⁸ to be expressed (neither a singularity nor a Hilbert space infinity).

However, this is altered by simple agency – our own agency is significantly unproductive: modality is dependent on object forms, which therefore suggests a degree of difference on account of relative semantic qualities (these can be *dependence*, *salience*, et cetera); for instance, modality expresses dependence towards ontological bodies (quantity, quality).

Primarily, this interpretation operates as an organisation of Conceptual meaning; composite with qualifying factors for suggesting the building blocks for conceptual thought – specifically isolated within the boundaries of intellectual division, understand, however, that this interpretation is entirely a conjectural identity and results to provide sufficient reasoning for Categorical thought.

6. Conclusion and Significance

This article introduces two central ideas, the latter as a corollary. The first is that knowledge is explicitly limited to its conceptual Categories in accordance with the *differential* in Derrida's worn; the second is the disjunction between the limit (shown in *stationary* thought) and *performative* thought:

⁸ As a note, reductionist positions on values induce relative equality: the containment faculty for dimensionality is in equal nature as would be a difference expressed via numeral – such as we see in adding quantities to the n-tuple or the integer value.

that “meta” constructions are disjoint from our basic thought and interpretation of *ideas* is exclusively generative of thoughtful reality.

It achieves a model for conceptual intelligence that hitherto has not been introduced. The brevity of this piece serves as an introductory work to the topics in this article. It also – as a note of conjecture – excludes Consciousness from being assumed as a productive entity for conceptual knowledge.

This article then addresses its own *Antithesis* in Section 4.1, supposing a valid counter-argument to the manifestation of alternative Categories by a hypothetical *necessary condition of thought* – to assume that *thought* (on such a scale as is understood with respect to humanity’s creative distinction) is only produced with respect to conditions as an ontological basis. However, the greatest degree of significance is particularly addressed in 1.2, the conditions for how humanity should be addressed are most pertinent in altering the significance of categorical thought.

References

- Chalmers, David J. (2014). Précis of Constructing the World. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 89 (1):217-219.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1910) "The phenomenology of mind". The Macmillan company
- Heidegger, Martin. 2008. Being and Time. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Kant, I. (2003). Critique of Pure Reason (M. Weigelt, Trans.). Penguin Classics
- Koffka, K. (1935). *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Locke, John, An essay concerning humane understanding, volume 1 MDCXC, based on the 2nd edition, books 1 and. 1690.
- Lowe, Edward Jonathan (2005). The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science. Oxford, GB: Clarendon Press.
- Nunez, Tyke (2014). Definitions of Kant’s categories. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 44 (5-6):631-657.
- Stoljar, Daniel, "Physicalism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2024 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2024/entries/physicalism/>>.
- Sweetman, Brendan (1999). Postmodernism, Derrida, and Différance: A Critique. *International Philosophical Quarterly* 39 (1):5-18.
- Westerhoff, Jan. "Defining ‘Ontological Category.’" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 102, 2002, pp. 337–43. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4545378>.

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.