In his unfinished book on religion, Hans Wagner wrote that metaphysics is the bread “from which we live in good times and in bad; and if we hunger for anything, then most often for a valid metaphysics.”¹ He distinguishes between a transcensive metaphysics, which compellingly clears a path to the unexperienceable, and a ciscensive metaphysics which, conversely, rests upon a glossing over of the unexperienceable. In both cases, in starting from experience one reaches that which lies beyond experience—either in the transcendent manner of transcensive metaphysics (which is capable of substantiating and justifying its claims), or in the exuberant style of ciscensive metaphysics, which presents a way of thinking that no longer necessarily follows from the certainty of what is known, and consequently lacks any sufficient grounding.²

Transcendental philosophy, then, claims to establish a valid metaphysics; to this end, it is understood as the basis for a transcensive metaphysics in Wagner’s sense, insofar as it represents knowledge of a boundary and knowledge from this boundary. As Kant emphasizes, this boundary (Grenze) divides two domains in a positive way, since it leaves open the possibility for movement on both sides of the division. The limit (Schranke), on the other hand, represents the containment of something, and negates its own overcoming. While the boundary is “something positive,” in the way that a point dividing a line is “nonetheless a locus in space,” the limit includes “mere negations.”³ What transcendental philosophy knows, it knows about concepts and the normative rules of their relations. Thus, such concepts can be seen as the boundary points from which it is possible for something to be known (though not objectively). Although they separate the domains of that which is located

¹ Wagner 1953, 220; my translation.
² Wagner 1953, 210–214.
³ AA 4, 354; Kant 2004, 105.
on either side of the line that they constitute, these terms display a characteristic positivity in that they enable us to obtain knowledge (though not objective knowledge) in both domains. Knowledge of the boundary and from the boundary is, strictly speaking, nothing other than the application of the principle by which philosophy is transcendental, because it does not have to do with objects but with a priori knowledge. Thus, Kant calls this kind of knowledge “knowledge of a boundary” insofar as it “restricts itself solely to the relation of what lies outside the boundary to what is contained within.”

The knowledge of transcendental philosophy, then, allows for an analogical explanation of certain objects and states of affairs. One such example for Kant is the notion of religion and the related understanding of God as that moral entity to which the human conscience answers. The reality of God is not theoretically or objectively accepted, but rather subjectively, that is, through practical reason. It is “only in following out the analogy” of God that one knows how he or she should act. In this way, religion becomes for the human being “a principle of estimating all his duties as divine commands.” Even when one has no objective knowledge of God, it is permitted from the standpoint of reason to know Him as the legislator of human duties.

Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre* also presents knowledge of the boundary and from the boundary as transcendental philosophy, and here too we can speak of analogical thinking. In contrast to Kant’s critique of reason, the analogy found in the *Wissenschaftslehre* holds not only in regard to knowledge of particular objects and states of affairs, but also in regard to the principle of philosophy. In other words, according to this analogy we can speak not only of duties and commands, but also of the rational knowledge itself which underlies diverse knowledge of these duties and commands. Namely, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is knowledge of the various forms of knowledge, which would not be possible without understanding this absolute knowledge as knowledge of the absolute. In this way, transcendental philosophy opens up the path to a transcensive metaphysics, inasmuch as it knows that which is beyond reason on the basis of knowledge of reason.

First, it is appropriate to characterize the absolute knowledge that is the principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a boundary, since it presents a point of reference between the absolute and the relative, the infinite and the finite. Accordingly, the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1804 calls the principle of philosophy “the absolute” that is “neither in being nor in consciousness but in the union of

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4 AA 4, 361; Kant 2004, 112.
5 AA 6, 440; Kant 1991, 235.