

Kant's Shorter Writings

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Critical Paths Outside the Critiques

Edited by

Rafael V. Orden Jiménez,
Robert Hanna,
Robert Louden,
Jacinto Rivera de Rosales
and Nuria Sánchez Madrid

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I.

**LOGICS AND REALITY IN KANT'S
TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM**

DIRECTIONS IN SPACE, NON-CONCEPTUAL FORM, AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

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1. Introduction

The central aim of this paper is to demonstrate an essential connection between Kant's¹ *Non-Conceptualism* and his *transcendental idealism*, by tracing this line of thinking in Kant's work directly back to his pre-Critical essay of 1768, "Concerning the Ground of the Ultimate Differentiation of Directions in Space," a.k.a. "Directions in Space."

2. "Transcendental Idealism," "Conceptualism," "Non-Conceptualism," "Kantian Conceptualism," and "Kantian Non-Conceptualism"

In a nutshell, Kant's thesis of "transcendental idealism" says that the basic structure of the apparent or phenomenal world necessarily conforms to the pure or non-empirical (hence a priori) structure of human cognition, and not the converse (*CPR* B xvi-xviii).

Or in other words, Kant is saying that the phenomenal world fundamentally conforms to the a priori structure of the human mind, and it is not the case that the human mind fundamentally conforms to the phenomenal world, or indeed to any non-apparent or *noumenal* world.

And here is Kant's primary argument for transcendental idealism. If the human mind fundamentally conformed to the world, whether phenomenal or noumenal, then since human knowledge of the world would be contingent on the existence and specific character of that world, then a priori human knowledge of the world would be impossible (*C* 10:130-131). But a priori human knowledge of the phenomenal world, e.g., in

mathematics, is already actual and therefore really possible. So the phenomenal world necessarily conforms to the a priori structure of the human mind. And in particular, the phenomenal world fundamentally conforms to our a priori representations of *space* and *time*, because that is the only acceptable philosophical explanation of the real possibility of mathematical knowledge (*ID* 2:398-406) (*CPR* A19-49/B33-73).

So if Kant is correct, then he is saying that the world in which we live, move, and have our being (by which I mean the phenomenal natural and social world of our ordinary human existence) is fundamentally dependent on *our* minded nature, and not the converse.

Correct or incorrect, transcendental idealism seems to me to be a deeply important philosophical thesis. For one thing, if transcendental idealism is true, then we cannot be inherently alienated from the world we are trying to know, as global epistemic sceptics claim, and human knowledge—not only a priori knowledge, but also a posteriori knowledge—is therefore really possible.²

In general, the thesis of “Conceptualism”³ says that the representational content of human cognition is essentially conceptual, and necessarily determined by our conceptual capacities. *Strong* Conceptualism says that our conceptual capacities are not only necessary but also sufficient for determining the content of human cognition, and *weak* Conceptualism says that our conceptual capacities are not alone sufficient but also require a contribution from some or another non-conceptual capacity (e.g., the capacity for sense perception) in order to determine the (ultimately conceptual) content of human cognition.

Correspondingly, the thesis of (essentialist content) “Non-Conceptualism”⁴ says that at least some of the representational contents of human cognition are not essentially conceptual, and not necessarily determined by our conceptual capacities, and also that these contents, on the contrary, are essentially non-conceptual, and necessarily determined by our non-conceptual capacities (e.g., the capacity for sense perception).

Although these distinctions might initially seem rather Scholastic or even trivial, the opposition between Conceptualism and (essentialist content) Non-Conceptualism is a philosophically important one. This is because what is at issue is nothing more and nothing less than the nature of the human mind. According to Conceptualism, human minds are basically

intellectual in character, having nothing inherently to do with the embodied, sense-perceiving, affective, desiring, animal side of human nature. By contrast, according to (essentialist content) Non-Conceptualism, human minds are basically bound up with the embodied, sense-perceiving, affective, desiring, animal side of human nature, and are *not* basically intellectual in character: on the contrary, the intellectual capacities of the human being constitutively presuppose, and are thereby grounded on and built on top of, the non-intellectual capacities.

Hence the philosophical debate about Conceptualism vs. Non-Conceptualism is really a debate about whether an *intellectualist* or a *non-intellectualist* conception of the human mind is the correct one. This has far-reaching implications not only for other parts of the philosophy of mind, but also for epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and even political philosophy, to the extent that it depends on ethics and philosophical anthropology.

Although both Conceptualism and (essentialist content) Non-Conceptualism are competing theses/doctrines in contemporary philosophy of mind, their philosophical origins both go back to Kant.⁵ Hence it is possible to defend either *Kantian* Conceptualism or *Kantian* (essentialist content) Non-Conceptualism, as competing interpretations of Kant's theory of human cognition in particular and of Kant's philosophy of mind more generally.

Now according to Kant, our conceptual capacities are located in the *understanding* or *Verstand*, whose operations yield concepts, judgements/propositions, and inferences, when those operations are also supplemented by our further intellectual capacities for apperception or self-consciousness, for judgement and belief, and for logical reason or inference.

By contrast, according to Kant, our non-conceptual capacities are located in the *sensibility* or *Sinnlichkeit*, which contains both a non-intellectual sub-capacity for sense perception and also a non-intellectual sub-capacity for imagination, and whose operations yield material or formal intuitions, material images, and formal images or schemata. Human sensibility for Kant, it must also be noted, *further* contains non-intellectual sub-capacities for feeling, desiring, and sensible willing or "the power of choice" (*Willkür*). In other words, sensibility for Kant is as much non-cognitive or practical, as it is cognitive or theoretical.

Since Kant believes that the understanding and the sensibility, as capacities, are essentially distinct from and irreducible to one another, and

also that both are required for rational human cognition (and in the case of human practical reason, a.k.a. “the faculty of desire,” both are required for rational human action and agency), Kant is also a *cognitive capacity dualist*.

But is Kant a Conceptualist or a Non-Conceptualist? Or in other words, is Kant a cognitive *content* dualist as well as a cognitive *capacity* dualist? Or in still other words, is Kant an *intellectualist* about the nature of the human mind, or a *non-intellectualist*?

The intellectualist thesis of Kantian Conceptualism says that for Kant the representational content of human cognition is essentially conceptual, and necessarily determined by the understanding. And just as there are strong and weak versions of Conceptualism in general, so too there are strong and weak versions of Kantian Conceptualism.⁶

By contrast, the non-intellectualist thesis of Kantian (essentialist content) Non-Conceptualism says that for Kant at least some of the representational contents of human cognition are not essentially conceptual, and not necessarily determined by the understanding, and also that these contents, on the contrary, are essentially non-conceptual, and necessarily determined by our sensibility.⁷

The classical or standard line of Kant-interpretation in 20th century Anglo-American philosophy simply took it as obvious that Kant is a Conceptualist and also an intellectualist. So the Non-Conceptualist interpretation of Kant is importantly revolutionary and unorthodox, and even if it were not correct (although I do think it *is* correct), nevertheless it has forced Conceptualist, intellectualist Kantians to re-think, re-argue, and re-work their previously unchallenged view.⁸

Now I can reformulate the main aim of this paper more precisely, in four sub-claims. What I want to claim is

- (i) that Kant is an (essentialist content) Non-Conceptualist,
- (ii) that there is a specifically non-intellectualist version of Kant’s transcendental idealism that depends inherently on the nature of human sensibility,
- (iii) that Kant’s (essentialist content) Non-Conceptualism is foundational for any philosophically defensible version of his transcendental idealism, and

- (iv) that this line of thinking in Kant can be traced directly back to his pre-Critical “Directions in Space” essay.

Or in other words, what I want to claim is that Kant’s non-intellectualism about the human mind goes all the way down into his *metaphysics*; that it is defensibly arguable that the apparent world fundamentally conforms to human *sensibility* even if it does not fundamentally conform to the human *understanding*; and that the basic source of all this is Kant’s (initially pre-Critical but later also Critical) theory of *space* and how we represent it.

3. Directions in Space and the Essentially Non-Conceptual Form of Our Representation of It

Kant’s “Directions in Space” essay contains an argument against the *relational* or Leibnizian view of space and in favour of the *absolute* or Newtonian view of space, but this merely scratches the surface of Kant’s argument.

The relational theory of space says that the nature of space is necessarily determined by extrinsic relations between objects in space. By contrast, the absolute theory of space, as Kant understands it, says that the nature of space is necessarily determined by a single universal framework—a *global space-frame*—in which physical objects are inherently embedded or located as filling up and realising proper parts of the global space-frame, whose structure necessarily includes certain special intrinsic relational topological properties that allow for fundamental *asymmetries*, in addition to the familiar Euclidean relational topological properties and relations, which are symmetrical.

According to Leibniz, who was a relationist about space, the objects standing in extrinsic relations are monads. So space is actually a “well-founded phenomenon” for Leibniz, and strongly supervenient on the intrinsic non-relational properties of noumenal monads. Nevertheless, other relationists about space, including Kant himself in the *Physical Monadology*, hold that these objects are actually material point-sources of causal forces in real physical space. So the version of relationism that Kant was working with in “Directions in Space” is not an orthodox Leibnizian theory.

According to Newton, who was an absolutist about space, the single universal framework in which physical objects are embedded is itself a

noumenal entity. But Newton was unaware (as far as I know) of the idea that the structure of absolute space contains special asymmetry-allowing intrinsic relational topological properties. Hence the version of absolutism that Kant was working with in “Directions in Space” is also not an orthodox Newtonian theory.

According to Kant in “Directions in Space,” space does indeed constitute a global frame for embedding or locating physical objects, like Newtonian space, but also and much more importantly it is an *egocentrically-centered, orientable space* with inherent structural asymmetries such as mirror-reflected incongruence or “handedness” in qualitatively identical objects (enantiomorphy), which Kant also calls “incongruent counterparts” (DDS 2:378-383). “Orientable spaces” are spaces with intrinsic directions, and “egocentric centering” means that the specific characteristics of an orientable space is fixed indexically and locally by conscious embodied perceivers who are themselves actually embedded or located within the total global space-frame.

In “Directions in Space,” Kant discovered that structural asymmetries such as handedness can be detected and differentiated only by the essentially non-intellectual, non-conceptual outer sensibility of living, embodied, conscious, cognising subjects like us, who are actually embedded or located in such a global space, and therefore that there is a necessary isomorphism between the representational form of the outer sensibility of such subjects, the abstract structure of that global space, and the material structure of perceivable objects also embedded or located in that global space:

Because of its three dimensions, physical space can be thought of as having three planes, which all intersect at right angles. *Concerning the things which exist outside ourselves: it is only insofar as they stand in relation to ourselves that we have any cognition of them by means of the senses at all. It is, therefore, not surprising that the ultimate ground, on the basis of which we form our [representation] of directions in space, derives from the relation of these intersecting planes to our bodies.* The plane upon which the length of our body stands vertically is called, with respect to ourselves, horizontal. This horizontal plane gives rise to the difference between the directions which we designate by the terms *above* and *below*. On this plane it is possible for two other planes to stand vertically and also to intersect each other at right angles, so that the length of the human body is thought of as lying along the axis of the intersection. One of these two vertical planes divides the body into two externally similar halves, and furnishes the ground of the difference between the *right* and *left* side. The

other vertical plane, which also stands perpendicularly on the horizontal plane, makes possible the [representation] of the side *in front* and the side *behind*. (DDS 2:379, emphasis added)

Since the distinct feeling of the right and left side is of such great necessity for judging directions, *nature has established an immediate connection between this feeling and the mechanical organization of the human body*. (DDS 2:380, emphasis added)

In short, the apparent or phenomenal world must conform to the form of our embodied outer sensibility, that is, the apparent or phenomenal world must conform to the form of human outer intuition.

Now for Kant the form of human outer sensibility or intuition is *essentially non-conceptual* for three reasons.

First, Kant says explicitly in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that intuitions of outer sense or inner sense, which pick out appearances—the undetermined objects of empirical intuitions (CPR A20/B34)—are possible for us independently of the functions of our understanding, i.e., independently of our concepts:

[S]ince an object can appear to *us only by means of ... pure forms of sensibility, i.e., be an object of empirical intuition*, space and time are thus pure intuitions that contain *a priori* the conditions of the possibility of appearances, and the synthesis in them has objective validity. (CPR A89/B122)

Objects can indeed appear to us *without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding*. (CPR A89/B122, emphasis added)

Appearances can certainly be given in intuition *without functions of the understanding*. (CPR A90/B122, emphasis added)

Appearances might very well be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accordance with the conditions of its unity... [and] in the series of appearances nothing would present itself that would yield a rule of synthesis and so correspond to the concept of cause and effect, so that this concept would be entirely empty, null, and meaningless. *Appearances would none the less present objects to our intuition, since intuition by no means requires the functions of thought*. (CPR A90-1/B122-3, emphasis added)

That representation which can be given prior to all thinking is called **intuition**. (CPR B132)

The manifold for intuition must already be given *prior to the synthesis of the understanding and independently from it*. (CPR B145, emphasis added)

Second, Kant explicitly claims in some pre-Critical writings and also Critical writings alike that at least non-human animals (e.g., oxen) and some non-rational human animals (e.g., ordinary human infants) are capable of sense perception and thus capable of inner and outer sensory intuition, but do not possess conceptual capacities.⁹

Third, and most importantly for our purposes, our pure or non-empirical representation of space picks out egocentrically-centered, orientable, asymmetric structural topological properties of space that *cannot* be represented by the understanding and concepts. This is shown by the “incongruent counterparts” argument, which, in a nutshell, says:

- (1) Incongruent counterparts like our right and left hands, by hypothesis, are such that they possess all their *conceptually*-representable qualities in common, yet they still are essentially different because they are incongruent.
- (2) This incongruence and the essential difference between our right and left hands is immediately and veridically represented by human cognisers, but only by means of our empirical *intuition* of real objects in physical space and also our pure sensory *intuition* of the structure of space, as necessarily conforming to the form of our outer sensibility or intuition.
- (3) Therefore our pure or non-empirical (hence a priori) representation of space is necessarily underdetermined by concepts.¹⁰

When the conclusion of the incongruent counterparts argument is conjoined with the first two reasons, then it follows that the form of our outer sensibility or intuition is essentially non-conceptual and also a priori.

Therefore, in “Directions in Space,” at least implicitly, Kant is saying that the basic structure of the apparent or phenomenal world necessarily conforms to the essentially non-conceptual a priori form of human embodied outer sensibility or intuition.

This line of argument is made even more explicit in, and furthermore is strongly supported by, Kant’s doctrine of the nature of space in the Inaugural Dissertation, “On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World” (1770), by his argument for the transcendental ideality of space in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783),

and by his later discussion of geographical spatial orientation in “What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?” (1786):

The [representation] of space is ... a pure intuition, for it is a singular [representation], not one which has been compounded from sensations, although it is the fundamental form of all outer sensation. Indeed, this pure intuition can easily be seen in the axioms of geometry, and in any mental construction of postulates, even of problems. That space does not have more than three dimensions, that between two points there is only one straight line, that from a given point on a plane a circle can be described with a given straight line, etc.—none of these things can be derived from some universal concept of space; they can only be *apprehended* concretely, so to speak, in space itself. *Which things in a given space lie in one direction and which things incline in the opposite direction cannot be described discursively nor reduced to characteristic marks of the understanding by any astuteness of the mind. Thus, between solid bodies which are similar and equal but incongruent, such as the left or right hands (insofar as they are conceived only according to their extension), or spherical triangles from two opposite hemispheres, there is a difference, in virtue of which it is impossible that the limits of their extension should coincide — and that, in spite of the fact that, in respect of everything which may be expressed by means of characteristic marks intelligible to the mind through speech, they could be substituted for one another. It is therefore clear that in these cases the difference, namely the incongruity, can only be apprehended by a certain pure intuition. (ID 2:403, emphasis added)*

What can be more similar to, and in parts more equal to, my hand or my ear than its image in a mirror? And yet I cannot put such a hand as is seen in the mirror in the place of its original; for if the one was a right hand, then the other in the mirror is a left, and the image of the right ear is a left one, which can never take the place of the former. Now there are no inner differences here that any understanding could merely think; and yet the differences are inner as far as the senses teach, for the left hand cannot, after all, be enclosed within the same boundaries as the right (they cannot be made congruent), despite all reciprocal quality and similarity; one hand’s glove cannot be used on the other. What then is the solution? These objects are surely not representations of things in themselves, and as the pure understanding would cognise them; rather, they are sensory intuitions, i.e., appearances, whose possibility rests on the relation of certain things, unknown in themselves, to something else, namely our sensibility. Now, space is the form of outer intuition of this sensibility, and the inner determination of space is possible only through the determination of the outer relation to the whole of space of which the space is only a part (the relation to outer sense); that is, the part is possible only through the whole, which never occurs with things in themselves as objects of the understanding alone, but does occur with mere appearances. *We can*

therefore make the difference between similar and unequal but nonetheless incongruent things (e.g., oppositely spiralled snails) intelligible through no concept alone, but only through the relation to right-hand and left-hand, which refers immediately to intuition. (Pro 4:286)

In the proper meaning of the word, to orient oneself means to use a given direction (when we divide the horizon into four of them) in order to find the others—literally, to find the *sunrise*. Now if I see the sun in the sky and know it is now midday, then I know how to find south, west, north and east. *For this, however, I also need the feeling of a difference in my own subject, namely the difference between my right and left hands. I call this a feeling because these two sides outwardly display no [conceptual] characteristic difference in intuition.* If I did not have this faculty of distinguishing without the need of any difference in the objects, between moving from left to right and moving in the opposite, then in describing a circle I would not know whether west was right or left of the southernmost point of the horizon, or whether I should complete the circle by moving north and east and thus back to south. Thus even with all the objective data of the sky, I orient myself *geographically* only through a *subjective* ground of differentiation. (OOT 8:135, emphasis added)

This way of reading “Directions in Space,” however, is confusingly concealed by the way that Kant formulates his main thesis in the essay:

My purpose in this treatise is to see whether there is not to be found in the intuitive judgments about extension, such as are to be found in geometry, clear proof that: *Absolute space, independently of the existence of all matter and as itself the ultimate foundation of the possibility of the compound character of matter, has a reality of its own. (DDS 2:378)*

In other words, the notion of *absolute* space, as Kant is using it in “Directions in Space,” is ambiguous as between

- (i) a *global space-frame* with orientability, egocentric centering, and structural asymmetries, that fundamentally conforms to the essentially non-conceptual representational structure of human outer sensibility or intuition, and
- (ii) *noumenal* space, as in Newton.

But by the time of the Inaugural Dissertation, however, and then later in the Transcendental Aesthetic and throughout the Critical period, it is perfectly clear that for Kant the global space-frame must be transcendently ideal, and cannot be noumenal.

4. The Essentially Non-Conceptual Form of Our Representation of Space and Transcendental Idealism for Sensibility

So for all these reasons, I want to claim that the central argument in “Directions in Space” is almost certainly the major philosophical break though that Kant famously reports when he says in one of the *Reflexionen* that “the year ’69 gave me great light” (*R* 5037, 18:69).

More precisely, what Kant had discovered between 1769 and 1772 is what I call *transcendental idealism for sensibility*. In 1772, Kant told Marcus Herz that if the human mind conformed to the world, whether phenomenal or noumenal, then a priori knowledge would be impossible (*C* 10:130-131); but by 1770 Kant already also held that a priori knowledge of the phenomenal world is already actual and therefore really possible in mathematics, hence the phenomenal world must conform to the non-empirical sensible structure of the human mind, and more specifically must conform to our a priori representations of space and time, since that is what makes mathematics really possible (*ID* 2:398-406).

More precisely, then, transcendental idealism for sensibility says that the apparent or phenomenal world fundamentally conforms to the essentially non-conceptual a priori forms of human sensibility, our representations of space and time.

Kant worked out explicit proofs for transcendental idealism for sensibility in the Inaugural Dissertation and again in the Transcendental Aesthetic in the first *Critique*.

The simplest version of the proof, provided in the Transcendental Aesthetic, goes like this:

- (1) Space and time are either (i) things in themselves, (ii) properties of/relations between things in themselves, or (iii) transcendently ideal.
- (2) If space and time were either things in themselves or properties of/relations between things in themselves, then a priori mathematical knowledge would be impossible.
- (3) But mathematical knowledge is actual, via our pure intuitions of space and time, and therefore really possible.

- (4) Therefore, space and time are transcendently ideal. (*CPR* A23/B37-38, A38-41/B55-58)

There is, of course, much more that can and should be said about this highly controversial argument. What is most crucial for our purposes here, however, is that this version of transcendental idealism relies *only* on essentially non-conceptual content and the nature of human sensibility, and *neither* relies on concepts and the nature of human understanding, *nor* does it entail that the phenomenal world necessarily conforms to our concepts and the nature of human understanding.

5. Transcendental Idealism for the Understanding and the Gap in the B Deduction

Indeed, after his major philosophical breakthrough between 1769 and 1772, it took Kant another *fifteen to seventeen years* to work out what he regarded as a fully cogent argument for what I call *transcendental idealism for the understanding*.

More precisely, transcendental idealism for the understanding says that the apparent or phenomenal world necessarily conforms to the essentially conceptual a priori forms of human understanding, namely the pure concepts of the understanding, or Categories. Kant's argument for this thesis is of course contained in the A (1781) edition and B (1787) edition versions of the Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding. But given what Kant says in the B Preface to the first *Critique*, we must take the B Deduction to be the *definitive* version of the argument. In turn, the explicit conclusion of the B Deduction is that the pure concepts of the understanding or Categories are necessarily applicable to "all objects of the senses in general," that is, to all actual and possible appearances (*CPR* B150-161).

It is also to be particularly noted that if the B Deduction is sound and transcendental idealism for the understanding is true, then at the very least, weak Kantian Conceptualism is true. But contrapositively, if Kantian Non-Conceptualism is true, then all forms of Kantian Conceptualism are false, transcendental idealism for the understanding is false, and the B Deduction is unsound.

Moreover, there are strong Kantian Non-Conceptualist reasons for thinking that the Transcendental Deduction, in *either* version, but particularly the B Deduction, is unsound.

Elsewhere, I have called the Kantian Non-Conceptualist argument for the unsoundness of the B Deduction “The Gap in the B Deduction.”¹¹ The Gap argument, in a nutshell, goes like this.

- (1) If the B Deduction is sound, then the pure concepts of the understanding or Categories are necessarily applicable to all appearances.
- (2) But if Kantian Non-Conceptualism is true, then there are actually, and therefore also really possibly, at least some appearances, veridically cognised by empirical and pure intuition, that necessarily fall outside the Categories, which I call “essentially rogue objects.” The most obvious example of this would be a conscious but non-rational animal’s veridical intuition of the difference between the right and left sides of its body.¹² More precisely, incongruent counterparts, as cognised by animal perceivers without conceptual capacities, are essentially rogue objects.
- (3) Therefore, the B Deduction is unsound.

Correspondingly, it also follows that transcendental idealism for the understanding is false: not all appearances necessarily conform to the Categories and concepts more generally; indeed, at least some appearances *cannot* conform to the Categories or to any concepts whatsoever.

6. Conclusion

If what I have argued so far is sound, then (i) transcendental idealism for sensibility and transcendental idealism for the understanding are logically independent, (ii) transcendental idealism for sensibility—based in particular on Kant’s arguments in “Directions in Space” and more generally on his philosophical breakthrough between 1768 and 1772—is arguably true, and (iii) transcendental idealism for the understanding is arguably false.

Correspondingly, then, the most important implication of the central argument in “Directions in Space” is that Kant’s Non-Conceptualism is foundational for any *philosophically defensible* version of his

transcendental idealism, namely, transcendental idealism for sensibility. Hence it is impossible to put forward a philosophically defensible but also recognizably Critical-period Kantian metaphysics or theory of cognition without also being a *Kantian Non-Conceptualist*.

This in turn implies, as I mentioned above, the philosophically important claims that Kant's non-intellectualism about the human mind goes all the way down into his metaphysics; that it is defensibly arguable that the apparent world fundamentally conforms to human sensibility even if it does not fundamentally conform to the human understanding; and that the basic source of all this is Kant's (initially pre-Critical but later also Critical) theory of space and how we represent it.

Notes

¹ For convenience, throughout this essay I cite Kant's works in parentheses. The citations include both an abbreviation of the English title and the corresponding volume and page numbers in the standard "Akademie" edition of Kant's works: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Königlich Preußischen (now Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: G. Reimer [now de Gruyter], 1902). For references to the first *Critique*, I follow the common practice of giving page numbers from the A (1781) and B (1787) German editions only. Because the Akademie edition contains only the B edition of the first *Critique*, I have also consulted the following German composite edition: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. W. Weischedel, Immanuel Kant Werkausgabe III (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968). For references to Kant's *Reflexionen*, i.e., entries in *Kants handschriftlicher Nachlaß*—which I abbreviate as 'R'—I give the entry number in addition to the Akademie volume and page numbers. The translations from the *Reflexionen* are my own. I generally follow the standard English translations of Kant's works, but have occasionally modified them where appropriate. Here is a list of the relevant abbreviations and English translations:

- CPR* *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997.
- DDS* "Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space", trans. D. Walford and R. Meerbote, in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy: 1755-1770*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992, pp. 365-372.
- ID* "On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World (Inaugural Dissertation)", in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy: 1755-1770*, pp. 373-416.
- OOT* "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?", trans. A. Wood, in A. Wood and G. di Giovanni, *Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996, pp. 7-18.

C *Immanuel Kant: Correspondence*, trans. A. Zweig. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999.

Pro *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. G. Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004.

² Hanna, *Cognition, Content, and the A Priori*, esp. chs. 3 and 6-8.

³ See, e.g., Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,”; Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes*; and McDowell, *Mind and World*.

⁴ See, e.g., Evans, *Varieties of Reference*. In the contemporary debate about Conceptualism vs. Non-Conceptualism, it is now standard to draw a distinction between *state* (or possession-theoretic) Non-Conceptualism and *content* Non-Conceptualism. State Non-Conceptualism says that there are mental states for which the subject of those states fails to possess concepts for the specification of those states. Content Non-Conceptualism, by contrast, says that some mental states have content that is of a different *kind* from that of conceptual content. In turn, *essentialist* content Non-Conceptualism says that the content of such states is of a categorically or essentially different kind from that of conceptual content. For a general survey of Non-Conceptualism, see Bermúdez and Cahen, “Nonconceptual Mental Content.” For the distinction between state and content Non-Conceptualism, see Heck, “Nonconceptual Content and the ‘Space of Reasons.’” And for the distinction between non-essentialist and essentialist content Non-Conceptualism, see Hanna, “Kantian Non-Conceptualism”; Hanna, “Beyond the Myth of the Myth: A Kantian Theory of Non-Conceptual Content”; and Hanna, *Cognition, Content, and the A Priori*, ch. 2.

⁵ See, e.g., J. McDowell, *Mind and World*; and R. Hanna, “Kant and Nonconceptual Content.”

⁶ See, e.g., Wenzel, “Spielen nach Kant die Kategorien schon bei der Wahrnehmung eine Rolle?”; Ginsborg, “Empirical Concepts and the Content of Experience”; Ginsborg, “Was Kant a Nonconceptualist?”; McDowell, “Avoiding the Myth of the Given”; Grüne, *Blinde Anschauung: Die Rolle von Begriffen in Kants Theorie sinnlicher Synthesis*; Bowman, “A Conceptualist Reply to Hanna’s Kantian Non-Conceptualism”; Land, “Kantian Conceptualism”; Bauer, “A Peculiar Intuition: Kant’s Conceptualist Account of Perception”; Griffith, “Perception and the Categories: A Conceptualist Reading of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason”; Williams, “How Conceptually-Guided are Kantian Intuitions?”; McDowell, “The Myth of the Mind as Detached”; Pippin, “What is ‘Conceptual Activity’?”; and Golob, “Kant on Intentionality, Magnitude, and the Unity of Perception.”

⁷ See, e.g., Hanna, “Kantian Non-Conceptualism”; Hanna and Chadha, “Non-Conceptualism and the Problem of Perceptual Self-Knowledge”; Hanna, “Beyond the Myth of the Myth: A Kantian Theory of Non-Conceptual Content”; Laiho, *Perception in Kant’s Model of Experience*; and Tolley, “The Non-Conceptuality of the Content of Intuitions: A New Approach.” Weaker versions of Kantian Non-Conceptualism are defended by, e.g., Allais, “Non-Conceptual Content and the Representation of Space”; McLearn, “Two Kinds of Unity in the Critique of Pure

Reason”; Onof and Schulting, “Space as Form of Intuition and as Formal Intuition: On the Note to B160 in Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason”; and Rohs, “Bezieht sich nach Kant die Anschauung mittelbar auf Gegenstände?”

⁸ See, e.g., McLear, “The Kantian (Non-)Conceptualism Debate.”

⁹ See, e.g., McLear, “Kant on Animal Consciousness.”

¹⁰ For more fully spelled out versions of this argument, see Hanna, “Kantian Non-Conceptualism”; and Hanna, “Beyond the Myth of the Myth: A Kantian Theory of Non-Conceptual Content.”

¹¹ See Hanna, “Kant’s Non-Conceptualism, Rogue Objects, and the Gap in the B Deduction.”

¹² There are also several more exciting but also less obvious examples, all of which have to do with the real possibility of human freedom. See Hanna, “Kant’s Non-Conceptualism, Rogue Objects, and the Gap in the B Deduction”; and Hanna, “Blind Intuitions, Essentially Rogue Objects, and Categorical Anarchy.”

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THE LOGICAL, THE REAL AND THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IN *THE ONLY POSSIBLE ARGUMENT* (1763)

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1. Introduction

An important distinction that Kant makes in the *Transcendental Analytic* of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is the contrast between formal or general logic and transcendental logic:

General logic abstracts [...] from all content of cognition, i.e. from any relation of it to the object, and considers only the logical form in the relation of cognitions to one another, i.e., the form of thinking in general. (*CPR* A55/B79)

The principle of this general logic is the law of non-contradiction. It is also “the supreme principle of all analytic judgements [...] that they do not contradict themselves” (*CPR* A150/B189). This principle is the other side of the principle of identity. For the pre-critical Kant, the first was the principle of negative judgements, and the second was the principle of positive judgements:

Because the form of each affirmation consists of representing something as the feature of a thing, i.e., as the same with the characteristics of a thing, each affirmative judgment is true if the predicate is identical with the subject. And since the form of each negative statement consists of representing something as opposing a thing, then a negative sentence is true, if the predicate contradicts the subject. (*IC Ak* 2:294)¹

But transcendental logic is not abstracted from all content of cognition, it considers on the contrary the relations of the concepts with sensibility, the connection of the form of thought with the real object, in order to discover

the a priori and universal forms of knowledge, thanks to which these objects are known and interpreted. We have to remember the Kantian distinction between thinking and cognising (*Denken und Erkennen*); the logic of mere thinking is formal and without explicit relation to the real, but for the foundation of objective cognition we must resort to transcendental logic:

In order to cognize an object, it is required that I am able to prove its possibility (either from its reality as attested by experience, or a priori, by means of reason). But I can think what I please, provided I do not only contradict myself; that is, provided my concept is a possible thought, although I may be unable to ensure the existence of a corresponding object to it in the sum of possibilities. However, something more is required before I can attribute objective validity to such a concept (real possibility, then the other possibility was merely logical). (*CPR*, B XXVI note)

Kant makes his first important steps towards this fundamental distinction in 1763 and 1764, moving away from his rationalist orientation, when he published three writings in which he established an increasingly clear differentiation between (analytic) logic and real, which would fall outside the logic, since transcendental logic had not yet been discovered by him.

On the one hand, we find the relative position of “is”, the analysis of the predicates of a subject-concept in a statement, the divine intellect, the logical or formal possibility, the logical opposition and logical ground, the form of knowledge, all this ruled by formal principles of thought, the principle of identity and non-contradiction. And on the other hand, in complementary and necessary opposition, we find the absolute positing of “is” or existence, the divine will, real or material possibility, real opposition and the real foundation of causality, the material of cognition, where all of this is based on real or material data.

In 1763 Kant published *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (*Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes*), in which he affirmed that existence is not an analytic concept and it cannot be obtained from the formal analysis of a concept. Furthermore, besides the formal possibility, ruled by the principles of identity and non-contradiction, we must take into account real or material possibility. This material possibility is the first appearance of the transcendental method of thinking.

The second publication was also in 1763 and entitled *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* (*Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*). Here it is stated that formal logical opposition is neither identical to real opposition nor does it have the same result.

And the third publication was *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (the Prize Essay) (*Untersuchungen über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*) in 1764. Against Rationalism, Kant distinguishes mathematical method from philosophical method. The mathematician can build concepts for himself, but the philosopher has to go beyond concepts to data that are given to him, and cannot create a world from logically perfect definitions. To a philosopher of nature, those data will come from external experience, to metaphysics “through a safe internal experience, i.e., in an immediate and momentary consciousness” (*IC Ak 2:286*). Here Kant still does not discriminate transcendental apperception from the inner sense.

I will limit myself here to the first publication, *The Only Possible Argument*.

2. Existence

In *The Only Possible Argument* Kant analyses the concept of existence, in order to determine whether it could establish an absolutely necessary existence, namely the existence of God. Kant formulates here a concept of existence that basically remains fixed up to and into his Critical period, and is included in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, specifically in “The Postulates of Empirical Thought in General,”² and is used to refute the ontological argument for the existence of God.³ The ontological argument intends to infer from the concept of God his existence by means of the analysis of the concept of God, i.e. to find his existence included in that concept itself, which would lead us to affirm his existence as necessary. Otherwise we would fall into contradiction, as if we had asserted a concept and refuted it at the same time, or else the concept of God would be contradictory in itself, and we would not know what it really means.

Against this argument, Kant states that a concept and the predicate of real existence belong to two different orders. The concept of something, with its analytic predicates, or what might be called its logical essence, belongs