

Beyond the Myth of the Myth: A Kantian Theory of Non-Conceptual Content

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Abstract

In this essay I argue that a broadly Kantian strategy for demonstrating and explaining the existence, semantic structure, and psychological function of essentially non-conceptual content can also provide an intelligible and defensible bottom-up theory of the foundations of rationality in minded animals. Otherwise put, if I am correct, then essentially non-conceptual content constitutes the semantic and psychological substructure, or matrix, out of which the categorically normative a priori superstructure of epistemic rationality and practical rationality – Sellars’s “logical space of reasons” – grows.

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Because of its three dimensions, physical space can be thought of as having three planes, which all intersect each other at right angles. Considering the things which exist outside ourselves: it is only in so far as they stand in relation to ourselves that we have any cognition of them by means of the senses at all. It is not therefore surprising that the ultimate ground on the basis of which we form our concept of directions in space, derives from the relation of these intersecting planes to our bodies.

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I. Kant (*DiS* 2: 378–9)¹

Appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity ... Appearances would nonetheless offer objects to our intuition, for intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking.

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I. Kant (*CPR* A90/B123)

Given that the existence of an information-link between subject and object is not by itself sufficient for identification, what makes it possible to have, in the standard cases of demonstrative identification, a mode of identification that is free of the conceptual element we have been considering? The answer is that in the standard cases, not only is there an information-link, but also the subject can, upon the basis of that link alone, *locate the object in space*.

G. Evans²

Perceptual knowledge involves sensibility: that is, a capacity for differential responsiveness to features of the environment, made possible by properly functioning sensory systems. But sensibility does not belong to reason. We share it with non-rational animals. According to Sellars's dictum, the rational faculty that distinguishes us from non-rational animals must also be operative in our being perceptually given things to know. This brings into view a way to fall into the Myth of the Given. Sellars's dictum implies that it is a form of the Myth to think sensibility by itself, without any involvement of capacities that belong to our rationality, can make things available for our cognition. That coincides with a basic doctrine of Kant. . . . The Myth, in the version I have introduced, is the idea that sensibility by itself could make things available for the sort of cognition that draws on the subject's rational powers.

J. McDowell³

Introduction

The thesis of *Non-Conceptualism* about mental content says that not all mental contents in the intentional or representational acts or states of minded animals are strictly determined by their conceptual capacities, and that at least some mental contents are strictly determined by their non-conceptual capacities.⁴ Non-Conceptualism is sometimes, but not always, combined with the further thesis that non-conceptual capacities and contents can be shared by rational human animals, non-rational human minded animals (and in particular, infants), and non-human minded animals alike. But in any case, Non-Conceptualism is directly opposed to the thesis of *Conceptualism* about mental content, which says that all mental contents are strictly determined by minded animals' conceptual capacities.⁵ Conceptualism is also sometimes, but not always, combined with the further thesis that the psychological acts or states of infants and non-human minded animals lack mental content.

Before going on, I should say precisely what I mean by the notions of ‘minded animal’ and ‘strict determination’.

By the notion of a ‘minded animal’, I mean any living organism with inherent capacities for

- (1) *consciousness*, i.e., a capacity for embodied subjective experience,⁶ 5
- (2) *intentionality*, i.e., a capacity for conscious mental representation and mental directedness to objects, events, processes, facts, acts, other minded animals, or the subject herself (so in general, a capacity for mental directedness to *intentional targets*),

and also for 10

- (3) *caring*, a capacity for conscious affect, desiring, and emotion, whether directed to objects, events, processes, facts, acts, other minded animals, or the subject herself.

Over and above consciousness, intentionality, and caring, in some minded animals, there is also a further inherent capacity for 15

- (4) *rationality*, i.e., a capacity for self-conscious thinking according to principles and with responsiveness to reasons, hence poised for justification, whether logical thinking (including inference and theory-construction) or practical thinking (including deliberation and decision-making). 20

And by the notion of ‘strict determination’ I mean *strong supervenience*, characterized as follows:

X strictly determines *Y* if and only if the *Y*-facts strongly supervene on the *X*-facts.

In turn, 25

Y-facts strongly supervene on *X*-facts if and only if *X*-facts necessitate *Y*-facts and there cannot be a change in anything’s *Y*-facts without a corresponding change in its *X*-facts.

In other words, both *the existence* of the *Y*-facts and also *the specific character* of the *Y*-facts are metaphysically controlled by the existence and specific character of the *X*-facts. 30

Now in a nutshell, Non-Conceptualism says that our cognitive access to the targets of our intentionality is neither always nor necessarily mediated by concepts, and furthermore that our cognitive access to the targets of our intentionality is sometimes wholly *unmediated* by concepts; 35

and Conceptualism says that our cognitive access to the targets of our intentionality is always and necessarily mediated by concepts. Here, then, is the fundamental philosophical issue: can we and do we sometimes cognitively encounter things directly and pre-discursively (Non-Conceptualism), or must we always cognitively encounter them only within the framework of discursive rationality (Conceptualism)?

Non-Conceptualism undeservedly suffers from bad press. This is because it is often confused with adherence to what Wilfrid Sellars aptly called 'The Myth of the Given', whereby (what is supposedly) non-conceptual content is just the unstructured causal-sensory 'given' input to the cognitive faculties, passively waiting to be actively carved up by concepts, propositions, and theories in 'the logical space of reasons':

The essential point is that in characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state, we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.⁷

John McDowell has also influentially asserted, most notably in *Mind and World*, but also repeatedly in his follow-up work, that Non-Conceptualism mistakenly buys into the Myth, by virtue of its commitment to 'the idea that sensibility by itself could make things available for the sort of cognition that draws on the subject's rational powers'

Yet this 'sensationalist' conception of non-conceptual content is not really a thesis about *representational* content at all, but rather only a generally discredited thesis about how *phenomenal* content relates to conceptual content. In turn, this generally discredited sensationalist or phenomenalist conception of non-conceptual content has a Strange History. It began in Hegel's misinterpretation of Kant, when Hegel wrongly claims that Kant is a subjective or phenomenal idealist.⁸ Then Hegel's misinterpretation was re-transmitted via late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Oxford neo-Hegelians and neo-Kantians, together with C. I. Lewis at Harvard, who passed it on to Wilfrid Sellars, who studied Kant at both Oxford and at Harvard. C. I. Lewis's influence on Kant studies in particular was directly and widely felt in North America in the second half of the twentieth century via the writings of Lewis White Beck and Sellars. Beck and Sellars were both Lewis's PhD students at Harvard. On the other side of the Atlantic, in 1936, Lewis's *Mind and the World Order* was the first contemporary philosophical text ever to be taught at Oxford, in a seminar run by J. L. Austin and Isaiah Berlin. Not altogether coincidentally, the second chapter of *Mind and the World Order* is entitled 'The Given'.

Sellars in fact attended this Oxford seminar, started a DPhil dissertation on Kant with T. D. Weldon the same year, and later transferred to Harvard. Then Hegel's misinterpretation of Kant was again re-transmitted at the University of Pittsburgh, where Sellars taught and was enormously influential. 5

At Pittsburgh, the plot thickens. Here we find McDowell, the former Oxford philosopher who had been significantly influenced by the work of Gareth Evans and by Oxford neo-Kantianism, including of course Peter Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense*, explicitly rejecting the sensationalist or phenomenalist notion of non-conceptual content in *Mind and World*, where he ties both to Evans's work on demonstrative perception and singular thought in *The Varieties of Reference*, which McDowell himself had edited. And then more recently, McDowell again rejects the sensationist conception of non-conceptual content in *Having the World in View*, where he finds vestiges of it in Sellars's writings. But in point of fact, in my opinion, what is being rejected by McDowell under the rubric of 'non-conceptual content' is nothing more and nothing less than Hegel's misinterpretation of Kant's philosophy of cognition. 10 15

On the contrary, however, as I am understanding it, Non-Conceptualism is a thesis about *representational content*, and *not* about sensory or phenomenal content – even if Non-Conceptualism does indeed have some non-trivial implications for the nature of sensory or phenomenal content. So it is nothing but a philosophical illusion to think that The Myth of the Given actually applies to Non-Conceptualism. This illusion can therefore be aptly dubbed *The Myth of the Myth of the Given*, or 'The Myth of the Myth' for short. 20 25

In order to go beyond The Myth of the Myth, in this essay I want to argue that Non-Conceptualism is in fact a thesis about *the foundations of rationality in minded animals*. Non-Conceptualism, as I will understand it, says that our pre-discursive and essentially embodied encounters with the world, insofar as they are directly referential, and insofar as they are guided and mediated by non-conceptual content, are inherently *proto-rational cognitive* and *practical* encounters, not *non-rational*, *non-cognitive* and *non-practical* encounters with it. More precisely, it is what I call 'essentially non-conceptual content', and essentially non-conceptual content alone, that makes epistemic rationality and practical rationality really possible from the bottom up. Essentially non-conceptual content in this sense expresses *the body's own reasons*, or what in section X I will call *The Grip of the Given*, and not some factor that is somehow alien to or outside of the rationality of rational animals. 30 35 40

In *Rationality and Logic*, I argued that a broadly Kantian theory of the nature of logic provides inherent *top-down* constraints on a theory of rationality in minded animals, including of course human rationality.⁹ Compatibly with and complementary to that account, here what I want 45

to show is how a broadly Kantian strategy for demonstrating and explaining the existence, semantic structure, and psychological function of essentially non-conceptual content can also provide an intelligible and defensible *bottom-up* theory of the foundations of rationality in minded animals. Otherwise put, if I am correct, then essentially non-conceptual content constitutes the semantic and psychological *substructure*, or matrix, out of which the categorically normative a priori *superstructure* of epistemic rationality and practical rationality – Sellars’s ‘logical space of reasons’ – grows.

II. The Varieties of Non-Conceptualism, and Kant

There are two importantly different kinds of Non-Conceptualism.¹⁰ What is nowadays called ‘state’ Non-Conceptualism says that the representational content of a given mental state¹¹ is non-conceptual if and only if the subject of that state does not possess concepts for the specification of that state. So state Non-Conceptualism is based on theories of conceptual possession-conditions. By contrast, ‘content’ Non-Conceptualism says that the content of a given mental state is non-conceptual if and only if the content of that state is of a different *kind* from the conceptual content of any mental act or state. So content Non-Conceptualism is based on theories of the composition, compositional stuff, or formal constitution of mental content, since these seem to be the three basic ways in which contents could differ in kind.

There are, I think, at least two very important reasons for being a defender of *content* Non-Conceptualism.

First, if our original cognitive encounter with the world is independent of concepts, and if it is also based on a different kind of content from conceptual content, then on the face of it, the prospects for a very robust (and indeed, *Disjunctivist*) version of direct or naïve perceptual realism look quite good. This is because, in that case, our original encounter with the world is NOT mediated by concepts, and therefore that encounter cannot fail to be veridical due to any failures of conceptualization, belief, judgement, propositions, or theorizing, given the plausible assumption that belief, judgement, propositions, and theories always and necessarily involve concepts.

Here, very briefly, is a line of reasoning which supports this claim. *Direct or Naïve Realism* about perception, in general, says:

- (1) Rational and other minded animals stand in immediate, unmediated cognitive relations to external real objects that are consciously and correctly perceived by them.

and

- (2) These external real objects *partially constitute* those veridical perceptual acts or states.

Disjunctivism about perception, which is both an intensification and also a specification of direct or naïve perceptual realism, posits a categorical or essential and mutually exclusive difference between veridical perception on the one hand, and non-veridical conscious experiences (e.g. complete or partial hallucinations) on the other hand. *Anti-Disjunctivism* about perception, by an opposing contrast, claims that not only is there no categorical or essential difference between veridical perception and hallucination, but also that there is something inherently *shared in common* between veridical perception and hallucination, such that the two either actually always are, or at least can be, *epistemically indiscriminable*. The actual or possible epistemic indiscriminability of veridical and hallucinatory states, in turn, not only *requires* concepts but also is a *necessary condition* of classical Cartesian skepticism about perceptual knowledge. Hence a non-conceptualist approach to direct or naïve realism and Disjunctivism is especially well-positioned to avoid classical Cartesian skepticism about perceptual knowledge. Indeed, as a direct or naïve realist and also a Disjunctivist, I want to hold the thesis that the categorical or essential difference between veridical perception and hallucination can be both directly attributed to and also adequately explained by the difference between essentially non-conceptual content and conceptual content, together with the perhaps even more surprising thesis that necessarily, veridical conscious experiences and non-veridical conscious experiences are always inherently *discriminable* from one another by suitably attentive conscious subjects under cognitively favorable conditions, although *not always actually discriminated* in context due to perfectly ordinary or perhaps pathological or otherwise unusual lapses in attentive self-awareness by those same human-all-too-human, fallible conscious subjects.¹²

Second, if content Non-Conceptualism is true, and if a Disjunctivist direct or naïve perceptual realism based on content Non-Conceptualism is also true, then I think the prospects for a *bottom-up theory* of the foundations of human rationality look quite good too. According to this bottom-up theory, our conceptual and other intellectual capacities, and the full range of types of mental content – including those specifically associated with sense perception, perceptual knowledge, perception-based intentional action, perceptual self-knowledge, the analytic-synthetic distinction, a priori truth and knowledge in logic, and a priori truth and knowledge in mathematics, and also those capacities and types of mental content specifically associated with practical agency, right action, and practical reasoning

– are all able to be explained in terms of the more basic and more primitive essentially non-conceptual psychological capacities shared with infants and non-human animals, or what I will call collectively *the proto-rational capacities*. Furthermore, this bottom-up explanation entails no deflation, narrowing, or reduction whatsoever in the epistemic scope, modal character, or categorically normative force of human epistemic and practical rationality as classically conceived by, e.g., Kant.

In the recent and contemporary literature on mental content, one can identify at least seven different arguments for Non-Conceptualism.¹³

- (1) *From phenomenological richness*: Our normal human perceptual experience is so replete with phenomenal characters and qualities that we could not possibly possess a conceptual repertoire extensive enough to capture them. Therefore normal human perceptual experience is always to some extent non-conceptual and has non-conceptual content.
- (2) *From perceptual discrimination*: It is possible for normal human cognizers to be capable of perceptual discriminations without also being capable of re-identifying the objects discriminated. But re-identification is a necessary condition of concept-possession. Therefore normal human cognizers are capable of non-conceptual cognitions with non-conceptual content.
- (3) *From infant and non-human animal cognition*: Normal human infants and some non-human animals are capable of perceptual cognition, but lack possession of concepts. Therefore normal human infants and some non-humans are capable of non-conceptual cognition with non-conceptual content.
- (4) *From the distinction between perception (or experience) and judgement (or thought)*: It is possible for normal human cognizers to perceive something without also making a judgement about it. But non-judgemental cognition is non-conceptual. Therefore normal human cognizers are capable of non-conceptual perceptions with non-conceptual content.
- (5) *From the knowing-how vs. knowing-that (or knowing-what) distinction*: It is possible for normal human subjects to know *how* to do something without being able to know *that* one is doing it and also without knowing precisely *what* it is one is doing. But cognition which lacks knowing-that and knowing-what is non-conceptual. Therefore normal human subjects are capable of non-conceptual knowledge-how with non-conceptual content.
- (6) *From the theory of concept-acquisition*: The best overall theory of concept-acquisition includes the thesis that simple concepts are acquired by normal human cognizers on the basis of non-conceptual perceptions of the objects falling under these concepts.

Therefore normal human cognizers are capable of non-conceptual perception with non-conceptual content.

- (7) *From the theory of demonstratives*: The best overall theory of the demonstratives ‘this’ and ‘that’ includes the thesis that demonstrative reference is fixed perceptually, essentially indexically, and therefore non-descriptively by normal human speakers.¹⁴ But essentially indexical, non-descriptive perception is non-conceptual. Therefore normal human speakers are capable of non-conceptual perception with non-conceptual content.

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But in his influential paper, ‘Is There a Problem about Nonconceptual Content?’, Jeff Speaks argues that there is in fact *no* problem about non-conceptual content because

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- (a) Non-Conceptualists have not established that the standard arguments they offer for the existence of non-conceptual content cannot be accommodated by suitably refined versions of *Conceptualism*.

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and

- (b) Non-Conceptualists have not established that perceptual acts or states have representational content whose semantic structure and psychological function are distinct from the semantic structure and psychological function of conceptual content.¹⁵

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I both agree and disagree with Speaks’s challenging claims. On the one hand, and on the side of agreement with his claim (a), I would want to make two even stronger claims, to the effect that:

- (a) It cannot be established that the standard arguments for state Non-Conceptualism cannot be accommodated by suitably refined versions of Conceptualism.

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and

- (b) Most current versions of content Non-Conceptualism also cannot establish that perceptual acts or states have mental or representational content whose structure and function are any more than just accidentally or contingently distinct from the structure and function of conceptual content.

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But on the other hand, I disagree with Speaks that as a consequence there is no problem for Conceptualists about non-conceptual content.

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This is because I believe that there are in fact perceptual acts or states whose mental or representational contents cannot – even in

principle – be conceptual, in the sense that those contents are strictly
 5 determined by our conceptual capacities. These are *essentially non-con-*
ceptual contents. It is crucial to note that I am NOT denying that all
 essentially non-conceptual contents can *in some sense or another* be con-
 ceptually grasped or conceptually specified. After all, here I am now
 10 writing various things about essentially non-conceptual contents, while
 obviously *also* using concepts in order to do this. Instead, I am denying
 only that it is our capacity for conceptual grasping or specification *alone*
 which strictly determines the semantic structure and psychological func-
 tion of essentially non-conceptual contents. Or otherwise put, I am deny-
 15 ing only that the *nature* of essentially non-conceptual mental contents is
 conceptual and also that the existence and specific character of essen-
 tially non-conceptual contents are *strictly determined* by our conceptual
 capacities, but NOT denying that essentially non-conceptual mental con-
 tents can be conceptualized in some *other* non-essential, non-strictly
 20 determining sense. If all this is correct, then at least some perceptual
 mental acts or states in minded animals have mental or representational
 contents whose semantic structure and psychological function are neces-
 sarily distinct from the structure and function of conceptual content, and
 are not strictly determined by the conceptual capacities of those minded
 animals. This is what I call *essentialist content Non-Conceptualism*.

25 Furthermore, I also believe that the special semantic and psychologi-
 cal character of these essentially non-conceptual contentful perceptual
 acts or states entails that *all* mental acts or states in minded animals,
 including of course their perceptual acts or states, contain non-conceptual
 content in this essentially distinct sense – although, to be sure, the
 30 presence of this essentially non-conceptual content does not necessarily
 exhaust the total content of such acts or states. The thesis of the *ubiquity*
 of essentially non-conceptual content is consistent with the thesis that
 essentially non-conceptual content is *combinable* with conceptual con-
 tent. Indeed, I believe that essentially non-conceptual content not only
 35 *can* be combined with conceptual content, but also *must* be so combined
 if perceptual judgements, perceptual knowledge and self-knowledge, ana-
 lytic truths and synthetic truths of all kinds, and a priori knowledge in
 logic and mathematics in particular, and also logical and practical rea-
 40 soning about the perceivable natural world more generally, are to be
 possible. This is the ‘proto-rationality’ of essentially non-conceptual con-
 tent. So if I am correct, then the essentially non-conceptual content of
 an act or state is *underdetermined by* (= is not strictly determined by)
 the conceptual content of that act or state (= the necessary distinctness
 45 of essentially non-conceptual content), and this modal fact about essen-
 tially non-conceptual content is perfectly consistent with the further
 modal fact that in the mental acts and states of rational minded animals,
 essentially non-conceptual content must be presupposed by conceptual

content and also be complementary with conceptual content (= the proto-rationality of essentially non-conceptual content). But in any case the nature of the uncombined or combined essentially non-conceptual content of these perceptual acts or states needs to be explained. 5

The larger argument I am running in this essay also has another important element. Because the explicit arguments I will offer for the existence and specific character of essentially non-conceptual content have a distinctively Kantian provenance, a second implication of my larger argument is that contemporary defenders of content Non-Conceptualism must in effect go 'back to Kant' if they are to respond adequately to Speaks's important challenge, by adopting a Kantian version of essentialist content Non-Conceptualism. Defenders of state Non-Conceptualism, in turn, must either just concede defeat to Conceptualism, or else become defenders of Kantian essentialist content Non-Conceptualism – henceforth, for terminological convenience, 'Kantian Non-Conceptualism'. In other words, I am saying that all rationally acceptable roads within Non-Conceptualism lead ultimately to Kantian Non-Conceptualism. 10 15

If I am correct about this deep historico-philosophical connection between essentialist Non-Conceptualism and Kant's theory of cognition, then it is also a deliciously historically ironic fact, because Kant is almost universally regarded as the founding father of Conceptualism and the nemesis of Non-Conceptualism. York Gunther articulates this view perfectly: 20 25

In his slogan, 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind', Kant sums up the doctrine of conceptualism.¹⁶

Nevertheless, I think that Kant is most accurately regarded as *not only* the founder of Conceptualism but also, and perhaps *even more importantly*, as the founder of Non-Conceptualism, and indeed, as the founder of content Non-Conceptualism and indeed also *essentialist* content Non-Conceptualism alike.¹⁷ 30

In addition to the second epigraph of this essay, here are four other Kant-texts that also more or less strongly confirm these claims: 35

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

That representation which can be given prior to all thinking is called *intuition*. (CPR B132, emphasis in italics added) 40

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

5 Concept differs from intuition by virtue of the fact that all intuition is singular. He who sees his first tree does not know what it is that he sees. (VL Ak 24: 905, emphasis added)

10 In my opinion, what Kant's famous slogan about blind intuitions and empty thoughts actually means is that intuitions and concepts must always be combined together *for the special purpose of making objectively valid judgements*. But *outside* that context it is also perfectly possible for there to be directly referential intuitions without concepts ('blind intuitions', e.g. someone's first cognitive encounter with a tree), and also to have thinkable concepts without intuitions ('empty concepts', e.g. concepts of things-in-themselves). Indeed, it is precisely the fact of blind
15 intuitions, whose semantic structure and psychological function are necessarily distinct from the semantic structure and psychological function of concepts, that drives Kant's need to argue in the first *Critique's* B edition Transcendental Deduction that all and only the objects of actual or possible human experience are necessarily conceptualized or conceptualizable under the pure concepts of the understanding or categories, and necessarily constrained by the transcendental laws of a pure science of nature. Otherwise blind intuitions might pick out *rogue objects* of human experience that are contingently or necessarily unconceptualizable, and nomologically intractable – causal deviants, and rude violaters of the
20 general causal laws of nature.¹⁸ Timothy Williamson calls these rogue objects 'elusive objects', and makes essentially the same critical Kantian point I am making here – i.e., that the scope of the Transcendental Deduction is inherently constrained by the possibility of rogue or elusive objects – although in the context of criticizing McDowell's Conceptualism:
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35 For objects, McDowell's claim that the conceptual is unbounded amounts to the claim that any object can be thought of. Likewise for the sort of thing that can be the case: the claim is, for example, that whenever an object has a property, it can be thought, of the object and the property, that the former has the latter. ... McDowell's argument in any case seems to require the premise that everything (object, property, relation, state of affairs ...) is thinkable. That premise is highly contentious. What reason have we to assume that reality does not contain *elusive objects*, incapable in
40 principle of being individually thought of? ... Although elusive

objects belong to the very same ontological category of objects as those we can single out, their possibility still undermines McDowell's claim that we cannot make "interesting sense" of the idea of something outside the conceptual realm ... We do not know whether there are actually elusive objects. What would motivate the claim that there are none, if not some form of idealism very far from McDowell's intentions? We should adopt no conception of philosophy that on methodological grounds excludes elusive objects.¹⁹

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In this way, Kant's theory of concepts and judgment in the *Transcendental Analytic*, if correct, provides foundations for Conceptualism. But equally and oppositely, Kant's theory of intuition in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, if correct, provides foundations for Kantian Non-Conceptualism, and also inherently constrains what Kant argues in the *Transcendental Analytic*.

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I will not re-argue those historical claims here. What I want to show is how a Kantian strategy for demonstrating and explaining the existence, semantic structure, and psychological function of essentially non-conceptual content can also provide an intelligible and defensible bottom-up theory of rationality in minded animals, including human rationality.

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III. A Dialectical Critique of the Contemporary Debate about Non-Conceptual Content

Now I want to take a closer look at the dialectical structure of the contemporary debate about non-conceptual content, and critically consider some different types of Non-Conceptualism.

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Most, or least a great many, contemporary Non-Conceptualists define the thesis of Non-Conceptualism in the following way:

The central idea behind the theory of nonconceptual mental content is that some mental states can represent the world even though the bearer of those states need not possess the concepts required to specify their content.²⁰

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This is a paradigmatic statement of *state* Non-Conceptualism. Corresponding to state Non-Conceptualism, Conceptualism then says that no mental acts or states can represent the world unless the bearers of those acts or states – which are sometimes, but not always, taken by Conceptualists to be rational and/or human cognizers exclusively (e.g. McDowell,

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following Donald Davidson and Sellars, takes this view) – possess the concepts required to specify their content.

5 One salient issue in this connection that I will flag for later and more careful discussion is the question of precisely what is meant by the notion of *possessing a concept*. But as a preliminary proposal, it seems to me that there are at least three necessary and partially constitutive factors in concept-possession:

- 10 (1) being able *to deploy and use* a concept (e.g., with respect to the concept *horse*, the ability to recognise a horse when you perceive it, and being able to distinguish horses from other sorts of things),
- 15 (2) being able *to be self-consciously aware of at least some of the intrinsic descriptive or intensional elements* of the concept (e.g. with respect to the concept *horse*, the ability to know that the concept *animal* is necessarily contained in that concept), and, following on directly from (2),
- 20 (3) being able *to make analytically necessary and a priori logical inferences* that pick out at least some of the intrinsic descriptive or intensional elements of the concept (e.g. with respect to the concept *horse*, the ability to infer in an analytically necessary and a priori way that if *X* is a horse, then *X* is an animal).

It is obvious that, e.g., normal human toddlers and other young children are able to recognise a horse when they perceive it and distinguish it from other sorts of things – say, effectively telling horses apart from inanimate objects, people, and many other animals, although they may be a little shaky on the difference between horses and Big Dogs, camels, or cows – even though they are incapable of becoming self-consciously aware of the descriptive or intensional elements of the concept *horse* and carrying out analytic a priori inferences involving *horse*. So it then follows directly from this preliminary account, that it is possible to have the ability to deploy and use a concept *without* also having possession of that concept. In other words, concept-possession requires more and richer abilities than the basic, minimal set of abilities required for concept-deployment and concept-use *alone*.

25 The argument against Conceptualism most favoured by contemporary state Non-Conceptualists is The Fineness of Grain Argument, or The FoGA for short:²¹

- 40 (1) Perceptual content is so replete with content (say, color-content or shape-content) that there cannot possibly be enough concepts in our existing conceptual repertoire to capture all the different sorts.

- (2) But we nevertheless frequently make effective finegrained discriminations between the different sorts of perceptual content, even in the absence of possessing concepts for those sorts of content. 5
- (3) Conceptualism is committed to the thesis that for every genuine discriminable difference in perceptual content, we must possess concepts that pick out the relevantly different kinds. 10
- (4) Therefore Conceptualism is false, and state Non-Conceptualism is true. 10

Conceptualists, led by McDowell, have replied to The FoGA by using what is now called The Demonstrative Strategy, or The DS.²² The DS directly addresses step (2) and says that for every case of effective finegrained discrimination in which corresponding concepts are apparently lacking, it is possible to construct a demonstrative concept of the form 'THIS SHADE', 'THAT SHAPE', etc., that correctly picks out the relevant determinates under some determinable concept already possessed by the cognizer. If so, then step (2) is false and The FoGA is unsound. In reply to that reply, state Non-Conceptualists have argued as follows: 15 20

- (1) The possession of demonstrative concepts, in addition to satisfying both of what Gareth Evans called 'Russell's Principle' (i.e. there is no singular thought about an object without the subject's possession of an identifying conception of it)²³ and 'The Generality Constraint' (i.e. there is no singular thought about an object without the subject's possession of the conceptual resources sufficient for entertaining many different possible thoughts about the same object),²⁴ also requires the ability to re-identify instances of those concepts. 25 30
- (2) But we frequently make finegrained demonstrative perceptual discriminations between different sorts of perceptual content without any further ability to re-identify them. 30
- (3) Therefore The Demonstrative Strategy fails, Conceptualism is false, and state Non-Conceptualism is true.²⁵ 35

But in criticism of that counter-reply, it has been recently argued by Philippe Chuard that demonstrative concepts can be applied in fine-grained demonstrative perceptual discriminations without any further ability to re-identify instances of those concepts.²⁶ So according to Chuard, concept-possession does not itself require the ability for re-identification. If this is correct, then The DS remains sound, the non-conceptualists are back at square one, and Great Confusion results. 40

In light of that greatly confusing and equally disappointing result, I want to suggest the following critical diagnosis. I think that it is a big mistake to define Non-Conceptualism in terms of failures of concept-possession, however we define ‘concept-possession’, and therefore a correspondingly big mistake to defend state Non-Conceptualism. Instead, Non-Conceptualism should be defined as the thesis that there exist perceptual mental contents, had by human and non-human animal cognizers alike, whose semantic structure and psychological function are distinct from the structure and function of conceptual content – or equivalently, that there exist what Speaks has aptly dubbed ‘absolutely non-conceptual’ contents:

A mental state *has absolutely nonconceptual content* iff that mental state has a different kind of content than do beliefs, thoughts, etc.²⁷

This is a paradigm statement of *content* Non-Conceptualism.

It is extremely important to note, however, that there are at least three logically distinct versions of content Non-Conceptualism. Generally speaking, and prima facie, it seems clear that content Non-Conceptualism could variously be based on theories of

- (i) the *composition*, or construction, of mental content,
- (ii) the *compositional matter*, or stuff, of mental content,

or

- (i) the *formal constitution*, or structure, of mental content.

In this way, then, according to one content Non-Conceptualist theory of the composition or construction of mental content, the non-conceptual content of a mental act or state must fail some basic compositionality principle for propositional contents, such as Evans’s Generality Constraint.²⁸ By contrast, according to a second content Non-Conceptualist theory of the compositional matter or stuff of mental content, the non-conceptual content of a mental act or state must contain only rough-grained non-Fregean propositional contents (i.e. objects, properties, and relations).²⁹ And by another contrast, according to a third content Non-Conceptualist theory of the formal constitution or structure of mental content, the non-conceptual content of a mental act or state must be formally constituted by egocentrically-centered intrinsic spatiotemporal structure³⁰ – or to use Jenann Ismael’s apt term, content is inherently *situated*.³¹

What I want to argue in the rest of this essay is, first, that only the third version of content Non-Conceptualism has all the decisive dialectical virtues, and thereby satisfies all the basic requirements, of essentialist content Non-Conceptualism, which as we will remember, says this –

At least some perceptual acts or states have mental or representational content whose semantic structure and psychological function are necessarily distinct from the structure and function of conceptual content, and the content of such perceptual acts or states is essentially non-conceptual content.

– and, second, that this third version of content Non-Conceptualism is distinctively Kantian in its provenance. But before I can do that, I want to show that neither the composition-based version nor the compositional matter-based version of content Non-Conceptualism is in fact capable of showing that Conceptualism is false.

First, consider the composition-based version of content Non-Conceptualism defended by Richard Heck, which says that mental content is non-conceptual if (and, presumably, also only if) it fails Evans’s Generality Constraint. Now The Generality Constraint, as I mentioned in passing earlier, says that there can be no singular thought about an object without the subject’s possession of the conceptual resources sufficient for entertaining many different possible thoughts about the same object. Or in other words, The Generality Constraint is saying that in order to be sufficient for singular thought about an object, a mental content must be composed according to a rule for the construction of singular categorical – i.e. singular subject/monadic predicate – propositions, such as ‘*Kant is a bachelor*’. So Heck’s version of content Non-Conceptualism is saying that a mental content is non-conceptual if (and, presumably, also only if) it is not (or need not) be composed according to a rule for the construction of singular categorical propositions.

But suppose that a given mental content fails The Generality Constraint precisely because it is not (and thus, obviously, also need not be) composed according to a rule for the construction of singular categorical propositions. Nevertheless that mental content could still be fully conceptual. Let us rationally imagine, e.g., a mental state whose content is the concept *BACHELOR*, and nothing else. Given the difference I isolated above between the ability for concept-use or concept-deployment on the one hand, and the ability for concept-possession on the other, we can now also rationally imagine that the subject of this mental state satisfies conditions (ii) and (iii) on concept-possession, but not condition (i) i.e., the deployment and use condition. In other words, the subject of this state is the contrapositive of the normal human toddler who has abilities

for concept-use and concept-deployment, but lacks abilities for concept-analysis and analytic inference. On the contrary, she has abilities for concept-analysis and analytic inference, but lacks abilities for use and deployment. So she has, as it were, lost her concept-deploying and concept-using ‘inner child’. She is the Miss Havisham of the conceptualizing world. Miss Havisham is of course a famous character in *Great Expectations*, and the entry for ‘Havisham, Miss’ in *The Dickens Index* says:

[W]eird elderly recluse, the daughter of a wealthy brewer, who, having been betrayed by Compeyson who had pretended to love her but jilted her on their wedding morning, seeks to arrest time at the very moment she learned of his desertion.³²

So let us call our Havisham-like cognizer *The Oddly Detached Conceptualizer*, or The ODC for short.

In any case, assuming that BACHELOR is a determinate concept of the determinable concept UNMARRIED, then UNMARRIED is ‘intensionally contained’ with respect to BACHELOR, both

(a) in the sense that the concept UNMARRIED is contained *within* the intensional microstructure of the complex concept BACHELOR,

and also

(b) in the sense that the cross-possible-worlds extension of the concept BACHELOR is set-theoretically contained *under* the cross-possible-worlds extension of the concept UNMARRIED,

and correspondingly this two-part intensional containment relationship fully supports an a priori analytic inference from BACHELOR to UNMARRIED. But even if one does not favor the broadly Kantian notion of intensional containment I have just quickly sketched,³³ it nevertheless remains the case, as Stephen Yablo has pointed out, that the property UNMARRIEDNESS logically strongly supervenes on the property BACHELORHOOD, since determinable properties always logically strongly supervene on their determinate properties, and again this fully supports an analytic a priori inference from the concept BACHELOR to the concept UNMARRIED.³⁴ So, clearly, BACHELOR can be the conceptual content of a mental state of some possible analytic reasoner *R*.

But there is no reason whatsoever to think that the content of *R*’s mental state must also satisfy The Generality Constraint. For suppose that *R* is The ODC and therefore she is nowadays simply *incapable* of

recognising singular thoughts or singular categorical propositions, precisely because, although she is perfectly capable of seeing analytic conceptual connections and making analytic a priori inferences, for whatever reasons – reasons which can be wholly contingent, and either just the result of evolutionarily random distributions of cognitive abilities and talents, or even the result of some unfortunate agnosia, cognitive pathology, or emotional trauma of a Miss Havisham-ish sort – she now lacks a cognitive capacity for recognising direct singular reference via concept-use and deployment. In addition to having lost her conceptualizing ‘inner child’, what she has, in effect, is (perhaps merely hysterical) *direct reference blindness*. The ODC can rationally see pure conceptual generality, including being able rationally to see conceptual specificity down to any lower degree of conceptual determination; but at the same time she is also rationally blind to all concrete individuality and particularity, even if she is appropriately pre-reflectively sensitive to them (for how else could she ever survive in this world?). Otherwise put, for whatever reasons, The ODC is now exclusively an a priori conceptual reasoner – and she may even be *oddly proud of it*, as it were, in the dual sense that she could reflectively come to know that she has ‘direct reference blindness’ and also freely come to accept herself being this way, although of course with a certain deep underlying bitterness too.

The Oddly Detached Conceptualizer and her cognitive (and emotional) situation seem entirely rationally imaginable and therefore really possible. Therefore, even if the content of a given mental act or state fails The Generality Constraint, it can still be thoroughly conceptual, in the dual sense that

(i) it is fully accessible to higher-level conceptual abilities

and

(ii) its content is at the very least *inherently conceptlike*.

Hence failing The Generality Constraint is not a sufficient condition of non-conceptual content.

Second, consider the compositional stuff-based version of content Non-Conceptualism defended by Michael Tye, which asserts the existence of what Tye calls ‘robustly non-conceptual content’. According to Tye,

(1) a contentful nonconceptual state is a contentful state the tokening of which does not involve the exercise of concepts,
and

- (2) experiences [with non-conceptual content] are nonconceptual states having coarse-grained contents (*robustly* nonconceptual contents, as I shall call them).³⁵

In other words, the robustly non-conceptual content of a perceptual state is the content of a *Russellian* proposition, and not the content of a *Fregean* proposition. Or in still other words, the robustly non-conceptual contents of a perceptual state are just the worldly objects, properties, and relations represented by that state.

Given Tye's formulation (1), it is possible that he is still a *state* non-conceptualist. But assuming for the moment that Tye is in fact a *content* non-conceptualist, whose sufficient reason for thinking that there are 'contentful state[s] the tokening of which [do] not involve the exercise of concepts' is that such states contain a different *kind* of content than conceptual states do, then the obvious problem with Tye's conception of robustly non-conceptual content is that although the elements of this content are not specified by concepts in the actual perceptual states in which they occur, there is no in-principle reason why they could not be conceptually specified in states *other* than those actual perceptual states. In other words, robustly non-conceptual content is at most accidentally or contingently non-conceptual, and not essentially non-conceptual. Now Tye frankly admits as much in a very revealing footnote in the middle of a critical discussion of The FoGA and The DS:

I want to stress that the above discussion of demonstratives does *not* undercut the view that fineness of grain in visual experiences can be presented conceptually in *demonstrative judgments or thoughts* made on the basis of experience. What I have argued is that the *visual experiences themselves* do not represent details *via* demonstrative concepts.³⁶

But this gives the game away for the compositional stuff-based version of content Non-Conceptualism. For Tye has thereby explicitly admitted that his robustly non-conceptual content could still be conceptually presented. This means that any robustly non-conceptual content could also be a proper part of the content of a whole mental act or state that also contain a set of corresponding Fregean senses for specifying just those Russellian contents. Here we need only posit a mental state containing a set of what McDowell (following Evans) has called '*de re* senses',³⁷ which have the special semantic feature that they descriptively and rigidly pick out Russellian contents, but without also uniquely determining them in the modally super-powered Leibnizian sense of providing their complete individual concepts. So robustly non-conceptual content is

ultimately just more grist for the conceptualist's mill, in that a given content could be robustly non-conceptual and also Fregean or sense-theoretic, and also satisfy The Generality Constraint, and therefore also be conceptual.

But perhaps I am being uncharitable to Tye. Perhaps Tye actually is a defender of *state* Non-Conceptualism, who also just happens to have a view about the nature of non-conceptual content. If that is so, then of course my criticism does not directly apply to him, but instead only to *another* content-conceptualist, call him 'Tye*' or whatever, who does indeed defend a compositional stuff-based version of content Non-Conceptualism. 5 10

Nevertheless, even charitably granting that Tye himself is a state non-conceptualist, and so not a target of the worry now directed at Tye*, the state non-conceptualist *Tye's* view will *still* fall under a general worry I have about state Non-Conceptualism, which I will articulate shortly. 15

In any case, what the essentialist content Non-Conceptualist is saying, by sharp contrast to both the composition-based and compositional stuff-based versions of content Non-Conceptualism, is that there are mental contents that *cannot* be conceptually presented because they are *inherently* non-conceptual in formal constitution or structure. Contents that fail The Generality Constraint, or contents that are rough-grained or Russellian, or even both of them together, just will not do. It has to be *impossible* to give an adequately individuating conceptual specification of an essentially non-conceptual content. Again, as I mentioned above, it is crucial to note that I am not denying that all essentially non-conceptual contents can in *some sense or another* be conceptually grasped or conceptually specified. Instead I am denying only that it is our capacity for their conceptual grasping or specification *alone* which strictly determines the semantic structure and psychological function of essentially non-conceptual contents. That is, I am denying only that the *nature* of essentially non-conceptual mental contents is conceptual and also that the existence and specific character of essentially non-conceptual contents are *strictly determined* by our conceptual capacities, NOT denying that essentially non-conceptual mental contents can be conceptualized in some *other* non-essential, non-strictly determining sense. 20 25 30 35

Now Speaks also very usefully distinguishes between absolutely non-conceptual content and 'relatively non-conceptual content':

A mental state of an agent A (at time t) has *relatively nonconceptual content* iff the content of that mind includes contents not grasped (possessed) by A at t.³⁸ 40

In other words, mental content that is relatively non-conceptual differs from conceptual content only in that an agent does not at that time meet the conceptual grasping-conditions or possession-conditions for that content. So relatively non-conceptual content satisfies the conditions for state Non-Conceptualism. But the crucial point is that relatively non-conceptual mental content *might still be conceptual content in a merely or at least partially ungrasped or unpossessed form*. And this is equally true of both the composition-based version of content Non-Conceptualism defended by Heck and also the compositional stuff-based version of content Non-Conceptualism defended by Tye*, even if not by Tye himself.

Learning from Heck's and Tye*'s shared error, we can now see that it was a big mistake for Non-Conceptualists to have deployed The Fineness of Grain Argument or FoGA against Conceptualism. This is because The FoGA mistakenly sidetracks the debate into a discussion about perceptual experiences involving failures of concept-possession, which not only deflects attention away from the real issue about non-conceptual content – the existence or non-existence of essentially non-conceptual content – towards state Non-Conceptualism, but also is a discussion that the suitably sophisticated Conceptualist can always win, just by pointing out that a mental *state* that involves a failure of concept-possession might still have *content* that is conceptual, and by strategically weakening and re-formulating the possession-based version of the Conceptualist thesis, roughly as follows:

No mental states can represent the world without *some possible* (i.e., not necessarily any contemporary or conspecific actual) cognizer's *dispositional* (i.e., not necessarily manifest or occurrent) possession of the concepts required to *minimally* (i.e., not necessarily fully) specify their content.

I will call this two-part strategically weakened and re-formulated version of conceptualism, *Highly Refined Conceptualism*. Highly Refined Conceptualism entails, e.g., that even if it can be shown that some human or non-human cognizers do actually achieve demonstrative perceptual reference to some objects without actually possessing or even being capable of possessing a sortal term for the identification of those objects,³⁹ then Conceptualism is still not undermined. For according to Highly Refined Conceptualism, the content of that perceptual state could still be conceptual, precisely because

- (a) The failure of conceptual possession-conditions for a given state does not in itself entail that the content of this mental state is not conceptual. 5

and

- (b) The truth of Conceptualism requires only that some possible non-contemporary or non-conspecific cognizer dispositionally possess the concepts needed minimally to specify the content of that mental state, which is a condition that is extremely easy to satisfy. 10

Indeed, in recent work McDowell has implicitly adopted a version of Highly Refined Conceptualism, by explicitly dropping his earlier stronger thesis that the content of rational human perception is always articulately and self-consciously propositional, and by asserting that the content of perception is 'intuitional' in Kant's sense.⁴⁰ 15

Given the possibility of Highly Refined Conceptualism, and given McDowell's recent move in this direction, I do think that both state Non-Conceptualism and also the composition-based and the compositional stuff-based versions of content Non-Conceptualism are ultimately *hopeless*. This general worry, e.g., applies to Tye as much as it applies to Tye*. So, and now generalizing over all versions of state Non-Conceptualism together with both the composition-based and compositional stuff-based versions of content Non-Conceptualism, I think that instead of arguing *either* for the existence of mental representation without concept-possession *or* for the existence of mental content that is only contingently or non-inherently non-conceptual, Non-conceptualists should *on the contrary* argue directly against The Demonstrative Strategy and against Conceptualism – whether unrefined Conceptualism or Highly Refined Conceptualism – by developing an intelligible and defensible theory of essentially non-conceptual content. So that is what I am going to try to do. 20 25 30

IV. The Nature of Concepts

My dialectical critique of the contemporary debate about non-conceptual content is not quite finished yet, however. Another even more troubling, and for some strange reason often unnoticed, feature of the debate is the lack of any generally-accepted theory of the nature of concepts.⁴¹ 35
But how can we critically evaluate the claim that *non*-conceptual content exists, and, if we are to be essentialist content Non-Conceptualists, that it has such-and-such a necessarily distinct semantic structure and

5 psychological function from that of concepts, if we do not actually know what *concepts* are?

10 In order to face up to that problem, I am going to make a positive, working proposal about the nature of concepts. Mental content in general, as I briefly spelled it out in section I, is the cognitive or practical information that is contained in a mental representation – a.k.a. an intentional act or state – insofar as that representation is an intersubjectively shareable type that is also tokened in and directly cognitive accessible to individual minded animals on particular occasions and in particular contexts. According to my proposal about the nature of concepts, then, *X* is a concept – or what is the same thing, *X* is a conceptual content – if and only if *X* is a mental content such that

- 15 (1) *X* is either a *material* concept or a *formal* concept (**the conceptual dualism condition**),
- (2) *X* is a material concept if and only if
- 20 (2a) *X* provides for the definite or indefinite categorization, classification, discrimination, identification, and cognitively significant presentation of some actual or possible individual things, or unordered or ordered *n*-tuples of individual things (which allows for monadic concepts like BACHELOR and also for relational concepts like TALLER THAN), and *X* is thereby inherently *descriptive* of those individual things, which in turn ‘fall under’ *X* (**the first-order descriptivity condition**),
- 25 (2b) *X* is such that a conscious cognizer need not necessarily be directly acquainted with or confronted by whatever is represented by *X* right then and there in order to understand *X*, provided that those things, as represented by *X*, have already been encountered, and that the memory of that earlier acquaintance is cognitively accessible (**the non-acquaintance condition**),
- 30 (2c) *X* fully supports the truth of some analytic propositions that are necessarily true in virtue of intensional containment (**the containment analyticity condition**),
- 35 and
- (2d) the self-conscious cognition of *X* fully supports some sufficiently justified analytically necessarily true beliefs, i.e., a priori analytic knowledge (**the analytic a priori knowledge condition**),
- 40 (3) *X* is a formal concept if and only if
- (3a) *X* provides for the definite or indefinite categorization, classification, discrimination, identification, and cognitively significant presentation of some material concepts, and *X* is thereby inherently descriptive of those material concepts, which in turn are inherently descriptive of the individual things that fall under them (**the higher-order descriptivity condition**)
- 45

- (3b) X is such that a conscious cognizer need not necessarily be directly acquainted with or confronted by whatever individual things, or unordered or ordered n -tuples of individual things, that fall under any of the material concepts to which X applies (**the higher-order non-acquaintance condition**), 5
- (3c) X partially or wholly provides for the logical consequence relation, logical constants, logical laws and/or logical inference rules of classical truth-functional logic, or classical first-order predicate logic plus identity (a.k.a. ‘elementary logic’), or some conservative or deviant extension of elementary logic (**the logical notions condition**), 10
- (3d) X fully supports the truth of analytic propositions that are necessarily true in virtue of logic, i.e., logical truths (**the logical truth condition**), and 15
- (3e) the self-conscious cognition of X supports some sufficiently justified analytically necessarily true logical beliefs, i.e. a priori logical knowledge (**the logical a priori knowledge condition**), 20
- (4) X is intersubjectively cognitively shareable and communicable by means of some or another natural language L , precisely because X is a linguistically- and logically-structured mental representation type that can be variously tokened in the minds of competent, rational speakers of L when they correctly use expressions (and more specifically, n -place predicative expressions like ‘__ is a bachelor’ and ‘__ is married to –’, sentential modifiers like negation, and sentential connectives like conjunction) of L that have X as their *linguistic meaning*, by virtue of the innate a priori cognitive capacities that all competent, rational speakers of L possess for generating linguistic and logical understanding (**the linguistic cognitivism condition**),⁴² 25 30
- (5) X is possessible, which entails that
- (5a) X is deployable and usable, which is to say that X makes it possible for cognitive subjects to recognise X -type things when they perceive them, and also to distinguish X -type things from other types of things, 35
- (5b) it is possible for higher-level rational cognitive subjects to be self-consciously aware of at least some of the intrinsic descriptive or intensional elements of X , and 40
- (5c) it is possible for higher-level rational cognitive subjects to make analytically necessary and a priori logical inferences that pick out at least some of the intrinsic descriptive or intensional elements of X , but also

- 5 (5d) it is possible for (5a) to be satisfied by *some* cognitive subjects (e.g. normal human toddlers and other young children) without their also satisfying either (5b) or (5c), and it is possible for (5b) and (5c) to be satisfied by *other* cognitive subjects (e.g. The Oddly Detached Cognizer) without their also satisfying (5a), and in all such cases there is no real possibility of concept-possession, and conceptual contents in the strict sense, although *inherently concept-like contents* are still present in the mental acts or states of those cognitive subjects (**the concept-possession conditions**),
 10 and
- 15 (6) if *X* is a material concept, then some actual or possible rational animal cognizer
- (6a) uses *X* to detect some essential or accidental in rebus manifest properties and relations of actual macroscopic material objects, which are also their mereological structures⁴³ (**the world-detection condition**),
 20 and also
- (6b) accurately mirrors and records this information in the intensional microstructure of the content of *X* when the rational animal cognizer cognitively generates it (**the world-mirroring condition**),
 25 nevertheless
- (6c) this is not to say that no concepts pick out either ante rem properties/relations or uninstantiated manifest properties/relations. Indeed and precisely on the contrary, all the formal concepts pick out ante rem properties or relations; and every consistent set of material concepts picks out a manifest property or relation, whether or not it is actually instantiated. The fact remains, however, that every material concept picks out at least one in rebus manifest property or relation. So all conceptual content is firmly anchored in the actual manifest natural world (**the world-anchoring condition**).

35 Just to give this six-part theory of concepts a convenient label, and also because it directly reflects the theory of ‘Logical Cognitivism’ that I defended in *Rationality and Logic*, I will call it *The Logical Cognitivist Theory of Concepts*, or The LCTC for short.

40 There are three things that follow directly from The LCTC, and most certainly worth noticing right away.

45 **First**, it follows from specifically from the four conditions on being a material concept – i.e., conditions (2a) through (2d) – together with **the world-detection condition, the world-mirroring condition, and the world-anchoring condition**, that one of the specific semantic roles of an analytic truth is to express essential connections between various manifest properties/relations and structural proper parts of macroscopic material things, via essential connections between the corresponding material

concepts/conceptual networks and structural proper parts of material concepts that intensionally mirror and record precisely those manifest essential connections in the world. In turn and by contrast, one of the specific semantic roles of a synthetic a posteriori truth – and, in particular, one of the specific semantic roles of an ordinary singular categorical perceptual judgment – is to express the contingency that is inherent in the brute facts ‘given’ by things in the world.⁴⁴ But in any case, this general point about material concepts and manifest properties/relations needs to be specially re-emphasized:

There is a one-to-one correlation between material concepts and manifest properties/relations. The only basic differences between material concepts and manifest properties/relations are

- (a) that all material concepts, as mental representation types, are either tokened in some actual rational animal mind or else tokenable in some possible rational animal mind, but when a material concept is tokened in an actual rational animal mind, it is not necessarily the case – indeed, it is normally not the case – that the corresponding manifest property/relation is also instantiated in that mind,

and

- (b) that when a manifest property/relation is instantiated in the world, it is not necessarily the case – indeed, it is very often not the case – that its corresponding material concept is also tokened in an actual rational animal mind.

Second, it follows specifically from condition (4) – **the linguistic cognitivism condition** – that it must be possible to convey the content of a concept linguistically to someone else who is not actually directly acquainted with or confronted with the individual things or things represented by that conceptual content right then and there, provided that she has already been acquainted with them and that her memory of that earlier acquaintance is cognitively accessible. For example, it must be possible to convey that conceptual content linguistically to someone else over the telephone, in the actual then-and-there absence of the individual things or things represented by that concept, provided that she has already been acquainted with them and that her memory of that earlier acquaintance is cognitively accessible (and also provided, of course, that she is sufficiently capable of hearing, and that the other obvious *ceteris paribus* conditions are all met).⁴⁵

Third, in view of the conjunction of **the linguistic cognitivism condition** and **the concept-possession conditions**, it must be strongly emphasized that The LCTC does *not* entail that there *cannot* be non-linguistic concepts in any sense. On the contrary, it seems to me very plausible to hold that there are *non-linguistic inherently concept-like contents* in the following fourfold sense:

- (1) Many normal pre-linguistic human children – e.g. many young children between six months and one year of age, and in the pre-toddler stage, and also many *non-human* minded animals – can effectively deploy and use inherently concept-like contents as object-categorizing, object-classifying, object-discriminating, and object-identifying devices for the purposes of cognition and intentional action – e.g., in the case of pre-linguistic children, effectively recognising their primary care-givers and telling them apart from other things and people – even if they cannot possess these inherently concept-like contents.
- (2) These inherently concept-like contents can also be effectively deployed and used in the absence of the objects represented by them – e.g., in the case of pre-linguistic children, insofar as they demand the constant presence of their primary care givers, food, warmth, etc.
- (3) These inherently concept-like contents are intersubjectively shareable by other human minded animals and non-human minded animals alike.

and also

- (4) These inherently concept-like contents are present in their mental lives causally, phenomenologically, and semantically, but *not* by means of linguistic vehicles.

So according to The LCTC, there are indeed some non-linguistic inherently concept-like contents, in that the conscious, intentional, caring acts or states of some pre-linguistic humans or non-human minded animals do actually contain psychologically real inherently concept-like contents, as tokens of their corresponding mental representations types, which are effectively deployed and used by those animals in cognition and intentional action. But those inherently concept-like contents simply *lack linguistic vehicles*, and thus those inherently concept-like informational items really cannot be *possessed* by those creatures, even according to the weakest theory of concept-possession, Highly Refined Conceptualism.⁴⁶

The possibility of non-linguistic inherently concept-like contents obviously does not in any way rule out the possibility of the sort of relatively weak but still quite substantive necessary connection between concepts and language⁴⁷ that The LCTC provides. The LCTC entails – again via its condition (4), **the linguistic cognitivism condition** – that no concept is such that it cannot be conveyed by means of some possible natural language to someone else who is not actually directly acquainted with or confronted by the individual thing or things represented by that concept right then and there, provided that she has already been acquainted with them and that her memory of that earlier acquaintance is cognitively accessible. 5 10

Every concept is thereby possessible by some higher-level rational animal or another, including of course higher-level rational *human* animals. Thus the possible natural linguistic expressibility of every concept suffices to guarantee the inherently intersubjective and non-solipsistic character of concepts in the strict sense as well as of all concept-like contents, even for pre-linguistic humans and non-human minded animals, whose (inherently) concept(-like)-deployment and (inherently) concept (-like)-use simply lacks linguistic vehicles, and thereby prevents their possessing those concept-like contents, even though they do effectively 15 20 deploy and use them in cognition and intentional action. But the (inherently) concept(-like)-deploying and (inherently) concept(-like)-using animals who simply lack linguistic vehicles, lack them only *contingently*, not necessarily. Obviously, many or even most normal, healthy pre-linguistic children actually grow up to become linguistic 25 animals. And not only that. According to The LCTC, and as against the later Wittgenstein, counterfactually, if a lion *could* talk, then we *would* be able to understand him. Think, e.g., of the leonine Lord Aslan in C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Therefore in these actual and counterfactual senses, all pre-linguistic human 30 proto-conceptualizers and non-human minded animal proto-conceptualizers are also *proto-linguistic* creatures. Or to borrow another Wittgensteinian metaphor and also twist it a little, pre-linguistic human proto-conceptualizers and non-human minded animal proto-conceptualizers do not live in the center of The City of Language – but they *do* all 35 live in the suburbs.

In any case, the leading theoretical virtue of the LCTC is that it permits me to map the contrast between essentially non-conceptual content and conceptual content directly onto the classical contrast between 40

- (a) *knowledge by acquaintance*, or immediate subjective experience of the world, other minded animals, and oneself,

and

- 5 (b) *knowledge by description*, or logico-linguistically mediated thought about the world, other minded animals, and oneself.

Two more things about *this* classical distinction should be noted, however, before I get to the crucial point.

10 **First**, knowledge by description or conceptual cognition in my sense – specifically expressed in The LCTC by conditions (2a) and (3a), **the first-order descriptivity condition** and **the higher-order descriptivity condition** – basically captures everything that Frege means by cognition of things via a ‘mode of presentation’ (*Art des Gegebenseins*) or ‘sense’ (*Sinn*), and also *much more*. Frege held that modes or presentations or senses account for differences in cognitive significance across co-referential expressions; that they uniquely determine (purely attributive or descriptive) reference; and that they help to explain why there are failures of intersubstitutivity *salva veritate* in opaque contexts.⁴⁸ Knowledge by description or conceptual cognition in my sense plays these three roles by satisfying the two descriptivity conditions. Nevertheless it satisfies not *merely* those conditions, but also clearly satisfies **the conceptual dualism condition, the non-acquaintance condition, the analyticity condition, the logical-notions condition, the logical truth condition, the a priori knowledge condition, and the linguistic cognitivism condition**. And it is not at all clear whether Frege’s notion of a mode-of-presentation or sense, in and of itself or without theoretical supplementation, satisfies *any* of the latter seven conditions.

25 **Second**, although it is true that, in this way, I do generally support Russell’s classical distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description – which in turn, for Russell, was originally an updated version of Kant’s intuition (*Anschauung*) vs. *concept* (*Begriff*) distinction, whereby the Brentano-Meinong notion of a *presentation* was used to extend Kant’s notion of intuition beyond perceptual contexts to cognitive acquaintance with universals, logical constants, and other platonically abstract objects⁴⁹ – nevertheless, I also want to jettison most of early Russell’s epistemology. Contrary to Russell, I hold that the primary objects of cognitive acquaintance are just individual macroscopic material beings in the local or extended natural environment of the rational human animals and other kinds of conscious animals who sense-perceive them, and NOT sense data, universals, logical constants, or other platonically abstract objects. And again contrary to Russell, I hold that cognitive acquaintance is always, necessarily, and paradigmatically also a matter of *knowing how to move one’s own living organismic body in response to the causal-dynamic powers of macroscopic external material beings in the natural environment*. So ‘knowing *X*’ is always, necessarily, and paradigmatically also ‘knowing how to move my body in

response to X , where ' X ' ranges over the local and distal natural world of causally efficacious macroscopic external material beings. Indeed, as I argue elsewhere,⁵⁰ our dynamic, essentially embodied, pre-reflectively conscious perceptual acquaintance with causally efficacious individual macroscopic material beings in our local or extended natural environment, when originally and inherently guided and mediated by essentially non-conceptual content, satisfies all the requirements of a very powerful version of perceptual direct realism, which I call 'Radically Naïve Realism'. 5 10

But in any case, the crucial point right now is that I am proposing to identify conceptual contents, whether material concepts or formal concepts, with inherently descriptive representations, one of whose functions it must be logico-linguistically to categorize, classify, discriminate, identify, and provide cognitively significant presentations of individual macroscopic material beings, or unordered or ordered n -tuples of such things, or else to categorize, classify, discriminate, identify, and provide cognitively significant presentations of other (first-order, material) concepts that apply to those things, without our having to be actually cognitively acquainted with or cognitively actually directly confronted by those things right then and there in order to understand those concepts, provided that those things, as represented by those concepts, have already been encountered, and that the memory of that earlier acquaintance is cognitively accessible. Otherwise put, knowledge by description is always either 'knowing X as F ' (i.e. conceptual descriptive knowledge) or 'knowing *that* X is F ' (i.e. propositional descriptive knowledge), without having actually to encounter an F -typed X right then and there, provided that an F -typed X has already been encountered, and that the memory of that earlier acquaintance is cognitively accessible. In this way, knowledge by description expresses an inherently context-insensitive, *allocentric or non-egocentric* (whether third-personal or wholly impersonal), shareable, communicable content. 15 20 25

By sharp contrast, knowledge by acquaintance expresses an inherently context-sensitive, *egocentric or first-person-perspectival*, intrinsically spatiotemporally structured content that is not ineffable, but instead shareable or communicable only to the extent that another ego or first-person is in a cognitive position to be actually directly perceptually confronted by the selfsame individual macroscopic material being in a spacetime possessing the same basic orientable and thermodynamically irreversible structure. By 'orientable spacetime', I mean a global spacetime with intrinsic directions: up, down, right, left, top, bottom, over, under, inside, outside, backwards, forwards, and so on. And by 'thermodynamic irreversibility', I mean time's asymmetric forward arrow in the actual causally efficacious natural world 35 40 45

So given The LCTC, the very idea of a conceptual content entails the possibility of mental-representation-*without-actual-direct-confrontation* –

5 and if this is not always the possibility of a Nagel-like ‘view from *nowhere*’,
 then at least it is the possibility of either a ‘view from *later*’ or ‘a view from
 10 *somewhere else*’. By contrast, the very idea of essentially non-conceptual
 content entails mental-representation-*with-actual-direct-confrontation*,
 embedded in an egocentrically-centered orientable and thermodynamically
 15 irreversible spacetime. Hence essentially non-conceptual content is
 mental representation that necessarily involves a view of *that* actual macro-
 20 scopic material being right over *there*, from right *here* and right *now*, as
 directed towards *my/our future*.

V. A Working Analysis of the Essentially Non-Conceptual Content of Perception

15 In light of The LCTC, here is my Kantian Non-Conceptualist working
 analysis of essentially non-conceptual content. According to this analysis,
X is an essentially non-conceptual content of perception if and only if *X*
 is a mental content such that:

(i) *X* is *not* a conceptual content, as defined by The LCTC.

20 (ii) *X* is included in a mental state or act that directly refers to some
 or another actual individual macroscopic material being *B* in the
 local or distal natural environment of the minded animal subject
 of *X* – and it is also really possible that the minded animal subject
 25 of *X* = *B* – and thereby both uniquely (if not always perfectly
 accurately⁵¹) locates *B* in 3D Euclidean orientable space and also
 uniquely (if not always perfectly accurately) tracks *B*’s thermody-
 30 namically irreversible causal activities in time, in order to guide
 the subject’s conscious intentional desire-driven body movements
 for the purposes of cognitive and practical intentional agency.

30 and

(iii) *X* is an inherently context-sensitive, egocentric or first-person-per-
 35 spective, spatiotemporally structured content that is not ineffable,
 but instead shareable or communicable only to the extent that
 another minded animal ego or first-person is in a cognitive posi-
 tion to be actually directly perceptually confronted by the same
 actual individual macroscopic material being *B* in a spacetime
 possessing the same basic 3D Euclidean orientable and thermody-
 40 namically irreversible structure.

Against the backdrop of that working analysis, here is an initial argu-
 40 ment for the existence of essentially non-conceptual content that I call –
 pun fully intended – *The Handwaving Argument*:

The Handwaving Argument

- (1) Suppose that I am standing right in front of you and saying ‘All bachelors are males, and all males are animals, so it is analytic that all bachelors are animals, right?’ By hypothesis, you are concentrating on what I am saying, and clearly understand it. 5
- (2) Suppose also that as I am I saying ‘All bachelors are males’, my arms are held out straight towards you and I am also moving my right hand, rotated at the wrist, in a clockwise circular motion seen clearly from your point of view, which is also a counterclockwise circular motion seen clearly from my point of view. 10
- (3) Suppose also that as I am saying, ‘... and all males are animals’, I begin moving my left hand, again rotated at the wrist, in a counterclockwise circular motion seen clearly from your point of view, which is also a clockwise circular motion seen clearly from my point of view. 15
- (4) Suppose also that as I am saying, ‘... so it is analytic that all bachelors are animals, right?’ I am moving both hands simultaneously in front of you in the ways specified in (2) and (3). 20
- (5) Your conceptual capacities are being used by you to concentrate on what I am saying about bachelors, males, and animals, and to understand it clearly, which by hypothesis you do.
- (6) Insofar as you are using those conceptual capacities to concentrate on and to understand clearly what I am saying, you are *not* using your conceptual capacities to see clearly what I am doing with my hands. 25
- (7) Yet you *also* see clearly what I am doing with my hands. Your conscious attention is *divided* into linguistic understanding and lucid vision, but by hypothesis your conceptual capacities for linguistic understanding are not *distracted*. 30
- (8) Therefore you are using your *non-conceptual* capacities to see clearly what I am doing with my hands.
- (9) The kind of mental content that guides and mediates the use of non-conceptual capacities is *essentially* non-conceptual content. 35
- (10) Therefore essentially non-conceptual content exists.

The Handwaving Argument is directly inspired by Kant’s famous (or notorious) ‘argument from incongruent counterparts’ for the truth of the thesis of *the transcendental ideality of space and time*. I will explicitly work out this Kantian connection in the next section, along with a more carefully formulated and defended version of the argument for the existence of essentially non-conceptual content, including both 40

5 (a) *material*, empirical, or a posteriori essentially non-conceptual content,

and also

(b) *formal*, non-empirical, or a priori essentially non-conceptual content.

VI. Incongruent Counterparts Revisited: The Two Hands Argument

10 As I just mentioned, the argument presented in this section for the
existence of essentially non-conceptual content – which I will call *The*
Two Hands Argument, or The THA for short – is closely historically
related to a famous argument used by Kant in both his pre-Critical
and Critical periods, known as ‘the argument from incongruent counterparts’.⁵² He defines the notion of incongruent counterparts as follows:

20 *I shall call a body which is exactly equal and similar to another, but which cannot be enclosed in the same limits as the other, its **incongruent counterpart**. Now, in order to demonstrate the possibility of such a thing, let a body be taken consisting, not of two halves which are symmetrically arranged relatively to a single intersecting plane, but rather, say, a **human hand**. From all the points on its surface let perpendicular lines be extended to a plane surface set up opposite to it; and let these lines be extended the same distance behind the plane surface, as the points on the surface of the hand are in front of it; the ends of the lines, thus extended, constitute, when connected together, the surface of a corporeal form. That form is the incongruent counterpart of the first. *In other words, if the hand in question is a right hand, then its counterpart is a left hand. The reflection of an object in a mirror rests upon exactly the same principles. For the object always appears as far behind the mirror as it is in front of it. Hence, the image of a right hand in the mirror is always a left hand.* If the object itself consists of two incongruent counterparts, as the human body does if it is
25 divided by means of a vertical intersection running from front to back, then its image is congruent with that object. That this is the case can easily be recognised if one imagines the body making half a rotation; for the counterpart of the counterpart of an object is necessarily congruent with that object. (DiS 2: 382, emphasis in italics added).*

30
35
40

More briefly put, incongruent counterparts are perceivable mirror-reflected spatial duplicates that share all the same monadic or qualitative properties, have exactly the same shape and size, and correspond point-for-point, but are in different places and cannot be made to coincide by rigid translation within the same global orientable space (as I mentioned above, an orientable space is a space with intrinsic directions). Even more briefly put, incongruent counterparts are *enantiomorphs*. Enantiomorphs are qualitatively identical but topologically non-identical. On Kant's view, the non-identity of incongruent counterparts, or enantiomorphs, is non-logically or synthetically necessary and a priori.

By contrast, *homomorphs* are pairs of perceivable objects that share all the same monadic or qualitative properties, have exactly the same shape and size, and correspond point-for-point, but are in different places and *can* be made to coincide by rigid translation within the surrounding space. So they are both qualitatively and topologically *identical*. Although Kant was not in a position to know this, homomorphism for mirror-reflected objects is in fact logically possible if the local Euclidean space in which the paired objects are embedded, like that of the Möbius Strip or Klein Bottle, is also *non-orientable* or without intrinsic directions. Roughly speaking, letting your fingers do the walking, you send out your right hand for a long walk along the surface of the Möbius Strip, and it comes back as your left hand. Curiouser and curiouser!

But I think that this logical possibility is no objection to Kant's thesis. This is because, for Kant, it is a necessary condition of a proposition's being synthetically necessary that its denial be logically consistent and thus that its falsity be logically possible.⁵³ Thus his thesis is not that enantiomorphism can be correctly represented (or, equivalently, that mirror-reflected counterparts are incongruent, or topologically non-identical) in all logically possible spaces. For, as we have just seen, there are some logically possible spaces in which mirror-reflected counterparts are congruent. Instead, Kant's thesis is that enantiomorphism can be correctly represented in all and only humanly perceivable globally or locally Euclidean *orientable* spaces, and furthermore that if a single hand were to exist alone in any possible world framed by such a space, then necessarily it would be either a left hand or a right hand.⁵⁴

Kantian arguments from the existence or possibility of incongruent counterparts are all based on the fact of our primitive subjective experience, as minded animals, of enantiomorphic topological features of the natural perceivable world and our own living organismic bodies.⁵⁵ As I will show later, however, it is also arguable that there are

- (a) precise *temporal* analogues of incongruent counterparts in our primitive subjective experience of *spacetime events* in the natural perceivable world,

and also

- 5 (b) primitive subjective experience of *complex thermodynamic processes* occurring either inside or outside our own living bodies.

Interestingly, Kant uses the argument from incongruent counterparts in four different ways.

10 **First**, he uses it in his pre-Critical period to disprove the relational theory of space – which says that space is nothing but a set of extrinsic relations that are supervenient on pre-existing things (e.g. Leibnizian monads) and their intrinsic non-relational properties – and to establish the existence of absolute Newtonian space as a total unified space to which material bodies extended in space are intrinsically related, and also to demonstrate that the actual space of perceivable material bodies is intrinsically directional (i.e. orientable) and egocentrically-centered.⁵⁶

20 **Second**, he uses it at the very beginning of his Critical Period to prove that the representation of space is essentially intuitional and not conceptual.⁵⁷

Third, he uses it in the middle of his Critical period to prove that space and time are transcendently ideal.⁵⁸

25 And **fourth** and finally, he also uses it in his post-Critical period to establish the thesis that all rational thinking requires an intuition-based ‘orientation’ in order to be adequately grounded.⁵⁹

Kant’s fourfold use of the argument from incongruent counterparts is not only interesting: it is also philosophically important. One conclusion we can draw from it is that since his pre-Critical version of the argument entails Newtonian *realism* about space, while his Critical version of the argument entails transcendental *idealism* about space, these two arguments cancel out, and show us that the Kantian argument from incongruent counterparts is in fact *neutral* with respect to realism and idealism about space.⁶⁰ This is the clue I shall follow up directly in The THA. So while The THA has a distinctively Kantian provenance, I think that it is also defensible on grounds that are altogether logically independent of the much-controverted questions of precisely what Kant’s transcendental idealism is, and whether it is objectively true or objectively false. Here, then, is The THA.

40 *The Two Hands Argument*

- (1) Incongruent counterparts are logically and metaphysically possible. (Premise, supported by Kant’s theory of incongruent counterparts and human geometrical intuition.)

- (2) Incongruent counterparts, by definition, are enantiomorphs. This entails that they are perceivable mirror-reflected monadic-property-for-monadic-property spatial duplicates that have exactly the same shape and size, and correspond point-for-point. In short, incongruent counterparts are *qualitatively identical*. (From (1).) 5
- (3) So by definition, there is no *descriptive* difference between incongruent counterparts. (From (2).) 10
- (4) Either of my hands and its corresponding mirror-image are actual examples of incongruent counterparts, and my own actual right and left hands are approximate incongruent counterparts. (Premise, supported by Kant's theory of incongruent counterparts and human geometrical intuition.) 15
- (5) Therefore there is no descriptive difference between either one of my hands and its incongruent counterpart. (From (3) and (4).)
- (6) Therefore there is no conceptual difference between either one of my hands and its incongruent counterpart. In particular, the exact and real difference⁶¹ between either one of my hands and its incongruent counterpart could never be conveyed to someone else who was not actually directly confronted with these objects. (From (5) and the LCTC.) 20
- (7) But I can directly perceive the exact and real difference between either of my hands and its incongruent counterpart, and can also directly perceive the exact and real difference between my right and left hands. (Premise, supported by Kant's theory of incongruent counterparts and phenomenological introspection.) 25
- (8) Therefore essentially non-conceptual content exists. (From (6), (7), and my working analysis of essentially non-conceptual content.) 30

The essentially non-conceptual content whose existence I have demonstrated in The THA is *material*, empirical, or a posteriori. This is because the existence and specific character of that content are necessarily determined by the total set of actual contingent macroscopic material sensory objects (including, of course, living body-parts), events, processes, and facts (including mental events, processes, and facts) in the world. Otherwise put, the nature of this particular essentially non-conceptual content is strongly supervenient on the total set of actual contingent macroscopic material sensory objects (including living body parts) and actual contingent events, processes, and facts (including mental events, processes, and facts) in the world. So now generalizing over any mental content whatsoever: 35

A mental content *C* is material, empirical, or a posteriori if and only if the existence and specific character of *C* are strongly 45

supervenient on the total set of actual contingent macroscopic material sensory objects (including living body parts) and actual contingent events, processes, and facts (including experiential mental events, processes, and facts) in the world.

5 Contrastively, if there were to be essentially non-conceptual content that is *formal*, non-empirical, or a priori, then its nature would have to be such that fixing the total set of actual contingent macroscopic material sensory objects (including living body parts) and actual contingent events, processes, and facts (including experiential mental events, processes, and facts) in the world did *not* thereby necessarily fix its existence or specific character. Or again generalizing over any mental content:

10
15 A mental content *C* is formal, non-empirical, or a priori if and only if the existence and specific character of *C* are not strongly supervenient on the total relevant set of actual contingent macroscopic material sensory objects (including living body parts) and actual contingent events, processes, and facts (including experiential mental events, processes, and facts) in the world.

20 It is particularly to be noted that since the supervenience base for aposteriority already *includes* fundamental biological properties and fundamental mental properties, both of which I regard as fully non-reducible and causally efficacious kinds of properties, then it follows that the strong supervenience relation which constitutes aposteriority is not a *reductive* supervenience. Supervenience is reductive only if

- 25 (a) the modal strength of the strong supervenience relation is *logical*,
(b) the supervenience base is *essentially and exclusively one kind of* lower-level properties or facts,

and

- (c) the lower-level kind of properties or facts is *causally closed* with respect to the higher-level properties and facts.⁶²

30 But in fact none of those necessary conditions is satisfied by the strong supervenience that characterizes aposteriority. Hence aposteriority is an asymmetric strict determination relation *without* reduction.

35 Here is an important follow-up point about the relationship between apriority, aposteriority, and strong supervenience. Sometimes it is claimed that since necessary truths hold in every logically possible world, *then they logically strongly supervene on everything*, including of course

human experience. So since – at least for Kantians – necessity and the a priori are necessarily equivalent, then the a priori *also* logically strongly supervenes on everything, including human experience. This, in turn, would directly entail that the a priori is in fact a posteriori by my criterion of aposteriority. But that claim is instructively wrong, for three reasons. 5

First, according to my view of the synthetic a priori, synthetic necessities hold in all and only the logically possible worlds that have the same spacetime structure, the same causal-dynamic structure, and the same mathematical structure as the actual world. So synthetic necessities do *not* hold in *every* logically possible world. Therefore *synthetic* necessity does not logically strongly supervene on everything, and thus not *all* necessity logically strongly supervenes on everything. 10

Second, even if the *existence* of necessary truths logically strongly supervened on everything, it would not follow that their *specific character* logically strongly supervenes too. For although all logically necessary truths are necessarily equivalent, their structural senses are different in virtue of their inherently different logical forms. For example, ‘ $P \rightarrow P$ ’ does not have the same *structural sense* as ‘ $P \vee \sim P$ ’ because its logical form is inherently different. It is in virtue of *transformation rules* that we are able to move from one logical truth having a certain structural sense, to another logical truth having a distinct although necessarily equivalent structural sense. So their structural senses can vary independently of their being logically necessarily true, and this intensional fact is made manifest by the application of transformation rules. In turn, therefore, their structural senses do not logically strongly supervene on whatever it is that their existence logically supervenes on, under the supposition that their existence logically strongly supervenes on everything. And that is true in every logically possible world: logically necessary truths with inherently different logical forms are all intensionally non-equivalent. So their specific character does not logically strongly supervene on *anything*. 20 25 30

Third and finally, according to my view of the nature of possibility, a possible world is just *a maximal consistent set of different conceivable ways the actual world could have been*. So if a logically necessary truth logically strongly supervenes on everything, then it also logically strongly supervenes on the actual world. But if the thesis of Logical Cognitivism for which I argued in *Rationality and Logic* is correct, then logic is strictly dependent on rational animals and their nature. But neither consciousness nor rationality nor desire-based willing logically strongly supervenes on the actual manifest natural world as regards *their* specific characters: rationality, consciousness, and desire-based willing are all *spontaneous*. And this is also true in every possible world. Rationality, consciousness, and desire-based willing can spontaneously vary their 35 40 45

specific characters no matter what the rest of the world is like. So a logical truth does not logically strongly supervene on experience as regards its specific character, or indeed on anything else.

5 Granting these definitions of materiality/empiricality/aposteriority and formality/non-empiricality/apriority with respect to mental content, I now want to extend the original THA to an argument for the existence of formal, non-empirical, or a priori essentially non-conceptual content. In order to do this, I will simply pick up from where the original THA left off.

10 *The Extended THA*

(9) Now consider the *rightness* of my right hand and the *leftness* of my left hand, as represented by essentially non-conceptual content, and conceive that any other actual contingent macroscopic or sense-perceivable material object (including any living body part), as individuated by its qualitative properties, were uniformly substituted for either one of my hands, and also that any other contingent experiential mental event, process, or fact were substituted for my experience of my hands. (Premise.)

15
20 (10) The essentially non-conceptual representation of that object's rightness or leftness, and the non-reducible difference between it and its incongruent counterpart, would not be in any way affected by any of those conceivable uniform substitutions. (From (8), (9), and conceivability according to The LCTC.)

25 (11) Therefore the essentially non-conceptual representation of rightness or leftness is non-empirical, pure, or a priori. (From (10) and the definition of formality/non-empiricality/apriority with respect to any mental content.)

30 (12) Therefore formal, non-empirical, or a priori essentially non-conceptual content exists. (From (1) – (11))

Before going on, I need to respond to an obvious objection to The THA. This objection is based on The Demonstrative Strategy, or DS (which, as we saw above, has been commonly deployed by Conceptualists against The Fineness of Grain Argument or FoGA), and says that even if The THA is sound, it is nevertheless possible to form the demonstrative concepts *this right hand* and *this left hand*, and then use those concepts to tell my two hands apart from one another. Hence, so the objection goes, the cognition of incongruent counterparts can *still* be conceptual. This would play directly into the hands of a sophisticated defender of Highly Refined Conceptualism, or HRC, e.g., the recent McDowell.

The objection trades on an important confusion that is built into the very idea of a ‘demonstrative concept’. As Sean Kelly has correctly pointed out, ‘the demonstrative concept is something of a chimera: it has the head of a singular term but the body of a general concept’.⁶³ Indeed, as I would elaborate, reformulate, and strengthen Kelly’s very good point, I think that we can easily see that the so-called ‘demonstrative concept’ *this F* is nothing more and nothing less than a 3-part hybrid demonstrative content consisting of

- (a) the material essentially non-conceptual content *this*, which is the semantic content of the essential indexical ‘this’,⁶⁴ 10
- (b) the formal essentially non-conceptual content *whatever is over here now in the place indicated by the speaker*, which is inherently associated with the speaker’s ability to indicate, and which is roughly equivalent with what David Kaplan calls the ‘indexical character’ of ‘this’ and John Perry calls its ‘semantic role’,⁶⁵ 15
and
- (c) the material concept *F*, which is roughly equivalent with the Fregean sense of the predicate ‘x is an F’. Now a 3-part hybrid demonstrative content consisting of a material essentially non-conceptual content, a formal essentially non-conceptual content (roughly equivalent with a Kaplanian character), and a material concept (roughly equivalent with a Fregean sense), is *both* essentially 25
essentially indexical and *also* conceptual, in the same way that a griffin has *both* an eagle’s head and *also* a lion’s body. But a griffin is not a special kind of lion: it is a sui generis zoological and biological composite. Hence it does not follow that a griffin is a special kind of lion, just because it includes a lion part. So too a hybrid demonstrative content is a sui generis semantic and psychological composite. Correspondingly then, it does not follow that a 3-part hybrid demonstrative content is a special kind of concept, just because it includes a conceptual part. Therefore it is fundamentally misleading to call *this F* a ‘demonstrative concept’, just as it would be fundamentally misleading to call a griffin an ‘eagle-headed lion’. Hence any attempt to apply The DS to my analysis of essentially non-conceptual content and to The THA in order to bring them under the big tent of HRC must fail. For it simply has not been shown by proponents of The DS and HRC that demonstrative contents *are* concepts, and merely calling them ‘demonstrative concepts’ will obviously not suffice to do it either. For the same reasons, it is also fundamentally misleading to call the demonstrative content *this right hand* a 40

5 'demonstrative concept'. In fact, the content *this right hand* is nothing more and nothing less than a 5-part hybrid demonstrative content consisting of:

- 10 (1) the material essentially non-conceptual content this, which is the semantic content of the essential indexical 'this',
- (2) the formal essentially non-conceptual content whatever is over here now in the place indicated by the speaker, which is inherently associated with the speaker's ability to indicate, and roughly equivalent with the Kaplanian indexical character or Perryan semantic role of 'this',
- 15 (3) the material essentially non-conceptual content right, which is the semantic content of the essential indexical 'right',
- (4) the formal essentially non-conceptual content *whatever is on this side of me*, which is inherently associated with the speaker's ability to orient herself in space, and roughly equivalent with the Kaplanian indexical character or Perryan semantic role of 'right', and
- 20 (5) the material concept HAND, which is roughly equivalent with the Fregean sense of the predicate 'x is a hand'.

25 Obviously it does not follow that a 5-part hybrid demonstrative content, most of which is systematically built up out of essentially non-conceptual contents, is a special kind of conceptual content just because it has a conceptual part. Therefore The DS-based and HRC-driven objection to The THA fails, regardless of its applicability to The FoGA. (Now try to say *that* out loud three times in a row.)

30 One last remark in this particular connection. It should especially be noted that the very same basic points apply to *first-person singular thoughts* based on the essentially indexical term 'I', e.g., the semantic content of the statement:

35 I am a Canadian.

According to my account, here we have a statement whose semantic content is a hybrid singular proposition consisting of

- 40 (1) the material essentially non-conceptual content *I*, which is the semantic content of the essential indexical 'I',
- (2) the formal essentially non-conceptual content *whoever is here now and using this token of 'I'*, which is inherently associated with the speaker's ability to uniquely locate, track, and guide her own intentional body movements in space and time, and which is roughly equivalent to the Kaplanian indexical character or Perryan semantic role of 'I',⁶⁶

- (3) the material concept *Canadian*, which is roughly equivalent to the Fregean sense of the predicate ‘x is a Canadian’,
and 5
- (4) the formal concept *Singular Predication*, which combines the semantic content of a singular statement’s (or singular proposition’s) subject-term with the semantic content of that statement’s (proposition’s) predicate-term in accordance with Evans’s Generality Constraint, as well as with other basic logico-semantic constraints such as well-formedness, sortal correctness, non-contradiction, etc., and yields a truth-value as output. 10

In another paper, I look more closely at the specific cognitive function of the mental contents associated with (1) and (2) in relation to the important phenomenon of *perceptual self-knowledge*.⁶⁷ 15

VII. More Reasons for Accepting Both The LCTC and Kantian Non-Conceptualism

The THA, both in its original version also and in its extended version, obviously depend on The LCTC. And to be sure, there are many contemporary theories of concepts and many contemporary theories of content that would reject The LCTC. 20

For example, by an *Empiricist* theory of concepts I mean any theory that rejects the possibility of formal, non-empirical, or a priori concepts.⁶⁸ More precisely put, the basic claim of any Empiricist theory of concepts is that the existence and specific character of *every concept whatsoever* is strongly supervenient on the total set of actual contingent macroscopic material sensory objects (including living body parts) and actual contingent events, processes, and facts (including experiential mental events, processes, and facts) in the world, and therefore that every concept whatsoever is material, empirical, or a posteriori. Obviously, the contemporary Empiricist theory of concepts follows on from the older traditions of classical Empiricism (in which experiential mental events, processes, and facts would be irreducible facts), Logical Empiricism (in which experiential mental events, processes, and facts would be identical with behavioral events and facts, or logically supervenient on them), or Rylean/Sellarsian Empiricism (in which experiential mental events, processes, and facts would be strictly determined by facts about language-use and linguistic practices). Contemporary Empiricism about concepts might differ from these older forms of concept-Empiricism by asserting that mental events, processes, and facts are reducible to fundamental physical events, processes, and facts (e.g. Prinz’s concept Empiricism), or that facts about concepts are all facts about their non- 30 35 40

5 reducible normative inferential roles (e.g. Brandom's concept-Empiricism), but the general concept-Empiricist thesis of the strict determination of all concepts by contingent actual empirical objects and events/processes/facts would remain fully in place.

10 By a *Fregean* theory of concepts I mean any theory that narrowly identifies concepts with either *roughgrained intensions* (i.e. Frege's 'concepts') or *finegrained intensions* (i.e., Frege's 'modes-of-presentation' or 'senses') alone, whether these intensions are taken to be modally one-dimensional or modally two-dimensional.⁶⁹

15 By a *Possession-Theoretic* theory of concepts I mean any theory that identifies concepts with capacities for having propositional attitudes or other epistemic capacities.⁷⁰

By a *Quinean* theory of concepts I mean any theory of concepts that explicitly rejects the analytic-synthetic distinction.⁷¹

20 By a *Reductive Physicalist* theory of concepts I mean any theory of concepts that ontologically or explanatorily reduces concepts to physical properties and facts (whether fundamental, functional, or biological).⁷²

25 By an *Amorphous* theory of mental content I mean any theory that assigns no definite underlying semantic structure to mental content.⁷³

30 And finally by a *Vacuous* theory of conceptual content I mean any theory that straightaway identifies all mental content – including all perceptual content, propositional content, thought-content, and belief-content – with conceptual content, by more or less explicitly arguing in the following way:

- (1) All mental content must be normative and rule-governed.
- (2) Only conceptual representations can be normative and rule-governed.
- (3) Therefore all mental content must be conceptual, and nothing will
35 ever count as real mental content unless it is conceptual.⁷⁴

I do not mean to imply that Empiricist theories of concepts, Fregean theories of concepts, Possession-Theoretic theories of concepts, Quinean theories of concepts, Reductive Physicalist theories of concepts,

Amorphous theories of mental content, and Vacuous theories of conceptual content are mutually exclusive – in fact, on the contrary, it is quite obvious that they can overlap in various ways. For instance, some Empiricist theories are also Quinean theories and Reductive Physicalist theories (e.g. Prinz’s concept-Empiricism). My point is just that all these theories of concepts would entail the rejection of The LCTC. And that is quite a lot of philosophical enemies to have. So what can I say on The LCTC’s behalf in critical response? I can say at least three things. 5 10

First, I do think, and I do argue elsewhere, that Reductive Physicalism about mental content and knowledge is false.⁷⁵ If this is correct, then it follows automatically that all Reductive Physicalist theories of *concepts* are false too. So that would put them out of contention from the get-go. 15

Second, as regards the Empiricist, Fregean, Possession-Theoretic, and Quinean theories of concepts, I have a different kind of response. This is in the form of a collective explanatory challenge: Either you do a *better* job of accounting for all the psychological, semantic, epistemological, linguistic, and logical data that The LCTC accounts for, or else you must accept The LCTC by ‘inference-to-the-best-explanation’, or IBE for short. This explanatory challenge from IBE, at the very least, gives me some theoretical breathing space, since in effect it is a rational license to postulate The LCTC in order to develop and defend Kantian Non-Conceptualism more fully. By the end of that larger argument, I predict, it should be sufficiently clear that theories of concepts which 20 25

- (a) reject the existence of formal, non-empirical, or a priori concepts and assert that all concepts are material, empirical, or a posteriori, 30

which

- (b) narrowly identify concepts with roughgrained or finegrained Fregean intensions alone,

which 35

- (c) identify concepts with capacities for having propositional attitudes or other epistemic capacities,

or which

- (d) reject the analytic-synthetic distinction,

5 are all more or less seriously explanatorily impoverished, and that only
 The LCTC adequately captures all our basic philosophical intuitions
 about the roles of essentially non-conceptual content and concepts alike
 in mental content, cognition, and knowledge. Elsewhere I develop that
 10 larger argument by specifically applying Kantian Non-Conceptualism to
 sense perception and perceptual knowledge, perceptual self-knowledge,
 the analytic-synthetic distinction, and a priori truth and knowledge in
 mathematics.⁷⁶

Third, as regards Amorphous theories of content and Vacuous theories
 of conceptual content, I have a more overtly dialectical response to them,
 15 on behalf of The LCTC and Kantian Non-Conceptualism taken together
 as a coherent pair. It seems to me obvious that *if* either Amorphous theo-
 ries of content or Vacuous theories of conceptual content are true, then
 they *pre-emptively* make a genuine debate between essentialist content
 Non-Nonconceptualism and Conceptualism impossible, just by ruling out of
 20 court any way of marking an intrinsic or essential difference between non-
 conceptual content and conceptual content. In other words, they rule out
 essentialist content Non-Conceptualism from the get-go. For if, by a priori
 fiat, no kind of mental content can ever be intrinsically structurally distin-
 guished from any other kind, or if, again by a priori fiat, only conceptual
 25 content will ever count as real mental content, then obviously essentialist
 content Non-Conceptualism is false. But that is like winning a race by hav-
 ing your most challenging opponent disqualified by friends on the Rules
 Committee. So it seems to me only rationally fair that essentialist content
 Non-Conceptualism be at least allowed to compete. And if essentialist
 30 content Non-Conceptualism is allowed to compete, then so is The LCTC,
 since the former requires the latter. Therefore for the purposes of the rest
 of my argument in this essay, I am going to assume

(a) that it is at least an open question whether Amorphous theories
 of content and Vacuous theories of conceptual content are true,

35 and also

(b) that Kantian Non-Conceptualism and The LCTC, when taken
 together, constitute at least a coherent pair of admissible candi-
 dates for jointly explicating the nature of mental content.

40 **VIII. Some Implications of The THA, and The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem**

This brings me back now directly to The THA, and its implications for
 the theory of essentially non-conceptual content. According to the

original THA, the content of perceptual acts or states that pick out a perceivable natural object – such as a human hand – which has an actual or possible incongruent counterpart, is essentially non-conceptual. But it is clearly and distinctly conceivable according to The LCTC, and therefore logically possible, that any perceivable natural object, and also any external part of anyone’s living body, has an actual or possible incongruent counterpart. Here we need only imagine the natural object or living body-part placed in front of a mirror in order to recognise this possibility. This also inherently carries with it the possibility of ‘massive reduplication’,⁷⁷ such that necessarily, for any perceivable natural object and any finite set of such objects embedded in any actual local space in our orientable spatial world, a mirror reflection of that object or set of objects and the surrounding local space in which they are embedded is always possible. So the cognitive need for essentially non-conceptual content is ubiquitous in our world, in order for us to be able to discriminate between things and their actual or possible incongruent counterparts. 5 10 15

The main point I am making here is of course NOT that actual or possible incongruent counterparts are likely to be popping up all over the place, or even popping up just often enough to become a practical nuisance. The main point I am making here is that conceptual content is inherently incapable of doing the topologically-sensitive representational job of either adequately accounting for direct singular reference or successfully mediating and guiding the perceptual cognitions and basic intentional acts of minded animals through orientable spaces, precisely because conceptual content necessarily underdetermines the essentially non-conceptual content that actually performs these representational jobs. 20 25 30

Of course it is true that some perceivable natural objects are *events* or *processes* and not merely static material substances. But every such event *E* or process *P* has two possible counterparts that are exactly the same event or process, only occurring either *earlier* or *later* than *E* actually occurs, or in the *reverse order* to that in which the sequential parts of *P* occur. So I will assume for the purposes of my argument here, as Edmund Husserl persuasively argued in his famous lectures on the phenomenology of time consciousness,⁷⁸ and also in *Experience and Judgment*, that time is primitively subjectively experienced by rational human animals as asymmetric in its direction of flow: 35 40

This lawfulness [of temporal experience] concerns *all* phenomenological data, those which are truly passive, as well as [intentional] acts of the ego which make their appearance in the stream of consciousness. *Every [intentional] act of the ego*, for example every act

5 of simple apprehension of an object, appears in the temporal field
 as a temporally self-constituting datum... With this, we are at the
place of origin of the first so-called 'logical categories'. It is true, we
 can only begin to speak of logical categories in the proper sense in
 10 the sphere of predicative judgment, as elements of determination
 which belong necessarily to the form of possible predicative judg-
 ments. But all categories and categorical forms which appear there
 are constructed on (*bauen sich auf*) the prepredicative [temporal]
 syntheses and have their origin in them.⁷⁹

15 Moreover, there are good reasons provided by contemporary natural
 science for thinking that real natural time has thermodynamic irrevers-
 ibility.⁸⁰ Assuming these to be facts, we can then easily recognise how
 the earlier possible counterpart event $E_{earlier}$ is the precise temporal ana-
 logue of one of my hands and the later possible counterpart event E_{later}
 is the precise temporal analogue of the incongruent counterpart of that
 20 hand. But, in real natural time as perceived by us, just which of the
 counterparts is earlier than E and just which is later than E , such that I
 could uniquely identify it as *happening before E* or as *happening after E*,
 cannot be determined by descriptive means alone – e.g. I could not, even
 25 in principle, convey this to someone by means of language over the tele-
 phone, even assuming that all the previous-acquaintance conditions and
 ceteris paribus conditions of conceptual understanding and telephone
 usage had already been met. Similarly, with suitable appropriate changes
 made for differences between the cases, we can easily see how a process
 $P_{forward}$ that runs forward from its inception to its terminus, and its exact
 30 counterpart process $P_{backward}$ that runs backward from its terminus to its
 inception (think, e.g., of time-lapse photography of a flower blossoming,
 and then imagine the film run in reverse back into its seed), are *thermo-*
dynamic process enantiomorphs of one another, and therefore subject to
 the very set of same representability-facts that I rehearsed in The THA.

35 Therefore all contentful mental states directed at actual or possible
 sense-perceivable natural things, whether they are representations of sta-
 tic material objects or facts, or whether they are representations of living
 body parts or natural events or processes occurring outside or within my
 own living body, must have essentially non-conceptual content.

40 Generalizing now, we can see that essentially non-conceptual content
 is mental content that is inherently sensitive to the egocentrically-cen-
 tered orientation, intrinsic topology, intrinsic thermodynamically irre-
 versible temporality, and causal activities of actual macroscopic material
 objects, facts, events, processes, and living body-parts, and of actual
 45 essentially embodied minded animal subjects themselves in their percep-
 tion of any distal natural object, fact, event, or process, or any part of

their own living bodies, to the extent that it has an actual or possible incongruent counterpart. Or again, using Ismael's apt terminology, essentially non-conceptual content is 'situated content'.

In turn, this generalization also enables me to generalize The Extended THA as follows.

5

The Generalized Extended THA

(13) Any conceivable actual or possible relevant variation of the monadic or qualitative properties of any contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable object, fact, event, process, or living body part that is represented by an essentially non-conceptual content, leaves the formal representation of its orientable spatial, irreversible temporal, or asymmetric thermodynamical properties unaffected. (From (12), and conceivability according to The LCTC.)

10

15

(14) Therefore, any essentially non-conceptual formal representation of an orientable spatial property, or irreversible temporal property, or asymmetric thermodynamical property of any contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable object, fact, event, process, or living body part is pure, non-empirical or a priori. (From (1) – (13), and the definition of formality/non-empiricality/apriority with respect to mental contents.)

20

If all this is correct, then it leads to an even more profound consequence of The THA. Because *only* essentially non-conceptual content – whether it be material/empirical/a posteriori, or formal/non-empirical/a priori – can accurately and therefore adequately represent the unique location, movement, change, and causal activities of actual contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable objects, facts, events, processes, and living body parts, of other essentially embodied minded animal cognitive and practical subjects, and of the essentially embodied subject herself and her living body parts from the subject's own unique spatial and temporal standpoint, it then seems clearly true that *only* essentially non-conceptual content is structurally and functionally suited to the fine-grained and hyper-finegrained sensorimotor control of the living body in human and non-human cognition and basic intentional action.

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For example, it seems clearly true that only essentially non-conceptual content is structurally and functionally suited to mediate my ability to get my key quickly and smoothly out of my pocket and directly into the keyhole of the front door of my house – even in the dark, and possibly with a drink or two in me. Of course, this is only an unusual (and unusually rare, I assure you) case. More specifically and far less

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unusually, essentially non-conceptual content inherently involves what Adrian Cussins calls ‘basic spatial and temporal tracking and discriminatory skills which are required to find our way around the environment’, what Shaun Gallagher calls ‘body schemas’, and what Noë calls ‘sensorimotor knowledge’.⁸¹ Indeed, there is now an impressively large amount of compelling empirical research which directly supports the thesis that sensorimotor activity in embodied cognition and intentional body movement is inherently pre-reflective, non-propositional, non-epistemic, and situated⁸² – in a word, essentially non-conceptual.

One direct consequence of this is that the knowledge yielded by essentially embodied mental states with essentially non-conceptual content is fundamentally and irreducibly knowledge-*how*, not knowledge-*that*. Moreover, even if it turns out to be correct, as Jason Stanley and Timothy Williamson have argued,⁸³ that knowledge-how can be analysed in terms of knowledge-that for self-conscious or self-reflective rational cognitive and practical intentional action, this result will not follow for *pre-reflectively conscious* cognitive and practical intentional action, whether rational or non-rational, since this can occur without any conceptual or propositional content whatsoever. This is doubly ironic in the case of Noë, since not only has he argued directly against Stanley and Williamson,⁸⁴ but also he explicitly describes himself as a Conceptualist.⁸⁵ I think that Noë has assumed the truth of what in section VII I called a ‘Vacuous theory of conceptual content’, and thus has over-extended conceptual content into the domain of the essentially non-conceptual.

Be that small twist of dialectical irony as it may, however, the fundamental point I am emphasizing here is that according to Kantian Non-Conceptualism, the primary psychological function of essentially non-conceptual perceptual content is uniquely and (more or less) accurately to locate and track either

(a) causally efficacious, practically relevant or even usable, static or dynamic actual macroscopic material objects, facts, events, processes, or living body parts, or other minded animal cognitive and practical subjects, that exist in the local or distal natural environment of the minded animal cognizer and practical intentional agent (*environmental location and tracking*),

or

(b) the minded animal cognizer and practical intentional agent herself (*reflexive location and tracking*),

in their egocentrically-centered intrinsically spatiotemporal contexts, for the various normatively-governed purposes of cognition and practical agency.

But what ultimately *unifies* these capacities? I think that the answer to this question is delivered to us by the distinctively Kantian idea, developed in the Transcendental Aesthetic, that the representation of space and the representation of time are *necessary a priori subjective forms of sensibility*.⁸⁶ Obviously, I have already spelled out an independent argument for the apriority of the representations of space and time in The Generalized Extended THA. So now the argument for their *phenomenological necessity*, and indeed for the phenomenological necessity of the essentially non-conceptual formal representation of any orientable spatial property or irreversible temporal property or asymmetric dynamical property of any contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable object, fact, event, process, or living body-part, follows smoothly from the conclusion of The Generalized Extended THA:

The Generalized Extended THA + Phenomenological Necessity

- (15) Consider any essentially non-conceptual formal representation of an orientable spatial property or asymmetric temporal property or irreversible thermodynamic property of any contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable object, fact, event, process, or living body part. (Premise.) 20
- (16) Now conceive that this essentially non-conceptual formal representation is removed from the essentially non-conceptual material representation of any contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable object, fact, event, process, or living body part. (From (15), and conceivability according to The LCTC.) 25
- (17) It is inconceivable that the essentially non-conceptual material representation of that contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable object, fact, event, process, or living body part would still exist. (From (16), and inconceivability according to The LCTC.) 30
- (18) Therefore the essentially non-conceptual formal representation of an orientable spatial property or asymmetric temporal property or irreversible thermodynamic property of any contingent macroscopic material sense-perceivable object, fact, event, process, or living body part is not only non-empirical/pure/a priori, but also *phenomenologically necessary*. (From (1) – (17).) 35
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Here we must remember that for Kant the domain of sensibility or *Sinnlichkeit* includes not just sense perception, but also phenomenal consciousness or ‘inner sense’, the imagination, pleasure and pain, and

5 desire. So what I am saying is that we should think of the representation of space and the representation of time as necessary a priori subjective forms of essentially embodied, egocentrically-centered, conscious, intentional, caring rational human agency and non-rational or non-human animal intentional agency alike.

10 For me, even if not explicitly for Kant himself, the representations of space and time do not in fact *exhaust* the set of necessary a priori subjective forms of animal sensibility. As I argue elsewhere in detail,⁸⁷ the representation of *biological life* is also a necessary a priori subjective form of sensibility, and so is the representation of *self-organizing complex thermodynamic systems* more generally. Even so, both the representations of biological life and of self-organizing thermodynamics still presuppose the representations of space and time.

15 Now essentially non-conceptual content is either directly referentially accurate or else (to some degree) directly referentially inaccurate, and as I have claimed, also inherently poised for guiding and mediating the cognitive and practical intentionality of minded animals. Thus essentially non-conceptual content is inherently normative and practical. But in specifically *rational* and specifically *human* animals, or real human persons, essentially non-conceptual content is also inherently poised for use in logical cognition (including belief, judgement, inference, and theory-construction) and in self-conscious, deliberative, and morally responsible action. Therefore in rational human animals or real human persons, essentially non-conceptual content is inherently *proto-rationally* normative.

20 The main claim I have been developing so far in this section is that essentially non-conceptual content is metaphysically required for explaining direct singular referential cognition and also for explaining the guidance and mediation of cognitive and practical intentionality. An equivalent way of framing the latter half of this claim, however, is to say that essentially non-conceptual content is metaphysically required for explaining *mental-to-physical causation*. This in turn connects my main claim directly with a general problem for the theory of mental causation that Jaegwon Kim calls ‘The Causal Pairing Problem’. Kim has persuasively argued that since according to classical Cartesian Dualist Interactionism, distinct mental substances are immaterial and non-spatial, but at the same time real causal relations arguably require the spatiotemporal individuation of causes and effects, then it seems impossible for Dualist Interactionism to account for the ‘causal pairing’ of real causes and real effects.⁸⁸

Here is how Kim formulates The Causal Pairing Problem:

45 Let us begin with a simple example of physical causation: two guns, A and B, are simultaneously fired, and this results in the

simultaneous death of two persons, Adam and Bob. What makes it the case that the firing of A caused Adam's death and the firing of B caused Bob's death, and not the other way around? What are the principles that underlie the correct and incorrect *pairings* of cause and effect in a situation like this? We can call this 'the causal pairing problem', or 'the pairing problem' for short. ... Turn now to a situation involving nonphysical Cartesian souls as causal agents. There are two souls, A and B, and they perform an identical mental act at time *t*, as a result of which a change occurs in material substance *M* shortly after *t*. We may suppose that the mental actions of the kind involved generally cause physical changes of the sort that happened in *M*, and, moreover, that in the present case it is soul A's action, not soul B's, that caused the change in *M*. Surely, such a possibility must exist. But ask: What relation might serve to pair soul A's action with the change in *M*, a relation that is absent in the case of soul B's action and the change in *M*? That is, evidently no spatial relations can be invoked to answer this question, for souls are not in space and are not able to bear spatial relations to material things. Soul A cannot be any 'nearer' to material object *M*, or more propitiously 'oriented' in relation to it, than soul B is. Is there anything that can do for souls what space, or a network of spatial relations, does for material things?⁸⁹

After considering several possible candidates for being the pairing relation between immaterial Cartesian souls and their putative causal effects – i.e., intentionality, causal chains, and somehow locating immaterial souls in space – Kim concludes that the answer to his leading critical question is *no*, and also that

[t]he more we think about causation, the clearer becomes our realization that the possibility of causation between distinct objects depends on a shared space-like coordinate system in which these objects are located, a scheme that individuates objects by their 'locations' in the scheme.⁹⁰

Let us grant Kim his conclusion. It then seems to me that there is also a *Generalized Causal Pairing Problem* which is every bit as problematic for Reductive Physicalism and Non-Reductive Physicalism, as the original Causal Pairing Problem is for Cartesian Dualistic Interactionism. Here is what I mean. We start with the now-familiar idea of incongruent counterparts or enantiomorphs. Now consider causal mental event *M* (which might be either identical to or strongly supervenient on a physical

event, but also might be something fully ‘over and above’ the physical, as in Substance Dualism) and its putative physical effect *PI* at spacetime location *L*. Now also consider *PI*’s enantiomorph *P2*. The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem is this:

- 5 What explains *M*’s causing *PI* as opposed to its causing *P2* in the closest possible world which differs from the actual world only in that *P2* replaces *PI* at *L*?

10 By way of a response to The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem, obviously it will not be right to say: ‘Because *PI* is in the actual world, and *P2* is merely in a nearby non-actual possible world’. That clearly begs the question. What needs to be explained is exactly why *M* IS causally paired with *PI* while also *M* IS NOT causally paired with something else *P2* that is importantly physically similar to *PI* – and *P2*, as *PI*’s enantiomorph, is obviously very importantly physically similar to *PI*. By hypothesis, *PI* and *P2* are both in the same place at the same time relative to their virtually identical possible worlds, and all their intrinsic non-relational and extrinsic relational properties are identical. So why does *M* cause *PI* and not *P2*? Why is the possible world with the physical effect *PI* in it the actual world, and not the other virtually identical world with the physical effect *P2* in it?

15 The notion of ‘the world’ I am using here is obviously the broad one which includes both the actual world and also all the different possible ways the actual world might have been, and not the narrow one that is restricted to the actual world alone. Indeed, it is precisely the fact that causal relations are also *necessitation* relations that extend across nomologically possible worlds that makes The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem so very difficult for Reductive Physicalism, Non-Reductive Physicalism, and Interactionist Dualism alike.

20 The problem that The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem poses for Interactionist Dualism is clear and distinct. Since Cartesian souls are immaterial and non-spatial, they cannot possibly contain any properties that are causally sensitive to differences between a material object and its enantiomorph, since these are inherently *topological* differences. Therefore, if *M* is an event in the life of an immaterial, non-spatial Cartesian soul, then there is necessarily nothing about *M* that can explain why *M* is causally paired with *PI* as opposed to *P2*.

25 Moreover, the problem that The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem poses for both Reductive Physicalism and Non-Reductive Physicalism is *equally* clear and distinct – although obviously somewhat different from the one posed for Interactionist Dualism. By hypothesis, according to either Reductive or Non-Reductive Physicalism, *M* is either identical to,

logically supervenient on, or nomologically supervenient on some purely physical event *P3*. Therefore, whether or not there are any *overdetermining* causal relations running from *M* to *P1*, nevertheless the one and only *efficacious and fundamental* causal relation is the physical causal relation that runs directly between *P3* and *P1*. Also by hypothesis, *P3* is a purely physical event. Now we can explicitly ask:

5

Which purely physical property of *P3* could guarantee that it is causally paired with *P1* and not with *P2*?

And more generally we can ask:

10

How can any purely physical property, or any set of such purely physical properties, ever be causally sensitive to the difference between *an actual material object or event and its closest non-actually possible enantiomorph*?

The root of the difficulty, of course, is that the difference between a given material object and its actual or possible enantiomorph can be adequately determined *only* from the standpoint of an *egocentric center* which is embedded in the very same space and time as that material object or event. But egocentric centering, I submit, is *not* a purely physical property. My proposal for an adequate solution to The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem has three parts.

15

First, it seems to me that only an appeal to *intentionality* can solve The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem.⁹¹ Kim officially rules out appealing to intentionality as an adequate solution to the *original* Causal Pairing Problem on the grounds that intentionality is, arguably, explicable in physical terms, which violates the original Cartesian Interactionist Dualism hypothesis.⁹² But

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25

- (1) It seems to me that Reductive Physicalism about mental content is least as arguably false as it is arguably true.

and in any case, as we have just seen,

30

- (2) The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem is every bit as problematic for Reductive Physicalism and Non-Reductive Physicalism about mental content as it is for Interactionist Dualism.

Second, it seems to me that the kind of intentionality we are appealing to must also be conscious intentionality, precisely in order to account for the possibility of *egocentric centering*, which in turn is required in

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order to account for the real possibility of *M*'s causal sensitivity to the difference between the actual material/physical object or event *P1* and its closest non-actually possible enantiomorph *P2*.

5 **Third**, in view of The THA and its implications as I have spelled them out, it is very plausibly arguable that the only kind of conscious intentional content which effectively causally pairs *M* with *P1* and not with *P2* is *essentially non-conceptual content*, since only essentially non-conceptual content is *necessarily* sensitive to enantiomorphic differences in the material intentional targets of mental representation.

10 Or in other words then, and now summing up this phase of my argument, my conclusion is that *only* Kantian Non-Conceptualism can adequately solve The Generalized Causal Pairing Problem. No version of Conceptualism will be able to solve it (given the soundness of The THA), and no theory of mental content which entails either Cartesian Interactionist Dualism, Reductive Physicalism, or Non-Reductive Physicalism will be able to solve it either. So this, it seems to me, is decisive evidence in favor of Kantian Non-Conceptualism.

20 **IX. Another Implication of the THA: The Deep Consciousness Thesis**

Assuming these claims to be correct, I now want to consider another extremely important implication of the THA. This is that basic levels of mental activity and representation generally assumed to belong to 'the cognitive unconscious'⁹³ are in fact essentially non-conceptually conscious. Otherwise put, on my view consciousness goes all the way down to the sensorimotor ground floor of cognitive and practical agency, via the vital cord of essentially non-conceptual content. This is what I call *The Deep Consciousness Thesis*. More precisely, however, the Deep Consciousness Thesis says this:

30 Necessarily, whenever a creature with a consciousness like ours is in any sort of mental state, then it is also occurrently conscious in some definite way, even if only minimally. So occurrent consciousness like ours penetrates into every aspect of our mental lives, including so-called 'non-conscious' or 'sub-personal' information processing.

35 If The Deep Consciousness Thesis is true, then this provides the beginnings of a solution to what Ray Jackendoff aptly calls *The Mind-Mind Problem*, which is how it is ever possible for there be genuine two-way causal or semantic interaction across the theoretical and normative gap between the Conscious Mind (or first-personal information

processing) and the Computational Mind (or so-called ‘non-conscious’ or ‘sub-personal’ information processing).⁹⁴ The Kantian Non-Conceptualist solution to the Mind-Mind Problem, along with The Deep Consciousness Thesis, is that so-called non-conscious or *sub-personal* mental processing is still in fact inherently *first-personal*, conscious, proto-rational mental processing, even though it is essentially non-conceptual, pre-reflective, and non-self-conscious.⁹⁵ And since, as I am assuming, essentially non-conceptual content is inherently proto-rationally normative in rational human animals or real human persons fundamentally understood as cognitive and practical agents, then it follows that sensorimotor cognition and action in us is *also* inherently proto-rationally normative. 5 10

The Deep Consciousness Thesis, like other parts of my view, may initially seem shockingly radical and unorthodox. But properly understood, it is much less shocking than it might seem. One fundamental source of philosophical confusion in this area is that the very idea of a consciousness like ours, or ‘the first-personal’, is deeply ambiguous as between 15

- (1) self-consciousness or self-reflection, which is the ability of a rational animal to have conscious propositional/conceptual meta-representational states, or self-describing conscious thoughts about itself, and what Evan Thompson aptly calls 20
- (2) sensorimotor subjectivity,⁹⁶

which is the more primitive and pre-reflective ability of rational (and also non-rational minded human or non-human) animals to have what Nagel also aptly calls a ‘single point of view’.⁹⁷ In turn, I hold, this pre-reflective ability of a rational (or non-rational minded human or non-human) animal to have a single point of view is grounded in egocentrically-centered essential embodiment, and what I call *primitive bodily awareness*, which includes proprioception (the sense of the relative positioning of one’s own body parts and limbs, at rest or in movement), kinaesthesia (the sense of bodily movement), the senses of orientation and balance (as intrinsic aspects of proprioception or kinaesthesia), bodily pleasures and pains, tickles and itches, the feeling of pressure, the feeling of temperature, the feelings of vitality or lethargy, and so on. 25 30 35

It is important to note here that consciousness in this pre-reflective or sensorimotor-subjective sense necessarily includes *phenomenal character*, or Nagel’s ‘subjective character of experience’ –

[F]undamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something it is like to *be* that organism – something 40

it is like *for* the organism. We may call this the subjective character of experience.⁹⁸

5 – but also that the non-reducible, non-dualist, non-supervenient fact of
consciousness in minded human or non-human animals is far from
being either captured or exhausted by phenomenal character.⁹⁹ On
the contrary, according to the doctrine of consciousness developed by
Maiese and me in *Embodied Minds in Action*, the psychological facts
10 of point-of-view and primitive bodily awareness, whether taken sepa-
rately or together, are massively richer psychological facts than that of
mere phenomenal character, given their necessary involvement with
spatial facts, temporal facts, biological facts, and complex thermody-
namic facts more generally. It is equally important to note here that
15 on my view even the notion of phenomenal character is *not* the same
as the classical notion of *qualia* – indeed, on my view, which I share
with other qualia-eliminativists, there simply are no such things as
qualia.¹⁰⁰

The really key point in the present context, however, is that self-con-
sciousness or self-reflection requires sensorimotor subjectivity or pre-
20 reflective consciousness, but sensorimotor subjectivity or pre-reflective
consciousness does not require self-consciousness or self-reflection. For
example, at least some non-human minded animals – e.g. Nagel's bat –
and all normal human infants have sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively
conscious states that are not also self-conscious or self-reflective.
25 Again, and despite the fact that I am a rational, self-conscious, and self-
reflective animal, when I am skillfully driving my car and drinking hot
coffee without spilling it, but also thinking intensely about philosophy,
the conscious acts or states that skillfully control my driving and my cof-
fee-drinking are sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious but
30 not in any way self-conscious or self-reflective. If they were, then I
would most probably spill the hot coffee all over myself, and drive off
the road into the ditch. Since, presumably, everyone would agree that
normal human infants and at least some non-human animals are con-
scious animals but not also self-conscious or self-reflective animals, and
35 also that it is possible for rational, self-conscious, self-reflective animals
like us skillfully to drive a car and at the same time drink hot coffee
consciously and pre-reflectively but not self-consciously or self-reflec-
tively, then at least implicitly everyone already concedes a distinction
between sensorimotor subjectivity and meta-representational, self-con-
40 scious or self-reflective subjectivity. Hence it is not so very shocking
after all for me to hold that all mental states, even 'tacit' computational
information processing states, are also occurrently conscious. All I am
saying is that even 'tacit' computational information processing involves

sensorimotor subjectivity, or pre-reflective consciousness, but not meta-representational, self-conscious or self-reflective subjectivity. 5

Sensorimotor subjectivity or pre-reflective consciousness is also an *essentially non-conceptual* consciousness, precisely because all sensorimotor-subjective, pre-reflectively conscious acts or states contain essentially non-conceptual information that necessarily includes direct singular reference, and which inherently guides and mediates them in their directedness to their intentional targets. By contrast, as Kant explicitly held in the *Transcendental Analytic*, self-consciousness or self-reflection is a *conceptual/propositional consciousness*, precisely because the capacity for self-consciousness or self-reflection is a subject's ability to make reflexive, reflective, meta-representational judgments about one's own mental acts and states, and thereby to possess (even if only in the Highly Refined sense) a concept of oneself, by way of those self-directed judgments. 10 15

If we were sufficiently careful about the distinction between sensorimotor subjectivity or pre-reflective consciousness on the one hand, and self-consciousness or self-reflection on the other, then I think that even the deeply puzzling and much-discussed phenomenon of *blindsight*¹⁰¹ – in which some brain-damaged subjects who introspectively report an inability to see are also able to point with some accuracy to objects in the self-professedly blind parts of their visual fields – could be explained. For we can then say that not only the roughgrained sensorimotor ability manifest in actual blindsight, but also the finegrained or hyper-finegrained – respectively, in the thought-experimental cases of what Ned Block calls 'superblindsight' and 'superduperblindsight'¹⁰² – sensorimotor connection between what blindsighters perceive in space, and their ability to point to it, discriminate it, or track it, is guided and mediated by the information carried by or contained in sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious vision, even though they lack self-conscious or self-reflective vision for that cognitive and practical task. 20 25 30

Otherwise put, I am proposing that in blindsight the frontline information-processing mechanisms of the eyes and related areas of the wider brain-body system (whose neural operations are, perhaps, localized in the parietal lobe) are relevantly and relatively undamaged and continue to transmit sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious visual information, even though the corresponding downstream mechanisms for processing self-conscious or self-reflective visual information (whose neural operations are, perhaps, localized in the temporal lobe) have broken down. Blindsighters, after all, *have their eyes open and are working under well-lit conditions*. Blindsighters would then be best and most coherently characterized as 'sighted' in *one* sense of conscious vision, but also 'blind' in *another* sense of conscious vision, instead of 35 40 45

being paradoxically characterized as being both ‘blind’ and ‘sighted’ in the *same* sense of conscious vision.

5 If that proposal is correct, then blindsighters subjectively experience self-conscious or self-reflective blindness via the more sophisticated ‘what’-sensitive downstream processing mechanisms of the brain-body system, but also subjectively experience sensorimotor-subjective, pre-reflectively conscious sight via the simpler ‘where’-sensitive processing mechanisms of the eyes and related parts of the brain-body system. 10 Blindsighted subjective experience, presumably, has its own unique sort of phenomenal character and thus its own unique ‘something it is like to be *for* the organism’. Otherwise put, presumably, blindsight is a determinate kind of conscious perceptual experience, just as ordinary seeing is a determinate kind of conscious perceptual experience. The blindsighted person obviously is not unconscious, and therefore (it seems to me) obviously is consciously feeling and doing something in a determinately specific way when she ‘blindsees’ an object.

15 Furthermore, the notion of a divided consciousness is already theoretically familiar from well-known experiments involving divided attention tasks and the dissociated cognitive abilities of neo-commissurotomy patients, and functionally similar agnosias. Most importantly for my purposes, there are the well-known Milner and Goodale data in favor of the hypothesis that there are two relatively distinct visual pathways of information processing, the *ventral stream* and the *dorsal stream*. The ventral stream is localized in the temporal lobe and supports so-called ‘conscious’ – or as I would say, in correction of that crucially ambiguous term, *self-conscious* or *self-reflective* – visual perception. And the dorsal stream is localized in the parietal lobe and supports so-called ‘non-conscious’ – or as I would say, in correction of that crucial misnomer, *non-self-consciously conscious* or *pre-reflectively conscious* – visual perception.¹⁰³ So what I am saying is that in blindsight the ventral stream, as the support for *one* kind of conscious vision, is significantly compromised, while the dorsal stream, as the support for the *other* kind of conscious vision, remains uncompromised.

35 This way of thinking about blindsight, in turn, would neatly avoid the further and even deeper paradox that in blindsight a brute, non-conscious, non-unified, purposeless mental processing somehow exerts roughgrained, finegrained, or hyper-finegrained control over our essentially embodied cognitive and practical intentional agency. If this were true, then blindsighters would be nothing but natural automata with respect to their blindseeing activities. But it seems to me more than just 40 implausible to hold that blindsighted people are nothing but naturally mechanized puppets or robots in the blind areas of their self-conscious or self-reflective visual fields, but *otherwise* really free agents. On the contrary, it seems clear to me that blindsighted people are genuinely 45

visually conscious in those areas, and also genuinely choose and act with *deep freedom of the will* under the relevant experimental conditions, such that they are *ultimate sources* of their own intentional body movements, which are thereby *up-to-them*, and such that they are also causally and morally *responsible* for their movements. The scientists in blindsight experiments are certainly not *overwhelming manipulators* like, e.g., the evil cognitive scientist in *The Manchurian Candidate*.¹⁰⁴ So our intuitive, smooth attribution of responsibility-for-their-movements to the blindsighted subjects is good prima facie evidence *against* their being nothing but naturally mechanized puppets or robots in the blind areas of their self-conscious or self-reflective visual fields, hence also good evidence *against* their being non-conscious cognizers in that domain.

Nevertheless, both blindsighted conscious experience, and also blindsighted choosing and doing, occur in a way that is in some determinate respects sharply and intrinsically phenomenologically, semantically, and biologically/neurobiologically different from the visual consciousness and intentional visual activity of normal self-consciously or self-reflectively sighted people. So blindsighters have a sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflective visual consciousness that is just like those of ordinary self-consciously or self-reflectively sighted people, but at the same time blindsighters simply differ determinately, specifically, and sharply from ordinary sighted people at the cognitive and practical level that is inherently guided and mediated by *conceptual* content. No one doubts that, other things being equal, blindsighters are operating normally as rational human agents during the course of the experiments. So all I am saying is that blindsighters are rational human agents *all the way down*. Their higher-level self-conscious cognitive activity and their lower-level blindsighted cognitive activity are *not* two essentially separate processes – one causally closed inherently ghostly and immaterial process (pure rationality), and another causally closed inherently mechanical and material process (pure animality), as the Cartesian Substance Dualist picture implies. Rational animals are BOTH rational AND animal all the way through, and all the way down. Or in other words, and *specifically* with respect to their essentially non-conceptual blindseeing abilities, blindsighters are rational human animals *too*.

This Kantian Non-Conceptualist explanation of blindsight, correspondingly, suggests a new way of explaining the equally puzzling phenomenon of ‘filling-in’.¹⁰⁵ Filling-in is the fact that our visual field presents itself as rich and continuous, even though we actually have blind spots on our retinas. A similar but more externalized version of this phenomenon occurs when you are walking alongside a tall fence with narrow gaps between the slats, and can see a complete object behind the fence, seemingly without any visual occlusion. And here is the hard cognitive-psychological/philosophical question raised by all such phenomena:

5 Why doesn't the normal human visual field have some holes in it?

Various possible solutions to the puzzle have been offered. The Kantian Non-Conceptualist solution is that filling-in is, in effect or even essentially, the cognitive contrapositive of blindsight. In blindsight, I have proposed, the cognitive subject has sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious (dorsal stream, parietal-lobe localized) vision without self-conscious or self-reflective (ventral stream, temporal-lobe localized) vision. That is, she has sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious vision via the simpler 'where'-sensitive processing mechanisms of the eyes and related parts of the brain-body system, together with self-conscious or self-reflective blindness via the more sophisticated 'what'-sensitive processing mechanisms of the downstream brain-body system. Contrapositively, in filling-in, I am suggesting, cognitive subjects have an uncompromised capacity for self-conscious or self-reflective (ventral stream, temporal-lobe localized) vision, combined with a slightly compromised or agnostic capacity for sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious (dorsal stream, parietal-lobe localized) vision. Or in other words, subjects have self-conscious or self-reflective *full vision* via the more sophisticated processing mechanisms of the downstream brain-body system, together with a sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious *selective blindness* via the simpler processing mechanisms of the eyes and related parts of the brain-body system. And as a consequence, the capacity for self-conscious or self-reflective (ventral stream, temporal lobe localized) vision simply *compensates* for the slightly compromised or agnostic capacity for sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious (dorsal stream, parietal lobe localized) vision in this cognitive and practical context – in just the way that one might lean more heavily on one's left leg if the right leg were slightly injured – and thereby *fills-in* the blind spots.

If this explanation is correct, then it will also smoothly bind together blindsight and filling-in within a *single* theoretical framework.

That might seem shockingly radical and unorthodox too. But in any case, whatever its ultimate success in explaining both blindsight and filling-in as cognitive contrapositives of one another, Kantian Non-Conceptualism predicts that sensorimotor subjectivity or pre-reflective consciousness and essentially non-conceptual content go inherently together, hand-in-glove – and this, in turn, is the deepest insight of Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic. Indeed, in the particular case of blindsight, what Kant would have called 'intuitions' or *Anschauungen* are literally blind in the self-conscious or self-reflective sense (the subject believes herself to be blind), yet intrinsically involve a sensorimotor subjectivity or pre-reflective consciousness in 'inner sense' and are also

directly referential conscious mental representations. The blindsighted subject authentically *blindsees* the world in a sensorimotor-subjective or pre-reflectively conscious and essentially non-conceptual sense, but also authentically *fails to see* the world in a self-conscious or self-reflective, thought-based, and conceptual sense. By an illuminatingly subtle comparison and contrast, while Nagel's bat is also blind, and therefore also fails to see, in a self-conscious or self-reflective sense, nevertheless the bat also has a sensorimotor subjectivity or pre-reflective consciousness (although neither, of course, a specifically human consciousness, nor a specifically rational consciousness), and also is capable of directly referential cognition and non-rational forms of intentional action, and therefore it also authentically *batsees the world*, via echolocation, in a sensorimotor or pre-reflectively conscious sense.¹⁰⁶

X. The Grip of the Given 15

Even Jeff Speaks, who of course is sceptical about the defensibility of content Non-Conceptualism, thinks that progress on the question of the relations between thought and perception cannot be made until we work out a theory of 'the involvement of a faculty of spontaneity in perception', that is, a theory which tells us precisely 'how far one's conceptual capacities – one's abilities to have thoughts involving certain kinds of concepts – go toward shaping the contents of one's experience':

I do think that there is a natural understanding of the questions about nonconceptual content which I have not discussed, but which seems to be in the background of McDowell's discussions of the issue. I have in mind his many discussions of the involvement of a faculty of spontaneity in perception. This is the Kantian question of how far one's conceptual capacities – one's abilities to have thoughts involving certain kinds of concepts – go toward shaping the contents of one's experience. But is this a matter of the new concepts entering into the content of one's perceptions, or of one simply being able to infer more sophisticated beliefs from a more or less stable perceptual content? This does strike me as an interesting and fundamental question with broad consequences for our understanding of the nature of intentionality.¹⁰⁷

Otherwise put, what Speaks is saying is that we need to have a theory which tells us precisely how our conceptual capacities encounter the externally-given world through sense perception, survive that encounter in such a way that our rationality remains fully intact (in the sense it does not collapse into a mere bundle of contingently associative cognitive

powers, as in classical Empiricism), and at the same time, along with our capacity for sense perception, jointly produce the normative fact of experiential content.

Here is a working sketch of how Kantian Non-Conceptualism can provide a theory that will answer this ‘interesting and fundamental question with broad consequences for our understanding of the nature of intentionality’. The Kantian Non-Conceptualist theory will hold that essentially non-conceptual content has its *own* ‘lower-level spontaneity’ (what Kant calls the spontaneity of the *synthesis speciosa* or ‘figurative synthesis’ of the imagination at *CPR* B151) and hence its own lower-level normativity, that is based on intrinsically spatiotemporally-structured and egocentrically-oriented instrumental – or hypothetically practical – rules for the skillful manipulation of tools and of the proximal or distal environment, and for the skillful finegrained or hyper-finegrained sensorimotor control of one’s own body in basic intentional actions. This theory will also hold that the lower-level spontaneity of our non-conceptual cognitive capacities is irreducible to the ‘higher-level spontaneity’ (what Kant calls the spontaneity of the *synthesis intellectualis* or ‘intellectual synthesis’ of the understanding and reason at *CPR* B151-2) of our conceptual capacities and our self-consciousness, and thus that its lower-level normativity is irreducible to the higher-level normativity of our conceptually-funded rationality, which is based on non-instrumental – or categorically practical – rules of logic and morality. And finally this theory will also hold that the lower-level spontaneity and lower-level normativity of essentially non-conceptual content, as situated content, is the necessary, presupposed ground of the higher-level rational spontaneity and normativity of conceptual content, and that both kinds of content are *complementary* to one another in the constitution of atomic or basic perceptual judgments, or what Kant calls ‘judgments of experience’,¹⁰⁸ as well as a posteriori hypothetical/instrumental-practical judgments, a posteriori non-instrumental practical judgments, and also a priori judgments in mathematics, logic, and categorical/non-instrumental morality.

There is an extremely important question, raised by McDowell in *Mind and World*, of how non-conceptual content can ever really and truly *justify*, and not just ‘exculpate’ – i.e., merely cause, occasion, or trigger – any of our rational human beliefs, choices, and actions. Following out McDowell’s thought, one might argue, e.g., in the following way:

- (1) All justification involves reasons.
- (2) All reasons stand in inferential relations to beliefs, choices, or actions.
- (3) Non-conceptual content on its own can never stand in inferential relations to beliefs, choices, or actions.

- (4) So non-conceptual content on its own can never supply justification for beliefs, choices, or actions.
- (5) Representational content is genuine only if it can supply justification for beliefs, choices, or actions. 5
- (6) So non-conceptual content is not genuine representational content.¹⁰⁹

I will call this *The Inferentialist Argument* against non-conceptual content. The Kantian Non-Conceptualist answer I am giving to McDowell's important question, and correspondingly the Kantian Non-Conceptualist response I am giving to The Inferentialist Argument, has three parts. 10

First, it is true that non-conceptual content certainly cannot ever justify beliefs, choices, or actions *if* one adopts the false 'sensationalist' conception of non-conceptual content that accepts The Myth of the Given, whereby non-conceptual content is nothing but the unstructured causal-sensory 'given' input to the cognitive faculties, passively waiting to be carved up by concepts and propositions. To hold that non-conceptual content, so construed, could ever justify, would be mistakenly to accept The Myth of the Given. But to believe that the 'sensationalist' conception is the only theory of how non-conceptual content could ever justify, is equally mistakenly to accept The Myth of the Myth. 15 20

Second, and again, it is true that non-conceptual content certainly cannot ever justify beliefs, choices, or actions *if* one adopts state Non-Conceptualism, which provides no well-grounded principles or reasons for cognizing or acting, and instead only asserts the subject's non-possession of concepts. This is shown by the possibility (and in recent work by McDowell, the actuality) of Highly Refined Conceptualism, or HRC, which in turn demonstrates that failures of concept-possession are systematically consistent with the thesis that the content of perception is still thoroughly conceptual, although in an implicit or rationally undeveloped format. 25 30

But **third**, according to Kantian Non-Conceptualism, steps (2), (4), and (6) in the Inferentialist Argument are all false. Not *all* reasons stand in inferential relations to beliefs, choices, or actions. Some reasons are *the body's own reasons*. More precisely, essentially non-conceptual content is presupposed by all rational conceptual/propositional content whatsoever, and thus it is inherently proto-rational, and, in rational human minded animals, it is also self-reflectively constrained by categorically normative moral principles, and therefore can and does sometimes sufficiently justify perceptual beliefs and basic intentional actions, and thereby provide reasons for them, even without standing in inferential relations to them. There is therefore at least one other kind of normative, justifying relation to beliefs, choices, and actions, and essentially non-conceptual content can stand in that kind of relation to them. Hence 35 40 45

essentially non-conceptual content is genuine, normatively-loaded representational content, although obviously of a categorically or essentially different kind from conceptual content.

Here is the explicit rationale for those claims. Essentially non-conceptual content can provide rational human animals with an inherently spatiotemporally situated, egocentrically-centered, biologically/neurobiologically embodied, pre-reflectively conscious, skillful perceptual and practical grip on things in our world. Call this fundamental normative fact *The Grip of the Given*, with due regard to the two-part thought that *to stand within* The Grip of the Given is also thereby to *have* a grip on things in our world. More precisely: to stand within The Grip of the Given is to be so related to things and other minded animals in our world, and thereby to have a grip on the positions and dispositions of things and other minded animals in our world, via essentially non-conceptual content, that we are poised for achieving accurate reference, true statements, knowledge, consistency and valid consequence in logical reasoning, effectiveness in intentional performance, goodness of means or ends, rightness in choice or conduct, and consistency and coherence of motivation in practical reasoning – in short, we are poised for achieving any or all of the highest values of our cognitive and practical lives.

This conception of The Grip of the Given fully includes the familiar notion of responsiveness-to-reasons, but also extends well beyond it. Whenever perceivers like us stand within The Grip of the Given, then all of these achievements actually lie within the scope of our cognitive and practical powers. As cognizers and practical agents we are then *enabled* and *primed* for cognition and intentional action, and the fact that *we ought to X* necessitates the fact that *we really can X*.

To be sure, being in The Grip of the Given is not an absolute or even money-back guarantee. It does not itself *ensure* or *secure* any of these cognitive or practical achievements. In the event and in the actual thick of things, Stuff Can Happen, and things can go trivially or colossally wrong – FUBAR. For example, the perceiver might unknowingly be looking into an *Ames room*, which is a trapezoidally-shaped room that is specially designed to create the appearance of a rectangular room and create illusions of depth, when viewed from one particular standpoint.¹¹⁰ It is therefore possible to stand in veridical cognitive relations to inherently deceptive world-situations, and then the unlucky cognizer and practical agent just has to make do as best she can in those situations. Such phenomena are usefully labelled *veridical illusions*.¹¹¹ The possibility of veridical illusions, in turn, raises a significant worry to the effect that The Grip of the Given cannot ever sufficiently justify cognition or intentional action.

What I want to say in reply to the worry about veridical illusions is this. The Grip of the Given endows and underwrites all actual cognitive

and practical achievements, and all cognitive and practical success. It makes cognitive and practical success really possible for all rational animals, including of course human ones. It enables and primes all our cognitive and practical success. The Grip of the Given does not, however, *buy us* cognitive or practical success. Nothing can. Indeed, it would be a serious Cartesian fallacy about the rational animal mind to think that anything ever *could*. There is still the rational animal's own free contribution to cognition and intentional action, and the world's brute factual contribution. An ineluctable element of *contingency* and *luck* is always involved. Sufficient justification according to The Grip of the Given is therefore not a *success mechanism*. On the contrary, sufficient justification according to The Grip of the Given is nothing more and nothing less than an adequate ground of epistemic and practical *confidence* – it is just an *adequate facilitator*, not a success mechanism. 5 10 15

In short then, in addition to inferential relations to beliefs, choices, and actions, there is also the normative, sufficiently justifying non-inferential grip relation to beliefs, choices, and actions, and essentially non-conceptual content can stand in that kind of relation to them. Therefore it is precisely The Grip of the Given, via essentially non-conceptual content, that is our non-inferential sufficiently justifying reason for basic perceptual belief or basic intentional action, or at least this grip is the primitive fact that provides non-inferential sufficiently justifying reasons for us to hold basic perceptual beliefs or perform basic intentional actions. No rational human animal cognitive or practical activity could ever be actually accurate, true, sufficiently justified, logically consistent, effective, good, right, or practically consistent without essentially non-conceptual content. And correspondingly no rational human animal could ever freely and successfully navigate her way through the world and perform basic intentional acts according to principles without it. So that is why essentially non-conceptual content really and truly sufficiently justifies, when it is combined with the other cognitive and practical capacities that are jointly essential to human rationality and free agency. 20 25 30 35

Otherwise put, and now generalizing to contemporary epistemology, the theory of basic perceptual knowledge that I am proposing is an 'internalistic Externalism'. Classical *Internalism* in the theory of knowledge says that knowledge is sufficiently justified true belief by virtue of a higher-order act or state of knowing-that-I-know, which yields indubitability. Classical *Externalism* in the theory of knowledge, by contrast, says that knowledge is true belief plus justification by a reliable 'sub-personal' causal mechanism of belief-formation, hence without any higher-order act or state of knowing-that-I-know. Classical Internalism makes no appeal to inherently mechanical worldly factors and instead appeals to airtight inferential reasons for the justification of belief, usually in the 40 45

5 guise of inherently *mentalist* evidence. Contrariwise, classical Externalism makes no appeal to inherently inferential factors and instead appeals to inherently mechanical *worldly* factors – natural mechanisms and sub-personal belief-causing processes – for the justification of belief.¹¹² What is right about classical Internalism is its appeal to mentalistic evidence for the justification of belief, and what is right about classical Externalism is its appeal to worldly factors together with its insight that knowledge is possible at the first-order level without any appeal to inferential relations or higher-order validation. What is wrong about *both* classical approaches is the false shared assumption that justificatory appeals to mentalistic evidence and to worldly factors are somehow fundamentally at odds with one another, precisely because they think of the mentalistic evidence as *inherently mental and fundamentally non-physical* and also of the worldly evidence as *inherently mechanical and fundamentally non-mental*.

20 By sharp contrast to both classical Internalism and classical Externalism, then, according to my view basic perceptual knowledge is sufficiently justified true belief by virtue of The Grip of the Given. The Grip of the Given, via essentially non-conceptual content, provides a genuinely worldly factor which is nevertheless neither inherently mechanical nor sub-personal, precisely because it inherently includes my pre-reflectively conscious causally efficacious grip on the world in the very same relation which constitutes the world's causally efficacious grip on me. As a direct consequence, The Grip of the Given is a genuinely worldly but also genuinely non-inferential, pre-reflectively conscious, and practical two-way primitive relation that fully enables, endows, primes, and underwrites basic perceptual beliefs and basic intentional actions in a first-order way, hence without any higher-order act or state of knowing-that-I-know. My 'internalistic Externalism' about basic perceptual knowledge is therefore not only distinct from classical Internalism and classical Externalism alike, but also designed to cohere seamlessly with The Deep Consciousness Thesis.

XI. Conclusion

40 If what I have argued in this essay is correct, then it follows that essentially non-conceptual content, or 'situated content', unified by the Kantian necessary a priori subjective forms of sensibility, not only exists, but also is the original and necessary two-way continuous thread-of-life by which the world is sensorimotor-subjectively or pre-reflectively consciously delivered up from human animal experience to our self-conscious or self-reflective thought and action-oriented deliberation, and then is downwardly transformed by our thinking and deliberative action

under universal a priori categorically normative principles. So when we go beyond The Myth of the Myth, what we find is just *ourselves as rational human animals*, fully embedded in the dynamic natural world, living purposefully and purposively within the unshakeable Grip of the Given.¹¹³

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Notes

- 1 For convenience I refer to Kant's works infratextually 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. I generally follow the standard English translations from the German texts, but have occasionally modified them where appropriate. Here is a list of the abbreviations and English translations of the works cited:
 - BL* – 'The Blomberg Logic'. In *Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Logic*, trans. J. M. Young, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 5–246.
 - CPR* – *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
 - DiS* – '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 University Press, 1992, pp. 365–72.
 - ID* – 'On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World (Inaugural Dissertation)', in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy: 1755–1770*, pp. 373–416.
 - JL* – 'The Jäsche Logic', in *Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Logic*, pp. 519–640.
 - OT* – 'What is Orientation in Thinking?' In H. Reiss (ed.), *Kant: Political Writings*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 237–49.
 - Prol* – *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, trans. J. Ellington, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1977.
 - VL* – 'The Vienna Logic', in *Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Logic*, pp. 251–377.
- 2 G. Evans, *Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 150.
- 3 J. McDowell, 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', in J. McDowell, *Having the World in View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 256–72, at p. 257.
- 4 See, e.g., J. Bermúdez and A. Cahen, 'Nonconceptual Mental Content', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2010 Edition) Edward N. Zalta (ed.) [online]. Available from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/>

- 5 spr2010/entries/content-nonconceptual/; G. Evans, *Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1982), esp. chs. 4–6; and Y. Gunther (ed.), *Essays on Nonconceptual Content* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).
- 10 5 See, e.g., J. McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); McDowell, *Having the World in View*; S. Sedivy, ‘Must Conceptually Informed Perceptual Experience Involve Non-conceptual Content?’, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 26 (1996), pp. 413–31; and B. Brewer, *Perception and Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- 15 6 In *Embodied Minds in Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Michelle Maiese and I distinguished carefully between:
 (1) ‘consciousness like ours’ (or ‘consciousness_{lo}’, for short) which is directly experienced by sentient living organisms like us,
 and
 (2) an unconstrained, unqualified notion of consciousness, which may
 20 include disembodied minds, angelic minds, divine minds, etc. In that book we focused exclusively on consciousness_{lo} for various methodological reasons. In the present essay I will focus my notion of consciousness in exactly the same way, but dispense with the subscribing convention.
- 25 7 W. Sellars, ‘Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind’, in W. Sellars, *Science, Perception, and Reality* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), pp. 127–96, at p. 169.
- 30 8 See, e.g., P. Guyer, ‘Thought and Being: Hegel’s Critique of Kant’s Theoretical Philosophy’, in F. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 171–210.
- 35 9 See R. Hanna, *Rationality and Logic* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).
- 40 10 See, e.g., R. Heck, ‘Nonconceptual Content and the “Space of Reasons”’, *Philosophical Review* 109 (2000), pp. 483–523; R. Heck, ‘Are There Different Kinds of Content?’, in J. Cohen and B. McLaughlin (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 117–38; T. Crowther, ‘Two Conceptions of Conceptualism and Nonconceptualism’, *Erkenntnis* 65 (2006), pp. 245–76; D. Laurier, ‘Nonconceptual Contents vs. Nonconceptual States’, *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 68 (2004), pp. 23–43; and J. Speaks, ‘Is There a Problem about Nonconceptual Content?’, *Philosophical Review* 114 (2005), pp. 359–98.
- 45 11 I see no reason to think that content-bearing mental episodes or events must be mental *states* exclusively and cannot also be mental *acts*. Indeed, given my emphasis on cognitive and practical intentional agency, it seems to me that the primary bearers of content are intentional acts, and that intentional states derive their contents from act-contents. To keep things relatively simple however, I won’t argue for that thesis here, or tinker with standard formulations in the secondary literature; but it remains true, that every occurrence
 50 of ‘states’ should really be understood to mean the same as ‘acts or states’.
- 12 I argue this explicitly and in detail in *The Rational Human Condition* (unpublished MS, Summer 2011 version), ch. 2.3.
- 55 13 All of these arguments are covered in Gunther (ed.), *Essays on Non-conceptual Content*.

- 14 See also R. Hanna, 'Direct Reference, Direct Perception, and the Cognitive Theory of Demonstratives', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 74 (1993), pp. 96–117.
- 15 Speaks, 'Is There a Problem about Nonconceptual Content?' 5
- 16 Y. Gunther, 'Introduction', in Gunther (ed.), *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*, pp. 1–19, at p. 1.
- 17 R. Hanna, 'Kant and Nonconceptual Content', *European Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2005), pp. 247–90.
- 18 See R. Hanna, 'Kant's Non-Conceptualism, Rogue Objects, and the Gap in the B Deduction', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19(3): 399–415. 10
- 19 T. Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 16–17.
- 20 Bermúdez and Cahen, 'Nonconceptual Mental Content'.
- 21 See, e.g., Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, p. 229; C. Peacocke, 'Does Perception Have a Nonconceptual Content?', *Journal of Philosophy* 98 (2001), pp. 239–64; and C. Peacocke, 'Nonconceptual Content Defended', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58 (1998), pp. 381–8. 15
- 22 See, e.g., McDowell, *Mind and World*, pp. 56–60, and 170–3. The Demonstrative Strategy is also endorsed by Brewer in *Perception and Reason* and by Sedivy in 'Must Conceptually Informed Perceptual Experience Involve Non-conceptual Content?'. 20
- 23 Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, pp. 44 and 74. My own view is that Russell's Principle has some counterexamples, and is therefore false. See Hanna, 'Direct Reference, Direct Perception, and the Cognitive Theory of Demonstratives'. 25
- 24 Evans, *Varieties of Reference*, pp. 100–05.
- 25 See S. Kelly, 'Demonstrative Concepts and Experience', *Philosophical Review* 110 (2001), pp. 397–420; and S. Kelly, 'The Nonconceptual Content of Perceptual Experience: Situation Dependence and Finesse of Grain', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62 (2001), pp. 601–8. 30
- 26 See P. Chuard, 'Demonstrative Concepts without Re-Identification', *Philosophical Studies* (2006), pp. 153–201. 35
- 27 Speaks, 'Is There a Problem about Nonconceptual Content?', p. 360.
- 28 See, e.g., Heck, 'Nonconceptual Content and the "Space of Reasons"' and Heck, 'Are There Different Kinds of Content?'
- 29 This is Speaks's own proposal for content Non-Conceptualism. See also M. Tye, 'Nonconceptual Content, Richness, and Finesse of Grain', in T. Gendler and J. Hawthorne (eds.), *Perceptual Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 504–30. 40
- 30 See R. Hanna, 'Kantian Non-Conceptualism', *Philosophical Studies* 137 (2008), pp. 41–4.
- 31 J. T. Ismael, *The Situated Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). 45
- 32 N. Bentley, M. Slater, and N. Burgis, *The Dickens Index* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 118.
- 33 See also R. Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 2001), ch. 3; and Hanna, *The Rational Human Condition*, ch. 2.4. 50
- 34 See S. Yablo, 'Mental Causation', *Philosophical Review* 101 (1992), pp. 245–80.

- 35 Tye, 'Nonconceptual Content, Richness, and Fineness of Grain', pp. 507–8.
- 5 36 Tye, 'Nonconceptual Content, Richness, and Fineness of Grain', p. 525.
- 37 See J. McDowell, 'De Re Senses', *Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1984), pp. 283–94.
- 38 Speaks, 'Is There a Problem about Nonconceptual Content?', p. 360.
- 10 39 See, e.g., J. Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 2002), ch. 4.
- 40 See McDowell, 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given'.
- 41 See also Bermúdez, 'Nonconceptual Mental Content', section 6.
- 42 See Hanna, *Rationality and Logic*, chs. 4–6.
- 15 43 See, e.g., K. Koslicki, *The Structure of Objects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- 44 See Hanna, *The Rational Human Condition*, ch. 2.4.
- 45 Many thanks to Jane Heal for suggesting to me this informal 'over-the-telephone test' for conceptuality.
- 20 46 See also J. Bermúdez, *Thinking without Words* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). Like Bermúdez, I hold that there are non-linguistic concepts and thoughts; but unlike Bermúdez, who is a state non-conceptualist, I do not identify non-conceptual content with the content of mental states not necessarily involving concept-possession.
- 25 47 See also P. Carruthers, *Language, Thought, and Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Like Carruthers, I hold that there is a substantive connection between conceptual thought and language; but unlike Carruthers, who is a higher-order thought theorist about consciousness, I do not think that the substantive connection between conceptual thought and language inherently constrains the nature of consciousness, which has a non-conceptual basis in sensorimotor subjectivity.
- 30 48 See, e.g., G. Frege, 'On Sense and Meaning', in G. Frege, *Collected Paper on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy*, trans. M. Black *et al.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 157–77.
- 35 49 See, e.g., B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1995), chs. V–X.
- 50 See Hanna, *The Rational Human Condition*, ch. 2.3.
- 40 51 In other words, essentially non-conceptual content is normatively governed by an ideal standard of accurate direct reference, and can still be directly referential when it is more or less inaccurate.
- 52 See, e.g., J.V. Biroker, *Space and Incongruence: The Origins of Kant's Idealism* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1981); and J. Van Cleve and R. Frederick, *The Philosophy of Right and Left: Incongruent Counterparts and the Nature of Space* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1991).
- 45 53 See Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*, ch. 4. See also Hanna, *The Rational Human Condition*, ch. 2.3.
- 54 See Kant, (*DiS* 2: 383); and G. Nerlich, 'On the One Hand: Reflections on Enantiomorphy', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1995), pp. 432–43.
- 50 55 One can also use the possibility of incongruent counterparts as a special kind of phenomenal inversion in order to argue for failures of materialist supervenience. See G. Lee, 'The Experience of Right and

- Left', in Gendler and Hawthorne (eds.), *Perceptual Experience*, pp. 291–315. 5
- 56 See Kant, (*DiS* 2: 377–83); and R. Hanna, *Kant, Science, and Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 2006), ch. 1.
- 57 See Kant (*ID* 2: 385–419).
- 58 See Kant (*Prol* 4: 285–86); and Hanna, *Kant, Science, and Human Nature*, ch. 6. 10
- 59 See Kant (*OT* 8: 131–47).
- 60 This formulation needs some qualifications that do not directly affect the main line of argument in the text, and I think would also only muddy the waters there. Strictly speaking, however, the neutrality of the argument from incongruent counterparts (i.e. The THA) is as between *noumenal* realism about space and *strong* transcendental idealism about space, according to which space is identical to (or logically supervenient on – ‘nothing more than’) the conscious representation of space. My own view is that noumenal realism about space is demonstrably false, that the classical Two World theory of Kant’s transcendental idealism is also demonstrably false, and that the neo-classical Two Standpoints theory version of transcendental idealism is also demonstrably false. Nevertheless, in addition to these philosophically unacceptable views, there is also, in my opinion, a fully intelligible and defensible version of transcendental idealism that I call Weak or Counterfactual Transcendental Idealism (WCTI), which says: 15
- (i) Things-in-themselves (a.k.a. ‘noumena’, or Really Real things, i.e. things as they could exist in a ‘lonely’ way, altogether independently of minds or anything else, by virtue of their intrinsic non-relational properties) are logically possible; but at the same time it is necessarily unknowable and unprovable whether things-in-themselves exist or not, hence for the purposes of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, they can be ignored (= *methodological eliminativism about things-in-themselves*). 20
- (ii) It is a necessary condition of the existence of the natural world that if rational human minded animals *were* to exist, then they *would* be able to know that world directly both a posteriori through direct sense perception and basic empirical judgments and also a priori through rational intuition, as well as indirectly through non-basic empirical judgments, theories, and inferential reasoning (= *the counterfactual conformity thesis*). 25
- (iii) The natural world has at some earlier times existed without rational human minded animals to know it, and could exist even if no rational human minded animals existed to know it, even though some rational human minded animals now actually exist who do in fact know it directly both a posteriori and a priori, however imperfectly (= *the actual existence thesis*). See, e.g., Hanna, *Kant, Science, and Human Nature*, chs. 1–5. 30
- 61 I’m not denying that *some* or another sort of difference between my right and left hands could be conveyed to someone who was not directly confronted with these objects – after all, one of them is called ‘RH’s right hand’ and the other one is called ‘RH’s left hand’, so *there* is a difference that I can convey. But all such differences are more or less trivial and philosophically irrelevant, since they presuppose what is at issue, which is how to tell my hands apart when by hypothesis they 35

are quality-for-quality counterparts. What I am denying, then, is that the *essential difference* between my hands could be conveyed to someone who was not directly confronted with them. Many thanks to Jon Shaheen for pressing me to make this point clearer.

- 62 See, e.g., Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind*, ch. 2; Hanna and Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Action*, esp. chs. 6–7; and Kim, *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*, esp. chs. 4–6.
- 63 Kelly, ‘Demonstrative Concepts and Experience’, p. 398.
- 64 See J. Perry, ‘The Problem of the Essential Indexical’, *Nouûs* 13 (1979), pp. 3–21. See also Hanna, ‘Direct Reference, Direct Perception, and the Cognitive Theory of Demonstratives’.
- 65 D. Kaplan, ‘Demonstratives: An Essay on the Logic, Metaphysics, Semantics, and Epistemology of Demonstratives and Other Indexicals’ and ‘Afterthoughts’, both in J. Almog et al. (eds.), *Themes from Kaplan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 481–563; and Perry, ‘The Problem of the Essential Indexical’.
- 66 See, e.g., J. Campbell, *Past, Space, and Self* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).
- 67 See R. Hanna and M. Chadha, ‘Non-Conceptualism and the Problem of Perceptual Self-Knowledge’, *European Journal of Philosophy* 19 (June 2011), pre-published. Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0378.2009.00377.x/abstract>.
- 68 See, e.g., R. Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); and J. Prinz, *Furnishing the Mind: Concepts and their Perceptual Basis* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- 69 See, e.g., G. Bealer, *Quality and Concept* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); and D. Chalmers, ‘The Foundations of Two-Dimensional Semantics’, in M. García-Carpintero and J. Macia (eds.), *Two-Dimensionalism: Foundations and Applications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 55–140.
- 70 See, e.g., C. Peacocke, *A Study of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992). Peacocke’s theory is also a Fregean theory of concepts.
- 71 See, e.g., J. Fodor, *Concepts* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1998). Fodor’s theory of concepts is not *fully* Quinean in that it accepts *all* of Quine’s arguments against the analytic-synthetic distinction. Indeed, I think that any theory which is fully Quinean must also be *Eliminativist* about concepts and conceptual contents, which in turn has radically skeptical, nihilistic consequences for epistemic and practical rationality. See Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*, ch. 3, and Concluding Un-Quinean Postscript.
- 72 See, e.g., Braddon-Mitchell and Jackson, *Philosophy of Mind and Cognition*, chs. 10–13; R. Cummins, *Meaning and Mental Representation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989); and F. Dretske, *Naturalizing the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).
- 73 See, e.g., R. Stalnaker, ‘What Might Nonconceptual Content Be?’, in E. Villanueva (ed.), *Concepts Atascadero*, CA: Ridgeview, 1998), pp. 339–52.
- 74 This, e.g., is Speaks’s own view of the nature of conceptual content.
- 75 See Hanna, *The Rational Human Condition*, part 2/volume 2, esp. the Introduction.

- 76 See Hanna, *The Rational Human Condition*, chs. 2.3 to 2.5; and R. Hanna, *Objectivity Regained: Benacerraf's Dilemma and Intuitions in Mathematics, Logic, Morality, and Philosophy* (unpublished MS, March 2011 version), complete working draft available at: http://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/paper_hanna_objectivity_regained_march11.pdf. 5
- 77 See P. F. Strawson, *Individuals* (London: Methuen, 1959).
- 78 E. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, trans. J. S. Churchill (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1964). 10
- 79 E. Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, trans. J. S. Churchill and K. Ameriks (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 111 and 115, texts combined and translation modified slightly.
- 80 See, e.g., I. Prigogine, *Being and Becoming: Time and Complexity in the Physical Sciences* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1980); and S. Savitt (ed.), *Time's Arrows Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). 15
- 81 See A. Cussins, 'Content, Conceptual Content, and Nonconceptual Content', in Gunther (ed.), *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*, pp. 133–63, at 147; Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, chs. 1–6; and Noë, *Action in Perception*. 20
- 82 See note 31 above.
- 83 J. Stanley and T. Williamson, 'Knowing How', *Journal of Philosophy* 97 (2001), pp. 411–44.
- 84 A. Noë, 'Against Intellectualism', *Analysis* 65 (2005), pp. 278–90. 25
- 85 Noë, *Action in Perception*, ch. 6.
- 86 See Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*, ch. 4; Hanna, 'Kant and Nonconceptual Content', sections IV and V; and Hanna, *Kant, Science, and Human Nature*, chs. 2 and 6.
- 87 See Hanna, *The Rational Human Condition*, part 1/volume 1, ch. 1.1. 30
- 88 Kim, *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*, ch. 3.
- 89 Kim, *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*, pp. 78–80.
- 90 Kim, *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*, p. 91.
- 91 Many thanks to Kelly Vincent for pressing me to be clearer on this point. 35
- 92 Kim, *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*, pp. 80–81.
- 93 See, e.g., J. Kihlstrom, 'The Cognitive Unconscious', *Science* 237 (1987), pp. 1445–52.
- 94 See, e.g., R. Jackendoff, *Consciousness and the Computational Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987). 40
- 95 See J. Bermúdez, 'Nonconceptual Content: From Perceptual Experience to Subpersonal Computational States', in Gunther (ed.), *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*, pp. 184–216. Bermúdez holds that subpersonal states have non-conceptual content, but would not agree that they are also conscious. 45
- 96 See E. Thompson, 'Sensorimotor Subjectivity and the Enactive Approach to Experience', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 4 (2005), pp. 407–27.
- 97 T. Nagel, 'What is like to be a bat?', in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 165–80, at pp. 166–7. 50
- 98 Nagel, 'What is it like to be a bat?', p. 166.
- 99 See Hanna and Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Action*, chapter 2.
- 100 See Hanna and Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Action*, section 2.3.
- 101 See, e.g., L. Weiskrantz, *Blindsight* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1986). 55

- 102 See N. Block, 'Concepts of Consciousness', in Chalmers (ed.), *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, pp. 206–18, at p. 211.
- 5 103 D. Milner and M. Goodale, *The Visual Brain in Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 104 Directed by J. Frankenheimer, 1962.
- 105 See, e.g., L. Pessoa, E. Thompson, and A. Noë, 'Finding out about filling in: A Guide to Perceptual Completion for Visual Science and the Philosophy of Perception', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 21 (1998), pp. 723–48.
- 10 106 See R. Hanna, 'What the Bat Saw' (unpublished MS, Summer 2011 version).
- 107 Speaks, 'Is There a Problem about Nonconceptual Content?', pp. 389–90.
- 15 108 See Hanna, *Kant, Science, and Human Nature*, chs. 1–2.
- 109 Many thanks to Dan Korman for helping me formulate this anti-non-conceptualist line of argument more clearly.
- 110 See, e.g., http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.illusionism.org/media/ames-room.png&imgrefurl=http://www.illusionism.org/depth-perception/ames%2Broom/&usg=__x2C7ctXzMPY5SeZhFvZuNDq1BY8=&h=347&w=350&sz=19&hl=en&start=1&um=1&itbs=1&tbnid=O4VDayM6IZR7QM:&tbnh=119&tbnw=120&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthe%2BAmes%2Broom%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26channel%3Ds%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26sa%3DX%26um%3D1.
- 20 111 See, e.g., Hanna, 'Direct Reference, Direct Perception, and the Cognitive Semantics of Demonstratives'.
- 25 112 See, e.g., M. Steup, 'Epistemology', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2008 Edition)*, E. Zalta (ed.) [online]. Available from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/epistemology/>.
- 30 113 I am very grateful to the participants in the Kant and Non-Conceptual Content Workshop at the University of Luxembourg in May 2009 for their very helpful critical comments on my papers and equally helpful conversation on related issues; and I am especially grateful to Dietmar Heidemann for organizing the Workshop, guiding our papers through to publication in *IJPS*, and also providing an Introduction for this special
- 35 issue.