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3 **Kantian non-conceptualism**

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7 **Abstract** There are perceptual states whose representational content cannot even
8 in principle be conceptual. If that claim is true, then at least some perceptual states
9 have content whose semantic structure and psychological function are essentially
10 distinct from the structure and function of conceptual content. Furthermore the
11 intrinsically “orientable” spatial character of essentially non-conceptual content
12 entails not only that *all* perceptual states contain non-conceptual content in this
13 essentially distinct sense, but also that *consciousness goes all the way down* into
14 so-called unconscious or subpersonal mental states. Both my argument for the
15 existence of essentially non-conceptual content and my theory of its structure and
16 function have a Kantian provenance.

17 **Keywords** Non-conceptual mental content · Spatial representation ·
18 Concepts · Consciousness · Kant

19
20 Because of its three dimensions, physical space can be thought of as having
21 three planes, which all intersect each other at right angles. Considering the
22 things which exist outside ourselves: it is only in so far as they stand in
23 relation to ourselves that we have any cognition of them by means of the
24 senses at all. It is not therefore surprising that the ultimate ground on the basis
25 of which we form our concept of directions in space, derives from the relation
26 of these intersecting planes to our bodies.

27 – Immanuel Kant¹

1FL01 ¹ Kant (1992b, p. 366, Ak 2: 378–379).

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

34 –Gareth Evans²

36 1 Introduction

37 What is non-conceptual mental content, and how can we prove that it exists? This
 38 paper has two goals. The first is to develop a decisive Kantian argument for the
 39 existence of non-conceptual content from our cognition of *enantiomorphy*, or what
 40 Kant called “incongruent counterparts”—which is a special way that pairs of
 41 qualitatively identical perceivable objects can be differently embedded in the same
 42 global orientable space. The second goal is to sketch the rudiments of a Kantian
 43 theory of the semantic structure and psychological function of non-conceptual
 44 content.

45 2 Non-conceptualism, conceptualism, and Kant

46 Mental representations are the means by which rational and other conscious animals
 47 refer to or describe items in their world for the purposes of cognition and intentional
 48 action. Broadly speaking, the mental content of an animal’s conscious mental state
 49 is *what* that state refers to or describes, and *how* it does so.

50 The thesis of *Non-Conceptualism* about mental content says that representational
 51 content is neither wholly nor solely determined by our conceptual capacities, and
 52 that at least some contents are both solely and wholly determined by non-conceptual
 53 capacities and can be shared by human and non-human animals alike.³ This thesis is
 54 directly opposed to the thesis of *Conceptualism* about mental content, which says
 55 that content is solely or wholly determined by conceptual capacities, and that the
 56 psychological states of non-human animals lack mental content.⁴

57 There are at least two important reasons for being a non-conceptualist. First, if
 58 our original encounter with the world is independent of concepts, then the prospects
 59 for some form of direct perceptual realism look good. Second, if Non-Conceptu-
 60 alism is true, then the prospects for a bottom-up theory of human rationality,
 61 according to which conceptual and other intellectual capacities, including those
 62 associated with practical reasoning, are at least partially explained in terms of more

2FL01 ² Evans (1982, p. 150).

3FL01 ³ See, e.g., Bermúdez (2003a); Evans (1982, esp. chs. 4–6); and Gunther (2003a).

4FL01 ⁴ See, e.g., McDowell (1994); Brewer (1999); and Sedivy (1996).

63 primitive psychological capacities shared with many non-human animals, also look
64 good.

65 In the recent and contemporary literature we can identify at least seven different
66 arguments for Non-Conceptualism:⁵

- 67 (1) From infant and non-human animal cognition: Normal infants and some non-
68 human animals are capable of perceptual cognition, but lack possession of
69 concepts. Therefore normal infants and some non-humans are capable of non-
70 conceptual cognition with non-conceptual content.
- 71 (2) *From phenomenological fineness of grain:* Our normal human perceptual
72 experience is so replete with phenomenal characters and qualities that we
73 could not possibly possess a conceptual repertoire extensive enough to capture
74 them. Therefore normal human perceptual experience is always to some extent
75 non-conceptual and has non-conceptual content (See Sect. III).
- 76 (3) *From perceptual discrimination:* It is possible for normal human cognizers to
77 be capable of perceptual discriminations without also being capable of re-
78 identifying the objects discriminated. But re-identification is a necessary
79 condition of concept-possession. Therefore normal human cognizers are
80 capable of non-conceptual cognitions with non-conceptual content (See Sect.
81 III).
- 82 (4) From the distinction between perception (or experience) and judgment
83 (or thought): It is possible for normal human cognizers to perceive something
84 without also making a judgment about it. But non-judgmental cognition is non-
85 conceptual. Therefore normal human cognizers are capable of non-conceptual
86 perceptions with non-conceptual content.
- 87 (5) From the knowing-how versus knowing-that (or knowing-what) distinction: It
88 is possible for normal human subjects to know *how* to do something without
89 being able to know *that* one is doing it and without knowing precisely *what* it
90 is one is doing. But cognition that lacks knowing-that and knowing-what is
91 non-conceptual. Therefore normal human subjects are capable of non-
92 conceptual knowledge-how with non-conceptual content.
- 93 (6) *From the theory of concept-acquisition:* The best overall theory of concept-
94 acquisition includes the thesis that simple concepts are acquired by normal
95 human cognizers on the basis of non-conceptual perception of the objects
96 falling under these concepts. Therefore normal human cognizers are capable of
97 non-conceptual perception with non-conceptual content.
- 98 (7) *From the theory of demonstratives:* The best overall theory of the demonstra-
99 tives ‘this’ and ‘that’ includes the thesis that demonstrative reference is fixed
100 perceptually, essentially indexically, and therefore non-descriptively by
101 normal human speakers.⁶ But essentially indexical, non-descriptive perception
102 is non-conceptual. Therefore normal human speakers are capable of non-
103 conceptual perception with non-conceptual content.

5FL01 ⁵ All of these arguments are covered in Gunther (2003a).

6FL01 ⁶ See also Hanna (1993).

104 But in his recent paper, “Is There a Problem about Non-conceptual Content?,”
 105 Jeff Speaks argues that there is in fact *no* problem about non-conceptual content⁷
 106 because

107 (i) non-conceptualists have not established that the arguments they offer for the
 108 existence of non-conceptual content are not perfectly consistent with suitably
 109 refined versions of conceptualism,

110 and

111 (ii) non-conceptualists have not established that perceptual states have represen-
 112 tational content whose semantic structure and psychological function are
 113 distinct from the semantic structure and psychological function of conceptual
 114 content.

115 I both agree and disagree with Speaks’s challenging argument. On the one hand, I
 116 quite agree that non-conceptualists have not *yet* established either that the
 117 arguments they offer for the existence of non-conceptual content are not perfectly
 118 consistent with suitably refined versions of conceptualism, or that perceptual states
 119 have representational content whose structure and function are distinct from the
 120 structure and function of conceptual content. But on the other hand, I sharply
 121 disagree that as a consequence there is no problem about non-conceptual content.

122 This is because it seems to me that there are in fact perceptual states whose
 123 representational content cannot—even *in principle*—be conceptual. If that is
 124 correct, then at least some perceptual states have representational content whose
 125 semantic structure and psychological function are *essentially distinct* from the
 126 structure and function of conceptual content. Indeed, it seems to me that the special
 127 character of non-conceptually contentful perceptual states entails that *all* perceptual
 128 states contain non-conceptual content in this essentially distinct sense—although, to
 129 be sure, the presence of this non-conceptual content does not necessarily exhaust the
 130 total content of such states. The thesis of the ubiquity of non-conceptual content is
 131 consistent with the thesis that non-conceptual content is *combinable* with conceptual
 132 content. Indeed, I believe that non-conceptual content not only *can* be combined
 133 with conceptual content, but also *must* be so combined if perceptual judgments in
 134 particular, and logical and practical reasoning about the perceivable natural world
 135 more generally, are to be possible. But in any case the nature of the uncombined or
 136 combined essentially distinct non-conceptual content of these perceptual states
 137 needs to be explained. Therefore there *is* a problem about non-conceptual content.
 138 Or so I will argue.

139 My argument also has another strand. Because the argument for the existence of
 140 non-conceptual content has a distinctively Kantian provenance, a second conclusion
 141 of my paper will be that contemporary non-conceptualists must now go “back to
 142 Kant” if they are to respond adequately to Speaks’s important challenge. This is
 143 deliciously ironic, because Kant is almost universally regarded as the *founding*
 144 *father* of conceptualism and the *nemesis* of non-conceptualism. York Gunther puts
 145 this view perfectly:

7FL01 ⁷ Speaks (2005).

146 In his slogan, “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without
147 concepts are blind,” Kant sums up the doctrine of conceptualism.⁸

148 But as I have argued in an earlier essay, not only does this famous slogan *not*
149 mean what conceptualists think it means, but also and on the contrary Kant is most
150 accurately regarded as not only the founder of conceptualism but also and perhaps
151 even more importantly as the founder of *non*-conceptualism.⁹

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

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

156 Appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not
157 find them in accord with the conditions of its unity...Appearances would
158 nonetheless offer objects to our intuition, for intuition by no means requires
159 the functions of thinking. (CPR A90/B123)

160 Concept differs from intuition by virtue of the fact that all intuition is singular.
161 He who sees his first tree does not know what it is that he sees. (*Vienna Logic*
162 Ak 24: 905)

163 In my opinion, what Kant’s famous slogan about blind intuitions and empty
164 thoughts actually means is that intuitions and concepts must always be combined
165 together for the special purpose of making objectively valid judgments. But *outside*
166 that context it is also perfectly possible for there to be directly referential intuitions
167 without concepts (“blind intuitions,” e.g., someone’s first cognitive encounter with
168 a tree), and also to have thinkable concepts without intuitions (“empty concepts,”
169 e.g., concepts of things-in-themselves). Indeed, it is precisely the fact of blind
170 intuitions that drives Kant’s need to argue in the B edition Transcendental
171 Deduction that all and only the objects of possible human experience are necessarily
172 conceptualizable under the pure concepts of the understanding or categories, and
173 necessarily constrained by the transcendental laws of a pure science of nature.
174 Otherwise blind intuitions might pick out objects of human experience that are
175 partially or wholly unconceptualizable, and nomologically intractable. In this way,
176 Kant’s theory of concepts and judgment in the *Transcendental Analytic* provides
177 foundations for conceptualism. But equally and oppositely, Kant’s theory of
178 intuition in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* also provides foundations for non-
179 conceptualism.

180 I will not re-argue those historical claims here. As I have said, the first goal of
181 this paper is to develop a Kantian argument for the existence of non-conceptual
182 content from our cognition of enantiomorphy. I will lay out that argument in Sects.
183 III–IV.

184 In the larger project of which this paper is a part, however, I want to show how a
185 broadly Kantian strategy for demonstrating and explaining the existence, semantic
186 structure, and psychological function of non-conceptual content provides

8FL01 ⁸ See Gunther (2003b, p. 1).

9FL01 ⁹ Hanna (2005).

187 foundations for a bottom-up theory of human rationality. In an earlier book,¹⁰ I tried
 188 to show how a broadly Kantian theory of the nature of logic provides *top-down*
 189 constraints on a theory of human rationality. The basic thesis of the new project is
 190 that non-conceptual content and non-conceptual cognition jointly provide for what
 191 is, in effect, *the rationality of the body*, which is to say that they jointly constitute
 192 the semantic and psychological platform on which the everyday discursive and
 193 a priori superstructure of human rationality is built. If all this is correct, then human
 194 rationality is an inherently *embodied* rationality that is also inherently constrained
 195 and governed by universal a priori logical and practical norms. I will sketch the
 196 outlines of this account in Sect. V.

197 3 Varieties of non-conceptualism

198 In this Sect. I want to take a brief critical look at the dialectical structure of the
 199 contemporary debate about non-conceptual content, and consider some different
 200 types of non-conceptualism.

201 Most or least a great many contemporary non-conceptualists define the thesis of
 202 non-conceptualism in the following way:

203 The central idea behind the theory of non-conceptual mental content is that
 204 some mental states can represent the world even though the bearer of those
 205 states does not possess the concepts required to specify their content.¹¹

206 Correspondingly, conceptualism then says that no mental states can represent the
 207 world unless the bearers of those states—who are human cognizers exclusively—
 208 possess the concepts required to specify their content. Now the argument against
 209 conceptualism most favored by contemporary non-conceptualists is the Fineness of
 210 Grain Argument, or FoGA:¹²

- 211 (1) Perceptual content is so replete with content (say, color-content or shape-
 212 content) that there cannot possibly be enough concepts in our existing
 213 conceptual repertoire to capture all the different sorts.
- 214 (2) But we nevertheless frequently make effective finegrained discriminations
 215 between the different sorts of perceptual content, even in the absence of
 216 possessing concepts for those sorts of content.
- 217 (3) Conceptualism is committed to the thesis that for every genuine discriminable
 218 difference in perceptual content, we must possess concepts that pick out the
 219 relevantly different kinds.
- 220 (4) Therefore conceptualism is false, and non-conceptualism is true.

221 Conceptualists, led by John McDowell, have replied to the FoGA by using what
 222 is now called “the Demonstrative Strategy,” or DS¹³ The DS directly addresses step

10FL01 ¹⁰ Hanna (2006a).

11FL01 ¹¹ Bermúdez (2003a, p. 1).

12FL01 ¹² See, e.g., Evans (1982, p. 229); Peacocke (2001); and Peacocke (1998).

13FL01 ¹³ See, e.g., McDowell (1994, pp. 56–60, and 170–173). The Demonstrative Strategy is also endorsed by
 13FL02 Brewer in his (1999) and by Sedivy in her (1996).

223 (2) and says that for every case of effective finegrained discrimination in which
 224 corresponding concepts are apparently lacking, it is possible to construct a
 225 demonstrative concept of the form “THIS SHADE,” “THAT SHAPE,” etc., that
 226 correctly picks out the relevant determinates under some determinable concept
 227 already possessed by the cognizer. If so, then step (2) is false and the FoGA is
 228 unsound. In reply to that reply, non-conceptualists have argued as follows:

- 229 (1) The possession of demonstrative concepts, in addition to satisfying both of
 230 what Gareth Evans called Russell’s Principle (i.e., no singular thought about
 231 an object without the subject’s possession of an identifying conception of it)¹⁴
 232 and the Generality Constraint (i.e., no singular thought about an object without
 233 the subject’s possession of the conceptual resources sufficient for entertaining
 234 many different possible thoughts about the same object),¹⁵ *also* requires the
 235 ability to re-identify instances of those concepts.
 236 (2) But we frequently make finegrained demonstrative perceptual discriminations
 237 between different sorts of perceptual content without any further ability to
 238 re-identify them.
 239 (3) Therefore the Demonstrative Strategy fails, conceptualism is false, and non-
 240 conceptualism is true.¹⁶

241 But in criticism of that counter-reply, it has been recently argued by Philippe
 242 Chuard that demonstrative *concepts* can be applied in finegrained demonstrative
 243 perceptual discriminations without any further ability to re-identify instances of those
 244 concepts.¹⁷ So concept-possession does *not* require the ability for re-identification,
 245 the Demonstrative Strategy holds, the non-conceptualists are back at square one, and
 246 Great Confusion results.

247 In light of that greatly confusing and equally disappointing result, I want to
 248 suggest the following critical diagnosis. I think that it is a big mistake to define Non-
 249 Conceptualism in terms of failures of concept-possession. Instead, Non-Conceptual-
 250 ism should be defined as the thesis that there exist perceptual mental contents, had
 251 by human and non-human animal cognizers alike, whose semantic structure and
 252 psychological function are distinct from the structure and function of conceptual
 253 content—or equivalently, that there exist what Speaks has aptly dubbed *absolutely*
 254 *non-conceptual* contents:

255 A mental state has *absolutely non-conceptual content* iff that mental state has
 256 a different kind of content than do beliefs, thoughts, etc.¹⁸

257 This thesis is what I call *Absolutist Non-Conceptualism*.

258 It should also be explicitly noted that there are two subtly different versions of
 259 the thesis that absolutely non-conceptual content exists:

14FL01 ¹⁴ Evans (1982, pp. 44 and 74).

15FL01 ¹⁵ Evans (1982, pp. 100–105).

16FL01 ¹⁶ See Kelly (2001a, b).

17FL01 ¹⁷ See Chuard (2006).

18FL01 ¹⁸ Speaks (2005, p. 360).

260 (1) *weak* Absolutist Non-Conceptualism,

261 and

262 (2) *strong* Absolutist Non-Conceptualism.

263 According to weak Absolutist Non-Conceptualism, there exist perceptual mental
 264 contents, had by human and non-human animal cognizers alike, whose structure and
 265 function are *contingently* distinct from the structure and function of conceptual
 266 content. I will call the content posited by weak Absolutist Non-Conceptualism
 267 *contingently absolutely non-conceptual content*. By contrast, according to strong
 268 Absolutist Non-Conceptualism, there exist perceptual mental contents, had by
 269 human and non-human animal cognizers alike, whose structure and function are
 270 *essentially* distinct from the structure and function of conceptual content. I will call
 271 the content posited by strong Absolutist Non-Conceptualism *essentially absolutely*
 272 *non-conceptual content*, or for short, *essentially non-conceptual content*.

273 This distinction is crucially important for clarifying what Michael Tye has
 274 recently dubbed *robustly non-conceptual content*. According to Tye,

275 (i) a contentful non-conceptual state is a contentful state the tokening of which
 276 does not involve the exercise of concepts,

277 and

278 (ii) experiences [with non-conceptual content] are non-conceptual states having
 279 coarse-grained contents (*robustly non-conceptual* contents, as I shall call
 280 them).¹⁹

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

285 The obvious problem with Tye's robustly non-conceptual content is that although
 286 it is not specified by concepts in the actual perceptual states in which they occur,
 287 there is no in principle reason why it could not be conceptually specified in states
 288 other than those actual perceptual states. In other words, robustly non-conceptual
 289 content is at most *contingently* absolutely non-conceptual, and not *essentially* non-
 290 conceptual. Tye admits as much in a very revealing footnote in the middle of a
 291 critical discussion of the FoGA and the DS:

292 I want to stress that the above discussion of demonstratives does *not* undercut
 293 the view that fineness of grain in visual experiences can be presented
 294 conceptually in *demonstrative judgments or thoughts* made on the basis of
 295 experience. What I have argued is that the *visual experiences themselves* do
 296 not represent details *via* demonstrative concepts.²⁰

19FL01 ¹⁹ Tye (2006, pp. 507–508).

20FL01 ²⁰ Tye (2006, p. 525).

297 As far as I am concerned, this gives the game away. For Tye has explicitly
 298 admitted that his robustly non-conceptual content could still be *conceptually*
 299 *presented*. So robustly non-conceptual content is ultimately just more grist for the
 300 conceptualist's mill. What the essentialist non-conceptualist is saying, by sharp
 301 contrast, is that there are perceptual contents that *cannot* be conceptually presented
 302 because they are *inherently* non-conceptual. Rough-grained or Russellian contents
 303 alone will not do. It has to be *impossible* to give an adequately individuating
 304 conceptual specification of an essentially non-conceptual content.

305 Now Speaks also very usefully distinguishes between absolutely non-conceptual
 306 content and *relatively* non-conceptual content:

307 A mental state of an agent *A* (at time *t*) has *relatively non-conceptual content*
 308 iff the content of that mind includes contents not grasped (possessed) by *A*
 309 at *t*.²¹

310 In other words, perceptual content that is relatively non-conceptual differs from
 311 conceptual content only in that an agent does not at that time meet the grasping-
 312 conditions or possession-conditions for that content. So relatively non-conceptual
 313 perceptual content might still be conceptual content in a merely or at least partially
 314 ungrasped or unpossessed form. Therefore, arguments for the existence of relatively
 315 non-conceptual perceptual content do not entail the existence of essentially non-
 316 conceptual perceptual content. For this reason, the standard version of non-
 317 conceptualism cited at the beginning of this section, which says that

318 [t]he central idea behind the theory of non-conceptual mental content is that
 319 some mental states can represent the world even though the bearer of those
 320 states does not possess the concepts required to specify their content,

321 and which therefore holds that that there exist perceptual mental contents, had by
 322 human and non-human animal cognizers alike, even though the conscious subjects
 323 of those contents do not possess the concepts required to specify them, is what I call
 324 *Relativist Non-Conceptualism*.

325 Learning from Tye's error, we can now see that it was a big mistake to have
 326 deployed the FoGA against conceptualism. This is because the FoGA mistakenly
 327 sidetracks the debate into a discussion about perceptual experiences involving
 328 failures of concept-possession, which not only deflects attention away from what I
 329 take to be the real issue about non-conceptual content—the existence or non-
 330 existence of essentially non-conceptual content—towards Relativist Non-Concept-
 331 ualism, but also is a discussion that the conceptualist can *always* win, just by
 332 pointing out that a cognitive *state* that involves a failure of concept-possession
 333 might still have *content* that is conceptual, and by strategically weakening and re-
 334 formulating the possession-based version of the conceptualist thesis as follows:

335 No mental states can represent the world without *some possible* (i.e., not
 336 necessarily any contemporary or conspecific actual) cognizer's *dispositional*

21FL01 ²¹ Speaks, "Is There a Problem about Non-conceptual Content?," p. 360.

337 (i.e., not necessarily manifest or occurrent) possession of the concepts required
 338 to *minimally* (i.e., not necessarily fully) specify their content.

339 I will call this two-part strategically weakened and re-formulated version of
 340 conceptualism, *Highly Refined Conceptualism*. This entails, for example, that even
 341 if it can be shown that some human or non-human cognizers do actually achieve
 342 demonstrative perceptual reference to some objects without actually possessing or
 343 even being capable of possessing a sortal term for the identification of those
 344 objects,²² conceptualism is not undermined. For according to Highly Refined
 345 Conceptualism, the content of that state could *still* be conceptual, precisely because

346 (a) the failure of conceptual possession-conditions for a given cognitive state does
 347 not in itself entail that the content of this state is not conceptual,

348 and

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

353 Given the possibility of Highly Refined Conceptualism, I think that Relativist
 354 Non-Conceptualism is probably *hopeless*. So instead of arguing for cognition
 355 without concept-possession, non-conceptualists should argue directly against the DS
 356 and against Conceptualism—whether unrefined or Highly Refined—by arguing for
 357 the existence of essentially non-conceptual content. I will do this in the next section
 358 by developing a *Kantian* argument for that thesis.

359 Another very troubling and often unnoticed feature of the contemporary debate
 360 about non-conceptual content is the lack of any generally accepted theory of the
 361 nature of concepts.²³ But how can we critically evaluate the claim that *non-*
 362 *conceptual* content exists and has such-and-such a semantic structure and
 363 psychological function, if we do not actually know what a *concept* is? In order to
 364 avoid that problem, in what follows I will assume that whatever counts as a concept
 365 or a conceptual content must satisfy the following complex minimally necessary
 366 condition or constraint:

367 At the very least, the function of a concept is to provide for definite or
 368 indefinite categorization, classification, discrimination, or identification of
 369 objects, and it must also be possible to linguistically convey the content of a
 370 concept to someone else who is not directly acquainted with or confronted
 371 with the object or objects represented by that conceptual content—e.g., it must
 372 be possible to linguistically convey that conceptual content to someone else
 373 over the telephone.²⁴

22FL01 ²² See, e.g., Campbell (2002, ch. 4).

23FL01 ²³ See, e.g., Bermúdez (2003a, Section 6); Fodor (1998); Peacocke (1992); and Prinz (2002).

24FL01 ²⁴ Many thanks to Jane Heal for suggesting to me this informal “over-the-telephone test” for
 24FL02 conceptuality.

374 For obvious reasons, I will call this *the Minimal Constraint*. The Minimal
 375 Constraint includes three conjoined necessary sub-conditions on anything's being a
 376 conceptual content:

- 377 (1) that the content be intrinsically descriptive,
 378 (2) that the content be intrinsically intersubjectively shareable,
 379 and
 380 (3) that the content be intrinsically such that the conscious cognizer need not be
 381 directly acquainted with or confronted by whatever is represented by it.

382 It should be noted explicitly here that the Minimal Constraint does *not* entail that
 383 there are no such things as non-linguistic concepts. On the contrary, it seems very
 384 plausible to hold that pre-linguistic human children and many non-human animals
 385 can deploy concepts as object-categorizing, object-classifying, object-discriminat-
 386 ing, and object-identifying cognitive devices, that these concepts can be deployed in
 387 the absence of the objects represented by them, that these concepts are
 388 intersubjectively shareable by other non-human animals and by human animals
 389 alike, and also that these concepts are immediately present in their mental lives both
 390 causally and phenomenologically, but *not* by means of linguistic vehicles. So on my
 391 view of concepts, there are indeed some non-linguistic concepts, in the sense that
 392 the conscious states of some animals contain psychologically real conceptual
 393 contents that lack linguistic vehicles.²⁵ But even assuming I am correct here, this
 394 fact does not in any way rule out the possibility of the sort of relatively weak but
 395 still quite substantive necessary connection between concepts and language²⁶ that
 396 the Minimal Constraint provides. The Minimal Constraint entails only that no
 397 concept is such that it *cannot*, even in principle, be communicated by means of *some*
 398 *possible natural language* to someone else who is not directly acquainted with or
 399 confronted by the object or objects represented by that concept. Thus the possible
 400 natural linguistic expressibility of every concept *suffices* to guarantee the inherently
 401 intersubjective and non-solipsistic character of concepts, even for pre-linguistic
 402 humans and non-humans. In this way, on our proposed view of concepts, and as
 403 against the later Wittgenstein, if a lion *could* talk, we *would* be able to understand
 404 him. So in this sense, all pre-linguistic human conceptualizers and non-human
 405 conceptualizers are *proto-linguistic* creatures. To use another Wittgensteinian
 406 metaphor, they do not live in the center of the city of language—but they *do* live in
 407 the suburbs.

408 In any case, the basic idea behind the Minimal Constraint is to map the contrast
 409 between essentially non-conceptual content and conceptual content onto the

25FL01 ²⁵ See also Bermúdez (2003a). Like Bermúdez, I hold that there are non-linguistic concepts and
 25FL02 thoughts; but unlike Bermúdez, who is a relativist non-conceptualist, I do not identify non-conceptual
 25FL03 content with the content of mental states not involving concept-possession.

26FL01 ²⁶ See also Carruthers (1998). Like Carruthers, I hold that there is a substantive connection between
 26FL02 conceptual thought and language; but unlike Carruthers, who is a higher-order thought theorist about
 26FL03 consciousness, I do not think that the substantive connection between conceptual thought and language
 26FL04 inherently constrains the nature of consciousness, which has a non-conceptual basis in sensorimotor
 26FL05 subjectivity.



410 classical contrast between *knowledge by acquaintance*, or *immediate experience* of
 411 the world and oneself, and *knowledge by description*, or *mediated thought* about the
 412 world and oneself. Or otherwise put, I am proposing to identify conceptual contents
 413 with *descriptive* representations, one of whose psychological functions it must be
 414 (even in the case of concepts with hybrid or mixed content, such as natural kind
 415 concepts, normative concepts, etc.) to categorize, classify, discriminate, and identify
 416 things, without our necessarily having to be *acquainted with* or *confronted by* those
 417 things. Knowledge by description expresses an objective, third-personal, commu-
 418 nicable content. Knowledge by acquaintance, by contrast, expresses an egocentric,
 419 first-personal content that is not ineffable, but rather communicable only to the
 420 extent that another ego or first person is in a cognitive position to be directly
 421 confronted by the same object. The crucial point is then that the very idea of
 422 conceptual content entails the possibility of *correct mental representation without*
 423 *direct confrontation*.

424 Concepts and conceptual content can obviously include much more than what is
 425 provided by the Minimal Constraint. For example, many concepts have a content
 426 whose underlying structure is determined by the logical syntax of predicates, sortal
 427 terms, and logical constants in elementary logic, or in some conservative extension
 428 or deviant of elementary logic. This sort of conceptual content, in turn, seems to
 429 imply the existence of a capacity for self-conscious rationality in order to recognize
 430 and deploy it.²⁷ But while this would seem to be a sufficient condition of some
 431 content's being a concept, it does not also seem to be necessary. Not every concept-
 432 user—e.g., human toddlers and lions—is a *logical animal*. By contrast, the Minimal
 433 Constraint provides a suitably low-bar and neutral but still non-trivial necessary
 434 condition on concepts and conceptual content that could be accepted by every
 435 theory of content.

436 This is not, however, to say that there cannot be theories of content that reject the
 437 Minimal Constraint. By an *amorphous* theory of mental content I mean any theory
 438 that assigns no definite underlying semantic structure to content.²⁸ And by a
 439 *vacuous* theory of conceptual content I mean any theory that straightaway identifies
 440 all mental content, propositional content, thought-content, and belief-content with
 441 conceptual content, by more or less implicitly arguing in the following way:

- 442 (1) All content must be normative and rule-governed.
 443 (2) Only conceptual representations can be normative and rule-governed.
 444 (3) Therefore all content must be conceptual, and nothing will ever count as real
 445 mental content unless it is conceptual.²⁹

446 Of course it is possible to hold amorphous or vacuous theories of content. But it
 447 seems to me that if these theories are simply assumed to be true, then they pre-
 448 emptively make a genuine debate with non-conceptualism impossible by ruling out
 449 any way of marking an intrinsic difference between conceptual content and non-
 450 conceptual content. If, by a priori fiat, no kind of mental content can ever be

27FL01 ²⁷ See Hanna (2006a, chs. 2–3).

28FL01 ²⁸ See, e.g., Stalnaker (1998).

29FL01 ²⁹ This, e.g., is Speaks's own view of the nature of conceptual content.

451 structurally distinguished from any other kind, and if, again by a priori fiat, only
 452 conceptual content will ever count psychologically as real content, then obviously
 453 essentialist non-conceptualism is false. But that is like winning a race by having
 454 your most challenging opponent disqualified by friends on the Rules Committee.
 455 Essentialist non-conceptualism has at least to be allowed to *compete*. So for the
 456 purposes of my argument, I am going to assume that it is at least an *open* question
 457 whether amorphous and vacuous theories of content are true.

458 Against the backdrop of the Minimal Constraint, I will now present a Kantian
 459 argument for the existence of essentially non-conceptual content.

460 **4 Incongruent counterparts revisited: The Two Hands Argument**

461 The argument presented below for the existence of essentially non-conceptual
 462 content, which I will call *The Two Hands Argument* (or the THA), is closely
 463 historically related to a famous argument used by Kant in both his pre-critical and
 464 critical periods, known as “the argument from incongruent counterparts.”³⁰ He
 465 defines the notion of incongruent counterparts as follows:

466 I shall call a body which is exactly equal and similar to another, but which
 467 cannot be enclosed in the same limits as the other, its *incongruent counterpart*.
 468 Now, in order to demonstrate the possibility of such a thing, let a body be
 469 taken consisting, not of two halves which are symmetrically arranged
 470 relatively to a single intersecting plane, but rather, say, a *human hand*. From
 471 all the points on its surface let perpendicular lines be extended to a plane
 472 surface set up opposite to it; and let these lines be extended the same distance
 473 behind the plane surface, as the points on the surface of the hand are in front of
 474 it; the ends of the lines, thus extended, constitute, when connected together,
 475 the surface of a corporeal form. That form is the incongruent counterpart of
 476 the first. In other words, if the hand in question is a right hand, then its
 477 counterpart is a left hand. The reflection of an object in a mirror rests upon
 478 exactly the same principles. For the object always appears as far behind the
 479 mirror as it is in front of it. Hence, the image of a right hand in the mirror is
 480 always a left hand. If the object itself consists of two incongruent counterparts,
 481 as the human body does if it is divided by means of a vertical intersection
 482 running from front to back, then its image is congruent with that object. That
 483 this is the case can easily be recognized if one imagines the body making half
 484 a rotation; for the counterpart of the counterpart of an object is necessarily
 485 congruent with that object.³¹

486 More briefly put, incongruent counterparts are perceivable mirror-reflected
 487 spatial duplicates that share all the same monadic properties, have exactly the same
 488 shape and size, and correspond point-for-point, but are in different places and
 489 cannot be made to coincide by rigid translation within the same global orientable

30FL01 ³⁰ See, e.g., Buroker (1981); and Van Cleve and Frederick (1991).

31FL01 ³¹ Kant (1992b, p. 370, Ak 2: 382).

490 space (an orientable space is a space with intrinsic directions). Even more briefly
 491 put, incongruent counterparts are enantiomorphs. Enantiomorphs are *qualitatively*
 492 *identical* but *topologically non-identical*. On Kant's view, the non-identity of
 493 incongruent counterparts, or enantiomorphs, is non-logically or synthetically
 494 necessary and a priori.

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

506 But I think that this logical possibility is no objection to Kant's thesis. This is
 507 because, for Kant, it is a necessary condition of a proposition's being synthetically
 508 necessary that its denial be logically consistent and thus that its falsity be logically
 509 possible.³² Thus his thesis is *not* that enantiomorphism can be correctly represented
 510 (or, equivalently, that mirror-reflected counterparts are incongruent, or topologically
 511 non-identical) in all logically possible spaces. For, as we have just seen, there are
 512 some logically possible spaces in which mirror-reflected counterparts are congruent.
 513 Rather Kant's thesis is that enantiomorphism can be correctly represented in all and
 514 only humanly perceivable globally or locally Euclidean *orientable* spaces, and
 515 furthermore that if a single hand were to exist alone in any possible world framed by
 516 such a space, then necessarily it would be either a left hand or a right hand.³³

517 Kantian arguments from the existence or possibility of incongruent counterparts
 518 are all based on the primitive consciousness or subjective experience of
 519 enantiomorphic topological features of the natural perceivable world and our own
 520 bodies.³⁴ As I will suggest later, however, it is also arguable that there are precise
 521 *temporal* analogues of incongruent counterparts in our primitive subjective
 522 experience of events in the natural perceivable world, and of the behavioral
 523 movements of and dynamic processes occurring within our own living bodies.

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

526 First, he uses it in his pre-critical period to disprove the relational theory of space—
 527 which says that space is nothing but a set of extrinsic relations that is supervenient on
 528 pre-existing things (e.g., Leibnizian monads) and their intrinsic non-relational
 529 properties—and to establish the existence of absolute Newtonian space as a total
 530 unified space to which material bodies extended in space are intrinsically related, and

32FL01 ³² See Hanna (2001, ch. 4).

33FL01 ³³ See Kant (1992b, p. 371, Ak 2: 383); and Nerlich (1995).

34FL01 ³⁴ One can also use the possibility of incongruent counterparts as a special kind of phenomenal inversion
 34FL02 in order to argue for failures of materialist supervenience. See Lee (2006).

531 also to demonstrate that the actual space of perceivable material bodies is intrinsically
532 directional (i.e., orientable) and egocentrically centered.³⁵

533 Second, he uses it at the very beginning of his critical Period to prove that the
534 representation of space is essentially intuitional and not conceptual.³⁶

535 Third, he uses it in the middle of his critical period to prove that space and time
536 are transcendently ideal.³⁷

537 And fourth and finally, he also uses it in his post-critical period to establish the
538 thesis that all rational thinking requires an intuition-based "orientation" in order to
539 be adequately grounded.³⁸

540 Kant's fourfold use of the argument from incongruent counterparts is not only
541 interesting: it is also philosophically important. One conclusion we can draw from it
542 is that since Kant's pre-critical version of the argument entails Newtonian *realism*
543 about space while his critical version of the argument entails transcendental
544 *idealism* about space, these two arguments cancel out, and show us that the
545 argument from incongruent counterparts is in fact *neutral* with respect to realism
546 and idealism about space. This is the clue I shall follow up directly in the THA.
547 While the THA has a distinctively Kantian provenance, I think that it is also
548 defensible on grounds that are altogether logically independent of the question of
549 whether transcendental idealism is true or false.

550 4.1 The Two Hands Argument

551 (1) Incongruent counterparts are logically and metaphysically possible. (Premise,
552 supported by Kant's theory of incongruent counterparts and human geomet-
553 rical intuition.)

554 (2) Incongruent counterparts, by definition, are enantiomorphs. This entails that
555 they are perceivable mirror-reflected property-for-property spatial duplicates
556 that have exactly the same shape and size, and correspond point-for-point. In
557 short, incongruent counterparts are *qualitatively identical*. (From (1).)

558 (3) So by definition, there is no *descriptive* difference between incongruent
559 counterparts. (From (2).)

560 (4) Either of my hands and its corresponding mirror-image are actual examples of
561 incongruent counterparts, and my own actual right and left hands are
562 approximate incongruent counterparts. (Premise, supported by Kant's theory
563 of incongruent counterparts and human geometrical intuition.)

564 (5) Therefore there is no descriptive difference between either one of my hands
565 and its incongruent counterpart. (From (3) and (4).)

566 (6) Therefore there is no conceptual difference between either one of my hands
567 and its incongruent counterpart. In particular, the difference between either
568 one of my hands and its incongruent counterpart could never be conveyed to

35FL01 ³⁵ See Kant (1992b). See also Hanna (2000).

36FL01 ³⁶ See Kant (1992c).

37FL01 ³⁷ See Kant (1977, §13, pp. 29–30, Ak 4: 285–286). See also Hanna (2006b, ch. 6).

38FL01 ³⁸ See Kant (1991).

- 569 someone else who was not directly confronted with these objects—e.g., it is
 570 impossible to convey the precise difference between one of my hands and its
 571 incongruent counterpart to someone else by means of language over the
 572 telephone. (From (5) and the Minimal Constraint.)
- 573 (7) But I can directly perceive the difference between either of my hands and its
 574 incongruent counterpart, and can also directly perceive the difference between
 575 my right and left hands. (Premise, supported by Kant’s theory of incongruent
 576 counterparts and phenomenological introspection.)
- 577 (8) Therefore essentially non-conceptual content exists. (From (6), (7), and the
 578 notion of essentially non-conceptual content.)

579 Before going on, I want to respond to an obvious objection based on the
 580 Demonstrative Strategy. The objection says that even if the THA is sound, it is
 581 nevertheless possible to form the demonstrative concepts *this right hand* and *this left*
 582 *hand*, and then use those concepts to tell my two hands apart from one another.
 583 Hence the cognition of incongruent counterparts can still be conceptual.

584 This objection trades on an important confusion in the very idea of a
 585 “demonstrative concept.” As Sean Kelly has correctly pointed out, “the demon-
 586 strative concept is something of a chimera: it has the head of a singular term but the
 587 body of a general concept.”³⁹ In fact, the content *this F* is nothing more and nothing
 588 less than a 2-part hybrid content consisting of

- 589 (i) the essentially indexical demonstrative *this*,⁴⁰
 590 and
 591 (ii) the concept *F*.

592 2-part hybrid contents consisting of a demonstrative and a concept are *both*
 593 essentially indexical and *also* conceptual, in the same way that a griffin has *both* an
 594 eagle’s head and *also* a lion’s body. But a griffin is not a special kind of lion: it is a sui
 595 generis biological composite. It does not follow that a griffin is *a special kind of lion*,
 596 just because it includes *a lion part*. So too a hybrid content is a sui generis semantic
 597 composite. Correspondingly then, it does not follow that a 2-part hybrid content is *a*
 598 *special kind of concept*, just because it includes *a conceptual part*. Therefore it is
 599 fundamentally misleading to call *this F* a “demonstrative concept,” just as it would be
 600 fundamentally misleading to call a griffin an “eagle-headed lion.”

601 By the same token, it is fundamentally misleading to call the content *this right*
 602 *hand* a “demonstrative concept.” In fact, the content *this right hand* is nothing more
 603 and nothing less than a 3-part hybrid content consisting of

- 604 (i) the essentially indexical demonstrative *this*,
 605 (ii) the essentially non-conceptual content *right*,
 606 and
 607 (iii) the concept *hand*.

39FL01 ³⁹ Kelly (2001a, p. 398).

40FL01 ⁴⁰ See Perry (1979). See also Hanna (1993).

608 Obviously it does not follow that a 3-part hybrid content is a special kind of
 609 conceptual content, just because it has a conceptual part. Therefore the objection
 610 fails.

611 5 Some consequences of the Two Hands Argument

612 According to the THA, the content of perceptual states that pick out a perceivable
 613 natural object—such as a human hand—that has an actual or possible incongruent
 614 counterpart, is essentially non-conceptual. But it is clearly and distinctly conceiv-
 615 able, and therefore logically possible, that *any* perceivable natural object, and also
 616 *any* external part of *anyone's* body, has an actual or possible incongruent
 617 counterpart. Here we need only imagine the natural object or body part placed in
 618 front of a mirror in order to recognize this possibility. This also inherently carries
 619 with it the possibility of *massive reduplication*,⁴¹ such that necessarily, for any
 620 perceivable natural object and any finite set of such objects embedded in any actual
 621 local space in our orientable spatial world, a mirror reflection of that object or set of
 622 objects and the surrounding local space in which they are embedded is always
 623 possible. So the cognitive need for essentially non-conceptual content is ubiquitous
 624 in our world, in order for us to be able to discriminate between things and their
 625 incongruent counterparts.

626 Of course it is true that some perceivable natural objects are events and not
 627 merely static material substances. But every such event E has two possible
 628 counterparts that are exactly the same event, only occurring either *earlier* or *later*
 629 than E actually occurs. Let us assume for the purposes of argument that time is
 630 subjectively experienced as asymmetric in its direction of flow, and that there are
 631 good reasons provided by contemporary natural science for thinking that real natural
 632 time has thermodynamic irreversibility.⁴² We can then easily recognize how the
 633 earlier possible counterpart event E_{earlier} is the precise temporal analogue of one of
 634 my hands and the later possible counterpart event E_{later} is the precise temporal
 635 analogue of the incongruent counterpart of that hand. But, in real natural time as
 636 perceived by us, just which of the counterparts is earlier than E and just which is
 637 later than E , such that I could uniquely identify it as *happening before E* or as
 638 *happening after E*, cannot be determined by descriptive means alone—I could not
 639 convey this to someone by means of language over the telephone. Therefore all
 640 perceptual states directed at perceivable natural objects or body parts, whether they
 641 are representations of static material substances, or whether they are representations
 642 of natural events occurring outside or within my own living body, must have
 643 essentially non-conceptual content.

644 Generalizing now, I want to claim that essentially non-conceptual content is
 645 mental content that is inherently sensitive to the egocentrically centered orientation,
 646 dynamics, intrinsic topology, and intrinsic temporality of material objects and of
 647 conscious subjects themselves in the embodied perception of any distal object or

41FL01 ⁴¹ See Strawson (1959).

42FL01 ⁴² See, e.g., Prigogine (1980); and Savitt (1995).

648 any part of their living bodies that has an actual or possible incongruent counterpart.
 649 If this is correct, then it leads to an even more profound consequence of the THA.
 650 Because only essentially non-conceptual content can adequately represent the
 651 unique location of material objects and of the embodied subject from the subject's
 652 own unique spatial and temporal standpoint, it seems that only essentially non-
 653 conceptual content is structurally and functionally suited to the finegrained
 654 sensorimotor control of the body in human and non-human perceptual cognition
 655 and intentional action.

656 For example, it seems that only essentially non-conceptual content is structurally
 657 and functionally suited to mediate my conscious ability to get my key quickly and
 658 smoothly out of my pocket and directly into the keyhole of the front door of my
 659 house—even in the dark, and with a drink or two in me. So it seems that essentially
 660 non-conceptual content inherently involves what Adrian Cussins calls “basic spatial
 661 and temporal tracking and discriminatory skills which are required to find our way
 662 around the environment,” what Shaun Gallagher calls “body schemas,” and what
 663 Alva Noë calls “sensorimotor knowledge.”⁴³ This is ironic in the case of Noë, since
 664 he explicitly describes himself as a *conceptualist*. But I think that he has assumed
 665 the truth of a *vacuous* theory of conceptual content (see Sect. III) and thus over-
 666 extended conceptual content into the domain of the essentially non-conceptual.

667 Be that as it may, I think that the primary psychological function of essentially
 668 non-conceptual perceptual content is uniquely and accurately to locate either
 669 (i) causally efficacious, practically relevant or even usable, static or dynamic actual
 670 perceivable natural objects at a distance from the embodied cognitive and
 671 intentional agent (*distal location*), or (ii) the embodied cognitive and intentional
 672 agent herself (*reflexive location*), in their egocentrically centered spatiotemporal
 673 contexts. But what ultimately unifies these capacities is the uniquely Kantian idea,
 674 developed in the Transcendental Aesthetic, that the representation of space and the
 675 representation of time are the necessary a priori subjective forms of sensibility.⁴⁴
 676 Here we must remember that for Kant the domain of sensibility or *Sinnlichkeit*
 677 includes not just sense perception, but also phenomenal consciousness or “inner
 678 sense,” the imagination, pleasure and pain, and desire. So what I am saying is that
 679 we should think of the representation of space and the representation of time as the
 680 necessary a priori subjective forms of egocentrically centered human and non-
 681 human animal embodiment.

682 Now essentially non-conceptual content is either accurate or inaccurate, and as I
 683 have suggested, inherently poised for use in the intentional actions of conscious
 684 animals. Thus essentially non-conceptual content is inherently normative and
 685 practical. But for conscious animals like *us*, essentially non-conceptual content is
 686 also inherently poised for use in logical cognition (including judgment and
 687 inference) and in self-conscious, deliberative, causally and morally responsible
 688 action. Therefore, in conscious animals like *us*, essentially non-conceptual content
 689 is also *rationally* normative and practical.

43FL01 ⁴³ See Cussins (2003, p. 147); Gallagher (2005, esp. chs. 1–6); and Noë (2004).

44FL01 ⁴⁴ See Hanna (2005, Sections IV and V).

690 Granting this, then another important consequence of the THA is that basic levels
 691 of mental activity and representation generally assumed to belong to “the cognitive
 692 unconscious”⁴⁵ are in fact non-conceptually *conscious*. Consciousness goes *all the*
 693 *way down* to the ground floor of cognition via what we might call the “ladder” of
 694 essentially non-conceptual content. This is what I call the *Deep Consciousness*
 695 *Thesis*. If the Deep Consciousness Thesis is true, then can see the beginnings of a
 696 solution to what Ray Jackendoff aptly calls *the mind-mind problem*, which is how it
 697 is ever possible for there be genuine two-way causal or semantic interaction across
 698 the theoretical and normative gap between the Conscious Mind (or *first-personal*
 699 information processing) and the Computational Mind (or *subpersonal* information
 700 processing)⁴⁶ The Kantian non-conceptualist solution to the mind-mind problem,
 701 along with the Deep Consciousness Thesis, is that subpersonal processing is still in
 702 fact *first-personal, conscious* processing even though it is *non-conceptual* and *non-*
 703 *self-conscious*.⁴⁷

704 This doctrine may seem shockingly unorthodox. But properly understood, it is
 705 much less shocking than it may seem. One fundamental source of philosophical
 706 confusion in this area is that the very idea of consciousness, or “the first-personal,”
 707 is deeply ambiguous as between

708 (a) *self-consciousness or self-reflection*,

709 which is the ability of a conscious creature like us to have conscious meta-
 710 representational states or conscious thoughts about itself, and what Evan Thompson
 711 aptly calls

712 (b) *sensorimotor subjectivity*,⁴⁸

713 which is the more primitive ability of conscious suitably neurobiologically
 714 complex living organisms like us to have what Thomas Nagel also aptly calls a
 715 “single point of view.”⁴⁹ In turn, I hold, this ability of a conscious living organism
 716 like us to have a single point of view is grounded in egocentrically centered
 717 embodiment, and a *primitive bodily awareness* that includes proprioception (the
 718 sense of one’s own body parts and limbs), kinaesthesia (the sense of bodily
 719 movement), the sense of orientation and balance, bodily pleasures and pains, tickles
 720 and itches, the feeling of pressure, the feeling of temperature, the feelings of vitality
 721 or lethargy, and so-on.

722 The crucial point here is that self-consciousness or self-reflection requires
 723 sensorimotor subjectivity, but sensorimotor subjectivity does not require self-
 724 consciousness or self-reflection. For example, at least some non-human animals—
 725 e.g., Nagel’s bat—and all normal human infants have sensorimotor-subjective states
 726 that are not also self-conscious or self-reflective. And again, when I am skillfully

45FL01 ⁴⁵ See, e.g., Kihlstrom (1987).

46FL01 ⁴⁶ See, e.g., Jackendoff (1987).

47FL01 ⁴⁷ See Bermúdez (2003c). Bermúdez holds that subpersonal states have non-conceptual content, but
 47FL02 would not agree that they are also conscious.

48FL01 ⁴⁸ See Thompson (2005).

49FL01 ⁴⁹ Nagel (1979, pp. 166–167).

727 driving my car but thinking about philosophy, the conscious states that skillfully
 728 control my driving are sensorimotor-subjective but not in any way self-conscious or
 729 self-reflective. Since, presumably, *everyone* would agree that normal human infants
 730 and at least some non-human animals are conscious animals but not also self-
 731 conscious or self-reflective animals, and also that it is possible to drive a car
 732 consciously but not self-consciously or self-reflectively, then at least implicitly
 733 everyone *already* concedes a distinction between sensorimotor subjectivity and
 734 meta-representational or self-conscious subjectivity. Hence it is not so very
 735 shocking after all for me to hold that all mental states, even tacit computational
 736 information processing states, are also occurrently conscious. All I am saying is that
 737 even tacit computational information processing involves *sensorimotor subjectivity*,
 738 but not meta-representational or self-conscious subjectivity.

739 Sensorimotor subjectivity is non-conceptual consciousness precisely because all
 740 sensorimotor-subjective states contain essentially non-conceptual information. By
 741 contrast, as Kant explicitly held in the Transcendental Analytic, self-consciousness
 742 is *conceptual consciousness* precisely because to be self-conscious is to be able to
 743 make reflexive judgments about one's own mental states and to possess (even if
 744 only in the Highly Refined sense) a concept of oneself.

745 If we were sufficiently careful about the distinction between sensorimotor
 746 subjectivity and self-consciousness, then I think that even the deeply puzzling and
 747 much-discussed phenomenon of blindsight⁵⁰—in which some brain-damaged
 748 subjects who introspectively report an inability to see are also able to point
 749 accurately to objects in the self-professedly blind parts of their visual fields—could
 750 be explained. For we could then say that the finegrained sensorimotor connection
 751 between what blindsighters perceive in space and their ability to point to it is guided
 752 by *sensorimotor-subjective vision*, even though they lack *self-conscious vision* for
 753 that cognitive and practical task. Otherwise put, in blindsight the frontline
 754 information-processing mechanisms of the eyes and related areas of the wider brain-
 755 body system are undamaged (blindsighters, after all, have their eyes open and are
 756 working under well-lit conditions) and continue to transmit sensorimotor-subjective
 757 visual information, even though the corresponding downstream mechanisms for
 758 processing self-conscious visual information have broken down. Blindsighters
 759 would then be best characterized as *sighted* in one sense of conscious vision, but
 760 *blind* in another sense of conscious vision. That is: blindsighters experience self-
 761 conscious *blindness* via the more sophisticated downstream processing mechanisms
 762 of the brain-body system, but also experience sensorimotor-subjective *sight* via the
 763 simpler processing mechanisms of the eyes. The notion of divided consciousness is
 764 already theoretically familiar from well-known experiments involving divided
 765 attention tasks and the dissociated cognitive abilities of neo-commissurotomy
 766 patients, so it should not therefore be very difficult to extend the same general idea
 767 to blindsight.

768 This in turn would neatly avoid the obvious paradox that in blindsight brute, non-
 769 conscious, non-unified, purposeless mental processing somehow exerts finegrained
 770 control over our conscious cognition and intentional body movements. It seems to

50FL01 ⁵⁰ See, e.g., Weiskrantz (1986).

771 me very implausible to hold that blindsighted people are *mere robots* in the blind
 772 areas of their self-conscious visual fields. On the contrary, it seems to me far more
 773 plausible that blindsighted people are genuinely visually conscious in those areas,
 774 but in a way that is in some respects intrinsically phenomenologically, semantically,
 775 and neurobiologically different from the visual consciousness of normal self-
 776 consciously sighted people. (This Kantian non-conceptualist explanation of
 777 blindsight, correspondingly, suggests a new way of explaining the equally puzzling
 778 phenomenon of “filling-in.”⁵¹)

779 For the Kantian non-conceptualist, sensorimotor subjectivity and essentially non-
 780 conceptual content go intrinsically together, hand-in-glove, and this is the deepest
 781 insight of the Transcendental Aesthetic. So in the case of blindsight, what Kant
 782 would have called “intuitions” or *Anschaungen* are *literally* blind in the self-
 783 conscious sense (the subject *believes* herself to be blind), yet intrinsically involve a
 784 sensorimotor subjectivity in “inner sense” and are also directly referential
 785 conscious mental representations. The blindsighted subject authentically *sees* the
 786 world in a sensorimotor-subjective and essentially non-conceptual sense, but also
 787 *fails to see* the world in a self-conscious, thought-based, and conceptual sense. By
 788 an illuminating contrast, while Nagel’s bat is *also* blind, *also* has a sensorimotor
 789 subjectivity, and *also* is capable of directly referential cognition, it does not actually
 790 *see* the world in a sensorimotor-subjective sense but rather *hears the world* via sonar
 791 instead.

792 Non-conceptualists have within their grasp a decisive reply to Speaks’s important
 793 challenge. If, as I have argued, the THA is sound, then essentially non-conceptual
 794 perceptual content exists, essentialist non-conceptualism is true, and conceptualism
 795 is false. But once they have made this decisive reply to Speaks, then I believe that
 796 non-conceptualists will also be committed to the deeper and larger task of
 797 explaining the nature of essentially non-conceptual content by relating it to human
 798 conceptual cognition, judgment, intentional action,⁵² logical rationality,⁵³ and
 799 practical rationality alike.

800 This explanation in turn, I think, must also invoke a broadly Kantian cognitive-
 801 semantic framework. Indeed even Speaks, who of course is skeptical about the
 802 existence of absolutely non-conceptual perceptual content, thinks that progress on
 803 the question of the relations between thought and perception cannot be made until
 804 we resuscitate and re-think some basic Kantian themes:

51FL01 ⁵¹ Filling-in is the puzzling fact that our visual field presents itself as rich and continuous even though we
 51FL02 have blind spots on our retinas. Various solutions to the puzzle have been offered. See, e.g., Pessoa et al.
 51FL03 (1998). The Kantian non-conceptualist solution is that filling-in is essentially the reverse of blindsight:
 51FL04 whereas in blindsight the subject has sensorimotor-subjective vision without self-conscious vision
 51FL05 (=sensorimotor-subjective vision via the simpler processing mechanisms of the eyes, together with self-
 51FL06 conscious blindness via the more sophisticated processing mechanisms of the downstream brain-body
 51FL07 system), by contrast in filling-in subjects have self-conscious vision without sensorimotor-subjective
 51FL08 vision (=self-conscious vision via the more sophisticated processing mechanisms of the downstream
 51FL09 brain-body system, together with sensorimotor-subjective blindness via the simpler processing
 51FL10 mechanisms of the eyes).

52FL01 ⁵² See, e.g., Mele (1987); and Hanna and Maiese (forthcoming).

53FL01 ⁵³ See Hanna (2006a).

805 I do think that there is a natural understanding of the questions about non-
 806 conceptual content which I have not discussed, but which seems to be in the
 807 background of McDowell's discussions of the issue. I have in mind his many
 808 discussions of the involvement of a faculty of spontaneity in perception. This
 809 is the Kantian question of how far one's conceptual capacities—one's abilities
 810 to have thoughts involving certain kinds of concepts—go toward shaping the
 811 contents of one's experience. But is this a matter of the new concepts entering
 812 into the content of one's perceptions, or of one simply being able to infer more
 813 sophisticated beliefs from a more or less stable perceptual content? This does
 814 strike me as an interesting and fundamental question with broad consequences
 815 for our understanding of the nature of intentionality.⁵⁴

816 Here is a sketch of how a Kantian theory of essentially non-conceptual content
 817 could begin to answer this "interesting and fundamental question." Such a theory
 818 would hold that essentially non-conceptual content has its *own* "lower-level
 819 spontaneity" (what Kant calls the spontaneity of the *synthesis speciosa* or
 820 "figurative synthesis" of the imagination)⁵⁵ and hence its own lower-level
 821 normativity, that is based on spatiotemporally structured and egocentrically oriented
 822 instrumental—or hypothetically practical—rules for the skillful manipulation of
 823 tools and of the proximal or distal environment, and for the skillful finegrained
 824 sensorimotor control of one's own body in basic intentional actions. Such a theory
 825 would also hold that this lower-level spontaneity of our non-conceptual cognitive
 826 capacities is irreducible to the "higher-level spontaneity" (what Kant calls the
 827 spontaneity of the *synthesis intellectualis* or "intellectual synthesis" of the
 828 understanding and reason)⁵⁶ of our conceptual capacities and our self-conscious-
 829 ness, and thus that its lower-level normativity is irreducible to the higher-level
 830 normativity of our conceptually funded rationality, which is based on non-
 831 instrumental—or categorically practical—rules of logic and morality. And finally
 832 such a theory would also hold that the lower-level spontaneity and lower-level
 833 normativity of essentially non-conceptual content is the necessary ground of the
 834 higher-level rational spontaneity and normativity of conceptual content, and that
 835 both kinds of content are *complementary* to one another in the constitution of atomic
 836 or basic perceptual judgments, or what Kant calls "judgments of experience."⁵⁷

837 6 Conclusion

838 If what I have argued is correct, then it follows that essentially non-conceptual
 839 content, unified by the Kantian necessary a priori subjective forms of sensibility, not
 840 only exists, but also is the original and necessary two-way ladder by which the
 841 world is consciously delivered up from embodied animal experience to self-

54FL01 ⁵⁴ Speaks (2005, pp. 389–390).

55FL01 ⁵⁵ See Kant, L., *Critique of pure reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ.
 55FL02 Press, 1997), p. 256, B151.

56FL01 ⁵⁶ See Kant (1997, pp. 256–257, B151–152).

57FL01 ⁵⁷ See Hanna (2006b, chs. 1–2).

842 conscious thought and action-oriented deliberation, and then is downwardly
 843 transformed by our thinking and action under universal a priori norms. Otherwise
 844 put, the Sellarsian “space of reasons” is nothing more and nothing less than a
 845 discursive—that is, a conceptual, judgment-driven, and linguistic—and a priori
 846 normative superstructure built on the platform of essentially non-conceptual
 847 embodied animal experience.

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