What Incongruent Counterparts Show

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Abstract: In a recent paper, Robert Hanna argues that Kant's
incongruent counterparts example can be mobilized to show that
some mental representations, which represent complex states of
affairs as complex, do so entirely non-conceptually. I will argue that
Hanna is right to see that Kant uses incongruent counterparts to
show that there must be a non-conceptual component to cognition,
but goes too far in concluding that there must be entirely non-
conceptual representations that represent objects as existing in
space and time. Kant is deeply committed to the thesis that no
representation of a complex state of affairs as complex can be
entirely non-conceptual. For Kant, all representations of complex
states of affairs as complex (including those of incongruent
counterparts) are conceptually structured. I present an interpreta-
tion of the Transcendental Aesthetic according to which Kant not
only aims at Leibnizian and Newtonian accounts of space and time,
but also Hume's. Hume's account fails to make representations of
complex states of affairs sufficiently determinate. Kant offers an
account later in the *Critique* that is meant to correct this failing by
requiring that all representations of complex states of affairs as
complex be conceptually (inferentially) structured.

In his recent paper, 'Kantian Non-Conceptualism', Robert Hanna argues that
Kant's incongruent counterparts example can be mobilized in an argument for
the conclusion that 'essentially non-conceptual content exists'.[1] That is, he argues
that this example proves that some mental representations, which represent
complex states of affairs *as* complex, do so entirely non-conceptually. His
argument is (roughly) as follows. Incongruent counterparts are qualitatively
identical. Therefore, any concept that applies to one of a pair of incongruent
counterparts applies to the other. Therefore, a representation of a pair of
incongruent counterparts as distinct cannot be an entirely conceptual representa-
tion. Therefore, this representation must be entirely non-conceptual.

Clearly, the move from the penultimate step of this argument to its conclusion
is invalid, but I will argue that it is exactly the move that Hanna makes. So,
Hanna is right to see that Kant uses incongruent counterparts to show that there
must be a non-conceptual *component* to cognition, but moves beyond what his
premises can support in concluding that there must be *entirely* non-conceptual
representations of items as existing in space and time. Instead, I will argue, Kant
is deeply committed to the thesis that *no* representation of a complex state of

affairs *as complex* (including any spatio-temporal state of affairs) can be entirely non-conceptual. That is, for Kant, all representations of complex states of affairs as complex are conceptually structured. Therefore, any representation of incongruent counterparts as (spatially or temporally) distinct from one another must be conceptually structured.

This thesis is at odds with a certain reading of the Transcendental Aesthetic according to which Kant argues that our intuitions of space and time are entirely non-conceptual.[2] I will thus offer an interpretation according to which, even in the Aesthetic, representations of space and time *must* be conceptually structured. The case for this interpretation will center on the notion that while Kant scholars have long focused on Kant's attempts to refute Leibnizian and Newtonian accounts of space and time in the Aesthetic, they have largely overlooked the fact that Kant also there seeks to refute *Hume's* account. I will argue that by examining the reasons that Kant gives in the Aesthetic for rejecting Hume's account of how we represent space and time, we can see that he must also be committed to the thesis that the representations of space and time are all conceptually structured.

The argument that I will trace through the Aesthetic goes (roughly) like this. Hume thought that we represent items as being spatially and/or temporally related to one another by placing representations of these items into spatial and/ or temporal relationships with one another. This account fails to make representations of complex states of affairs sufficiently determinate (cf. Landy 2009a). The account offered by Kant later in the *Critique*, in the Metaphysical Deduction, is broadly speaking a kind of inferentialism and is meant exactly to correct this failing of Hume's (cf. Landy 2009b). Kant's inferentialism requires that all representations of complex states of affairs as complex be inferentially (conceptually) structured. Thus, we must understand Kant's project in the Aesthetic not as positing non-conceptual representations, but rather as bracketing the conceptual aspects of representation to emphasize and scrutinize their non-conceptual aspects.

My procedure here will be as follows. First I will present and critique Hanna's argument, in the process suggesting an alternative to the conclusion he draws from Kant's premises. Next I will present evidence that this alternative is, in fact, Kant's position by showing that his position in the Transcendental Aesthetic can be read as a direct response to Hume's account of how we represent complex states of affairs as such. Finally, I will sketch a broad-strokes picture of how the rest of the *Critique* fills in the details of Kant's response to Hume by constructing a theory of representation according to which non-conceptual representations (which do not represent anything *as* complex) are combined to form conceptually-structured representations (which do). To begin, then, I will turn to Hanna.

I

Hanna gives his version of the argument from incongruent counterparts in the context of a paper in which he details a number of possible conceptualist and

non-conceptualist positions on mental representation, and argues persuasively that, given the current dialectics in the literature, only certain of each of these kinds of positions are tenable. Conceptualism is the thesis that all mental representations are conceptually structured.[3] Non-conceptualism is the thesis that at least some mental representations are not conceptually structured, and in fact do not require the deployment of concepts at all.[4] Hanna presents the Incongruent Counterparts argument as showing that conceptualism is untenable, and therefore, that some form of non-conceptualism must be right.

Now, before we turn to Hanna's argument, it will be helpful to put some cards on the table. What I will be arguing here is that Hanna's distinction between conceptualism and non-conceptualism obscures a different, crucial, distinction between mental representations that represent complex states of affairs *as complex*, and those that do not. I will argue that in order to fully understand *Kant's* theory of representation, and so his solution to the puzzle posed by the possibility of incongruent counterparts, we must read him as holding that the former representations (that represent complex states of affairs *as complex*) must be conceptually structured, but that there must also be representations of the latter kind (that do not represent complex states of affairs as complex) that are not conceptually structured. So, Kant comes out as a conceptualist about representations of complex states of affairs as complex—or, as he would put it, about representations of a manifold as a manifold—and a non-conceptualist about all representation *simpliciter*. His solution to the incongruent counterparts puzzle is to maintain that our *conceptual* representations of each member of such a pair as distinct from the other have non-conceptual *components*. This reading is opposed to Hanna's insofar as Hanna takes Kant to hold that incongruent counterparts are represented as distinct via non-conceptually structured representations *alone*.

To begin this dialectic, we must start with Hanna's argument, and it will be helpful to have that argument before us in its entirety.

(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 property-for-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).)

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

(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.)

(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 difference between either one of my hands and its incongruent counterpart could never be conveyed to someone else who was not directly confronted with these objects—e.g., it is impossible to convey the precise difference between one of my hands and its incongruent counterpart to someone else by means of language over the telephone. (From (5) and the Minimal Constraint.)[5]

(7) But I can directly perceive the difference between either of my hands and its incongruent counterpart, and can also directly perceive the difference between my right and left hands. (Premise, supported by Kant's theory of incongruent counterparts and phenomenological introspection.)

(8) Therefore essentially non-conceptual content exists. (From (6), (7), and the notion of essentially non-conceptual content.) (Hanna 2008: 55–6)

The incongruent counterparts argument is a familiar one from Kant, although, as I will argue further on, Hanna puts it to a different use here than Kant anywhere does. Hanna's version of the argument is roughly this. There is no way to distinguish one's right hand from one's left hand using only concepts. We can, however, so distinguish our hands. Therefore, we must do so via *non-conceptual* representations of them. Thus, Hanna sees himself as having refuted the conceptualist by proving that, as he puts it, 'essentially non conceptual content exists.' That is, since the conceptualist claims that all representations are conceptually structured, Hanna takes himself to have refuted the conceptualist by establishing that there are some representations that are entirely non-conceptual, and further, that such non-conceptual representations represent pairs of incongruent counterparts as distinct.

I will argue in a moment that Hanna has established no such thing, but first I want to make it clear that this is, in fact, what Hanna *takes himself* to have established. Doing this turns on understanding Hanna's phrase, 'essentially non-conceptual content exists.' Fortunately, Hanna tells us earlier in his paper exactly what he means by this. For essentially non-conceptual content to exist, is for there to exist,

> perceptual mental contents, had by human and non-human animal cognizers alike, whose structure and function are essentially distinct from the structure and function of conceptual content. (Hanna 2008: 48)

An important point for us to notice going forward is that Hanna here claims that such non-conceptual mental contents are essentially *distinct* from the structure and function of conceptual content. That is, what Hanna takes himself to

establish using Kant's Incongruent Counterparts example is that there are at least two kinds of representations—conceptual and non-conceptual—which can exist entirely independently of one another, and that the non-conceptual kind of representations are what are employed in our representing our hands as different from one another. (It is this claim, that entirely non-conceptual representations alone can be used to represent items as distinct from one another, to which my objection will be aimed.)

> 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 judgments. 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). (Hanna 2008: 45)

Here we finally arrive at Hanna's full-dress conclusion. When he claims that the Incongruent Counterparts argument shows that essentially non-conceptual content exists, what he means is that it shows that there can be representations of our hands—'directly referential intuitions'—without concepts, and that it is by employing such representations, *and no others*, that we represent our hands as different. For Hanna, representing a pair of incongruent counterparts as distinct from one another is an entirely non-conceptual affair. We do this using *only* non-conceptual 'directly referential intuitions'.

Having gained a clear understanding of what it is that Hanna takes himself to have shown, I now want to demonstrate that this conclusion is not justified by the premises of his argument. In particular, I want to show that Hanna has overlooked an alternative solution to the problem posed by the Incongruent Counterparts argument that not only invalidates the move from the premises to the conclusion, but also gives a more accurate picture of Kant's own solution to this puzzle. Sketching this alternative will take up the remainder of the current section. Showing that this alternative better represents Kant's own account will be the topic of the next.

To review, I agree with Hanna that the Incongruent Counterparts argument shows that we cannot represent our hands as different using concepts alone. Every concept that is applicable to one is applicable to the other, so there is no way to use concepts alone to draw a difference between them. Hanna infers from this that we represent our hands as different using *non*-conceptual representations: 'directly referential intuitions'. These are non-conceptual in the sense that they could exist entirely independently of any concept, and they are representations in the sense that they represent our hands *as* different (as being in different *places*).

The alternative I want to suggest to this picture is that we represent our hands as different (as being in different spaces) by using conceptually structured representations of space and time, which have as components *non*-conceptually

structured representations of our hands (or parts of our hands), but which non-conceptual representations do not themselves represent our hands *as* different. That is, I want to take very seriously Kant's claim that it is only through the use of concepts that we can represent a manifold *as* a manifold. Doing so requires that we also take seriously the idea that we cannot represent *space and time* as manifolds, as complex, without using concepts. Since the way that we represent incongruent counterparts, e.g., our hands, as different is by representing them as being in different *places*, it follows that our representations of our hands, even merely as two items located in different places, essentially involves concepts. It further follows that *any* representation of a complex state of affairs as complex (any representation of a manifold as a manifold) requires the use of concepts, so there is *no* solution to the Incongruent Counterparts puzzle that alone shows that there are representations that are entirely non-conceptual.

Rather, the conclusion that we ought to draw from those premises is that in addition to the conceptual structure of our representations of our hands, such representations must also have some non-conceptual *components*. What I will suggest in the next section is that, taking Kant's dictum seriously, these components cannot by themselves represent any complex state of affairs as complex, but that they can do so *when conceptually structured* by the understanding.

For now, however, what I want to point out is that the mere possibility of such a reading is enough to demonstrate that Hanna's argument is invalid. Hanna tries to draw a conclusion about the representational capacities of non-conceptual representations from an argument that only shows that such representations exist. This fact is occluded by Hanna's putting his conclusion only in terms of existence: 'essentially non-conceptual content *exists*'. As we have seen, however, this claim—as Hanna understands it—itself implies a further claim about representational capacity: non-conceptual content is content that can exist independently from concepts and can represent complex states of affairs as complex. Insofar as this thesis about representational capacity is built into his existence claim, that claim cannot be validly derived from the premises of the Incongruent Counterparts argument. All that that argument shows is that there must be something over and above mere concepts involved in our representations of incongruent counterparts. This by itself does not show that this non-conceptual something can exist independently of conceptual activity, or that it is *all* that is needed to represent incongruent counterparts as distinct from one another. It says nothing about whether this non-conceptual component can itself be free-standing, or whether it must be part of some other, conceptually structured representation. For all that the argument says, this non-conceptual aspect of representation could be, as I have suggested Kant takes it to be, a *component* of conceptual representation. What I will argue in the next section is that if it is to do the work required by the Incongruent Counterparts argument, if it is to represent a (spatially) complex state of affairs as such, this non-conceptual representation *must* itself be part of a conceptually structured representation (and Kant agrees). It is to that piece of business to which I now turn.

II

The primary goal of this section of the paper will be to give some cash value to the bare-bones suggestion made in the previous section that there is an alternative to Hanna's conclusion. Hanna's conclusion, remember, is that there exist some mental representations that are non-conceptual, yet that represent (spatially) complex states of affairs as complex (and Hanna claims that Kant holds this as well). My suggested alternative is that no non-conceptual representation represents a complex state of affairs as complex (as I claim Kant holds), and so the way that non-conceptual representations must figure into our representations of (spatial) complexes are as *parts* of conceptually structured representations. What I want to do in this section is defend the first part of this claim: that representing a complex state of affairs as complex requires concepts (and that Kant holds this). I will do so by providing a reading of Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic according to which Kant is not only responding to Leibnizian and Newtonian accounts of our representations of space and time, but also to Hume's account. The goal here is to show that (and why) Kant holds that, as he would put it, any representation of a manifold as a manifold requires concepts. Once we have done this, we can turn in the next section to the issue of how—as Hanna rightly sees it must—Kant's account also incorporates non-conceptual content into its story. We can begin, then, with Hume.

In what follows I am going to argue that Kant holds that representing a complex state of affairs as complex requires the use of concepts. Hume, on the other hand, is someone who holds *exactly* the opposite view: that representing a complex state of affairs as such does *not* require employing concepts at all. Understanding why Kant rejects such a view will be a helpful way of approaching what Kant puts in its place. Consider then the following passage from the *Treatise* in which Hume attempts to explain the origin and nature of our idea of space.

> The table in front of me is alone sufficient by its view to give me the idea of extension. This idea, then, is borrow'd from, and represents some impression, which this moment appears to the senses. But my senses convey to me only the impressions of colour'd points, dispos'd in a certain manner. If the eye is sensible of any thing farther, I desire it may be pointed out to me. But if it be impossible to show any thing farther, we may conclude with certainty, that the idea of extension is nothing but a copy of these colour'd points, and of the manner of their appearance. (T 1.2.3.4; SBN 34)[6]

Hume's thought here can be captured in the slogan, 'a representation of a complex is just a complex of representations'. That is, according to Hume, we represent two items as being related in space by having ideas of these items that are themselves *spatially related*. As he claims here, according to his account of representation, our complex idea of a table consists of nothing more than the

ideas of the individual parts of the table (impressions of colored points) arranged a certain way (arranged so as to form a *picture* of the table).[7]

Similarly, Hume offers a parallel account of our representation of time and temporally complex states of affairs.

> The idea of time being deriv'd from the succession of our perceptions of every kind, ideas as well as impressions, and impressions of reflection as well as of sensation, will afford us an instance of an abstract idea, which comprehends a still greater variety than that of space, and yet is represented in the fancy by some particular individual idea of a determinate quantity and quality. (T 1.2.3.6; SBN 34)

Again, our idea of time is 'deriv'd from the succession of our perceptions'. Hume's thought is that we represent two items as being related, now temporally, by placing them in a *temporal* relation to one another. That is, for example, we represent one thing as happening before another by having a representation of the former *followed by* a representation of the latter. So, whereas we represent a *spatially* complex state of affairs by forming a kind of *picture* in our mind's eye, we represent a temporally complex state of affairs by forming a kind of *movie* there. Complex states of affairs receive essentially the same treatment that simple ones do in Hume's system: a representation represents that of which it is a *copy*. So, in order for a representation to represent a complex state of affairs, it must represent the elements of that state of affairs and the representations of these elements must be placed in the *same relations* with one another as those in which the elements of the state of affairs represented stand in to each other. To represent two items as being next to one another, we place ideas of these items next to one another; to represent two items as succeeding one another in time, we have an idea of one of these items succeed an idea of the other, etc.

Kant, of course, wants no part of such a theory. He explicitly rejects this proposal as his first piece of business the Aesthetic.

> [I]n order for me to represent them [items in space] as outside one another, thus not merely as different but as in different places, the representation of space must already be their ground. Thus the representation of space cannot be obtained from the relations of outer appearance through experience, but this outer experience is itself first possible only through this representation. (A23/B38)[8]

Because Hume holds that we represent spatially complex states of affairs simply by copying these states of affairs in a complex of ideas, he is free to hold that we can derive our idea of space (which, for Hume, is just a set of associated ideas of spatial complexes) from 'the relations of outer appearance'. That is, Hume can hold that the idea of space is nothing more than a collection of ideas of spatial complexes, which ideas are themselves mere spatial complexes of ideas. Kant, on the other hand, holds that it is only by having a distinct representation of space that we can have representations of spatial relations. So, for Kant, if we want to

represent two items as being spatially related to one another, it is not enough that we place our representations of these items into spatial relations with one another. This would not yet involve any representation of *space*, and without such a representation, no two items can be represented as spatially related. For Kant, such a complex of representations would be merely that: a couple of ideas that happen to be sitting next to one another. In order to combine such representations into a *single* representation of the items represented as being related to one another, more is needed. We must add to these a representation of the space in which they are both situated.

Now, as of yet, Kant has said nothing at all about *conceptual* representation, and we won't find him doing so anywhere in the Aesthetic. This is because Kant's announced aim there is to,

> *isolate* sensibility by separating off everything that the understanding thinks through its concepts so that nothing but empirical intuition remains. (A22/B36)

Of course, if it is right that conceptual representation is *essential* to representing complex states of affairs as such, Kant cannot, strictly speaking, do what he says here. He cannot, that is, entirely account for our representations of space and time without, in some sense, bringing in the understanding. What he can do is focus our attention on aspects of our representations of space and time that do not explicitly involve concept use. Before, however, we can bring out how the understanding is at work here nonetheless, we must return to the thesis that it is only conceptual representations that can represent complex states of affairs as such. To do that, we must once again return to Hume. This is because in order to understand Kant's position, it will be helpful to understand how it is a response to Hume's position, and in order to see this, we must see why it is that Hume's position will not do. It is to this task that we shall now turn.

For Hume, it is both necessary and sufficient for representing a complex state of affairs as complex that one places representations of the elements of these states of affairs in the *same relations* with one another as those in which these elements stand in to each other. So, for example, in order to represent A as coming after B, we simply have a representation of A followed by a representation of B. Perhaps the best way to deal with the necessity claim is by presenting an alternative to it, which we will do when we turn to Kant's view. For now, we can focus our attention on the sufficiency claim. It should be clear that this cannot be right. As Hume himself points out,

> The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. (T1.4.6.4; SBN 252)

There is a countless succession of representations that pass through our mind. Clearly, though, not every such succession is a *representation of* a succession. There is a fairly obvious difference between, say, representing one's appetizer as

coming before one's main course and lazily daydreaming about first a dog, then a cat, then a mouse. The latter is not a representation of a succession at all. It is, however, a succession of representations. Therefore, a succession of representations cannot be sufficient for representing a succession.

So, Hume's account fails as an account of *all* that is needed to represent a complex state of affairs as complex. It is important to see, though, precisely *why* it fails, and a further example will help bring this out more clearly. Consider the following complex state of affairs, in which the figure on the left is *larger than* the figure on the right.
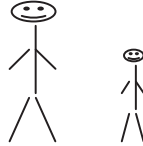
On Hume's account, the way to represent this state of affairs is by having a representation of each of these figures, and by having the representation of the figure on the left be larger than the representation of the figure on the right. So, one can represent the figure on the left's being larger than the figure on the right by having a picture that exactly resembles the picture above appear before one's mind's eye.[9] The real *problem* with this account is according to it, if one has such a picture before one's mind's eye, one represents not *just* the figure on the left's being *larger* than the figure on the right, but also the figure on the left's *being to the left of* the figure on the right, and the two figures *being congruent*, etc. The fundamental problem with Hume's account is that by having relations between items be represented by placing representations of these items into the same relations, it gives rise to crucial *ambiguities*. This is what we saw earlier in the case of successive representations that did not represent a succession of items. Some such successions will, but others will not, count as representations of successions. In the case above, a picture exactly resembling the picture above does not yet represent that picture *as* being any *particular* way. The problem with Hume's account is that the structures that he employs are not adequate for disambiguating what is being represented.

The question now is what *can* do this work? One possibility—the one that I will suggest Kant takes—is to replace the spatio-temporal structures that Hume employs with a richer set of structures, a set that is capable of disambiguating a *mere* complex of representations from a complex of representations that represents a complex state of affairs. The suggestion will be that Kant holds that only a *conceptual* structure can do this. That is, on Kant's account of how we represent complex states of affairs as such, instead of relating representations of the elements of complex states of affairs to one another spatio-temporally, we relate them *inferentially*.[10]

As the case for reading Kant as an inferentialist—as someone who holds that concepts are inferential rules—has already been made elsewhere in the literature, we can here focus instead on how Kant's inferentialism functions as a

replacement of Hume's account of complex representation. First, to get a quick sense for how Kant's inferentialism is supposed to operate, consider the following passage from the A-Deduction.

> Thus the concept of body *serves as a rule* for our cognition of outer appearances by means of the unity of the manifold that is thought through it. However, it can be a rule of intuitions only if it represents the necessary reproduction of the manifold of given intuitions, hence the synthetic unity in the consciousness of them. Thus in the case of the perception of something outside of us the concept of body *makes necessary* the representation of extension, and with it that of impenetrability, of shape, etc. (A106, emphasis mine)

Kant here tells us that, 'the concept of body serves as a rule', and that it, 'makes necessary the representation of extension', etc. Kant, of course, does not mean that whenever we employ 'body' in a judgment, we must also employ 'impenetrability', 'shape', etc. in further judgments. He is not speculating about the associative tendencies of the human mind. What he means is that the concept of a body serves as a rule *of inference* according to which if one is committed to a thing's being a body, then one is thereby also committed to its being extended, being impenetrable, having a shape, etc. It is the concept 'body' itself that licenses these inferences *because*, as Kant sees it, that concept just is (or is at least) a certain set of rules for how to place intuitions into relations with one another, which relations represent the objects of these intuitions as standing in certain relation to *each* other.

To take a slightly different, and more relevant example, consider a representation of a spatially complex state of affairs: a tree standing next to a house. How, on this account, do we represent this state of affairs? Well, on Hume's account we would do so by placing a representation of the tree next to a representation of the house. We have already seen why such an account fails. On the account that Kant adopts, we represent the tree as being next to the house by licensing and forbidding certain judgments, or inferences. For instance, we license the inference from 'this house is directly in front of me' to 'if I turn slightly, that tree will be directly in front of me'. We forbid the inference from, 'this house is nearby' to 'there is no tree nearby'. Etc.

There is a sense, then, in which Kant has not *abandoned* Hume's account at all. Kant agrees with Hume that the way to represent complex states of affairs as complex is to picture them. Where he differs from Hume is in what structures he thinks are adequate for constructing these pictures. He replaces Hume's spatio-temporal structures because he recognizes that spatio-temporal structures are not adequate to the task at hand. He chooses *inferential* structures for very good reason. If what is needed is a set of structures that can unambiguously picture one relation rather than another, if what is needed is a one-to-one correspondence between relations represent*ed* and relations doing the represent*ing*, inferential relations are tailor-made for just this. This is because inferential relations are not

fixed in the way that spatio-temporal relations are. We can always license a *new* inference upon discovering a new relation among objects. We can always forbid a certain inference upon discovering that some relation does not hold between objects. There can be as many relations between judgments as are necessary for representing relations among objects, so inferential structure is infinitely more rich that spatio-temporal structure.

So, for Kant, representing a complex state of affairs as complex requires placing representations of the elements of these states of affairs into inferential relations with one another. It requires this because only a normative-inferential structure is rich enough to capture the many ways that the objects of representation can relate to one another. Since *concepts* serve as the inferential rules for so arranging such representations, it follows that, for Kant, any representation of a complex state of affairs as complex must be *conceptually structured*.

In fact, Kant endorses exactly this conclusion at numerous points throughout the *Critique*. Here is one example.

> [T]he combination (conjunctio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; for it is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not . . . is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title synthesis in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves. (B130)

Combination—the act of representing a complex state of affairs as complex—cannot take place except through *synthesis*, an act of the understanding, i.e., our faculty for using *concepts*. To return to our original topic, then, representing the complex states of affairs that is our hands being located in different places cannot be done without the use of concepts. Hanna must be wrong that this work is done by mental representations that are entirely non-conceptual. It should be clear by now that Kant thinks this—we have seen both philosophical as well as exegetical evidence of this—and we have an argument (taken from Kant) that at least Hume's way of accounting for such representations non-conceptually fails.[11]

So, Hanna is at least wrong in thinking that *Kant* could employ the Incongruent Counterparts argument to show that there must be some non-conceptual representations that represent complex states of affairs as such. I also claimed earlier that he was wrong to think that *anyone* could so employ that argument because that argument is not valid. My claim that it was not valid was motivated by the idea that there exists an alternative to the conclusion that equally well accounts for the facts presented in the premises, namely that some aspect of our representation of our hands as different must be non-conceptual. The plausibility of that claim, therefore, hinges on the existence of that alternative. With the suggestion of a Kantian inferentialism before us, the next

section will be devoted to delineating some of the rough details of this alternative, again taking our cue from Kant. The goal will be to present the outlines of a theory (the theory I take Kant to present in the *Critique*) according to which non-conceptual representations are incorporated into conceptually structured representations to form a representation of our hands as located in different places.

III

The first thing to notice about the place of non-conceptual content in Kant's theory of mental representation is that, at least insofar as we are using examples of incongruent counterparts to demonstrate the need for such content, non-conceptual representations are intimately tied to our representations of objects existing in space and time. This is unsurprising. As Kant famously divvies up our mental faculties, concepts are opposed to intuitions, and our forms of intuition are space and time. So, we should expect there to be a natural affinity between the non-conceptual, intuitions, and space and time. As we will see in a moment, things are not quite this simple, but noticing the affinity is a good place to start.

Starting here gives us our first clue as to how to determine the place of non-conceptual representations in Kant's theory of mental representation. To do this, it will be helpful to have at least a sketch of Kant's account of the role that space and time play in that theory. To do this, we can look at slightly different example than the one we have been considering up until now.[12] Imagine, then, that the universe just so happens to exactly repeat itself every trillion years or so. There is a Big Bang; historical events unfold as they have up until the present; at some point in the future the universe collapses in on itself; the cycle starts anew without a single variation. Suppose further that this cycle has been going on for an infinite time, and will perpetuate for an infinite time. Were this the case, no merely conceptual description of, say, the clock-radio on my desk would do to individuate that object uniquely. This is because whatever conceptual description one could give of that clock-radio would fit the clock-radio not only in this universe-cycle, but also all of those from past and future cycles as well. Now, despite the failure of purely conceptual description to pick out this particular clock-radio, we *can* represent that particular radio nonetheless. We can do so by making use of an essentially *indexical* representation of it, e.g., as the clock-radio that stands in such-and-such a spatio-temporal relation to *me*.[13]

As Hanna rightly noticed in the case of incongruent counterparts, we cannot identify this clock-radio purely conceptually. In order to represent it as distinct from other, qualitatively identical clock-radios, there must be something non-conceptual to such a representation. Here, as in the case of incongruent counterparts, what seems to be playing that non-conceptual role is our representation of the clock-radio as occupying a particular, indexically located place in space and time. We have, however, recently argued that the representations of space and time, and of objects located in space and time, are conceptually structured. So, what we need to do now is figure out where the

non-conceptuality of such a representation lies. To do that, we need to delve a little more deeply in Kant's explanation of how we form such representations of objects as existing in spatial and temporal relation *to us*. For that, we will now have to consider my representation of my clock-radio in greater detail.

We can begin by noticing that while this representation is of a clock-radio, I do not see all of that clock-radio at once. I only see the facing surface of it. Nonetheless, I do not represent it merely as the facing surface of a clock-radio, but rather as a complete clock-radio (of which I am only seeing the facing surface). So, my representation of the clock-radio is of an object existing in space and time of which I see the facing surface, but which also has other surfaces that I do not see (as well as insides that I do not see, electronic parts that I do not understand, LED crystals that change with time, etc.) So, my representation of my clock-radio is of that clock-radio as having parts, some of which I actually see, and some of which I do not see, but imagine.[14]

This fact is of interest to us here because it raises the question of how it is that I (or the parts of me that form such representations) know what representations to include in the representation of the clock-radio other than those that are of what I actually see. That is, we ought to wonder here why it is that a representation of the back of the clock-radio, or of the electronic parts inside the radio, etc. get included in my representation of the clock-radio, but not the representation of an elephant tail, or a can of refried beans. Kant's answer is that our representation of the clock-radio is guided by our *concept*, 'clock-radio'. That concept is a concept of a certain kind of object existing in space and time that has certain, but not other, parts.

Our brief sketch of Kant's inferentialism can help us understand exactly how that works. The concept 'clock-radio', remember, is a rule of inference. It licenses, for instance, the move from, 'There is the front of a clock-radio before me now', to, 'If I move to the right, there will be the side of a clock-radio before me'. It forbids, for instance, the move from, 'There is the front of a clock-radio before me now', to, 'If I move to the right, there will be an elephant tail before me'. What the concept 'clock-radio' does is act as a rule for uniting sensory data (actual, possible, and imagined) into complex representations of objects existing in space and time.

The important thing to notice about the formation of such representations for current purposes is that they are not only indexical, but also *perspectival*. That is, the representation of the clock radio, united according to the concept 'clock-radio', is first made possible by taking the representation of the facing surface of the clock-radio *as* a representation of a clock-radio *seen from a certain point of view* by an experiencing subject. This is the sense in which space and time are our forms of intuition. It is by taking our sensory data as representing objects existing in space and time seen from the point of view of the experiencing subject that we come to form complex representations of those objects as complex.

We are now in a position to complete our picture by noticing that the sensory data that gets united through the use of concepts into a representation of a spatio-temporal complex state of affairs as complex is itself, at first, *non-conceptual*. That is, the representation that I form of the facing surface of the clock-radio upon

seeing that surface is not itself a conceptual representation. It is not a representation of the surface of the clock-radio *as* the surface of a clock-radio. It is, as Kant puts it at various places throughout the *Critique*, a mere modification of the state of the subject.[15] It is only when this mental state is combined via perceptual synthesis into a full-fledged, conceptually-structured intuition that it becomes a representation of a part of the clock-radio *as a part*. It is only when inferences from the having of such a representation are licensed or forbidden that this representation becomes a *component* of a representation of a complex state of affairs as complex (of the complex state of affairs that is the existence of my clock-radio as such). The non-conceptual 'sensation' (as Kant calls it) of the facing surface of my clock-radio, not *as* a facing surface yet, is *taken up* by the understanding and made a literal part of a conceptually structured representation of the clock-radio as having that facing surface.[16]

The non-conceptuality of our representations of objects existing in space and time—here of *this* clock-radio as opposed to the clock-radios of other time cycles, in the incongruent counterparts example of *this and that* hand as distinct—is not the non-conceptuality of the representation of such objects as complex. Rather, it is the non-conceptuality of the representations of the *parts* of such objects that are taken up and united to form *conceptual* representations of these parts *as* parts. So, there is a non-conceptual component to representation, and this non-conceptual component is essentially tied to intuition and more specifically to space and time. It is because our representations of objects are spatio-temporally *perspectival* and *indexical* that we must take in the non-conceptual sense-data (sensations) and, using the concept-guided imagination, unite it into fully-fledged conceptually structured representations of complex states of affairs as such. We thus respect Kant's claim that it is only through the use of concepts that we are able to represent a manifold as a manifold, while also agreeing with Hanna that the Incongruent Counterparts argument shows that there is a level of mental representation that is non-conceptual. This, then, is a sketch of the alternative solution to the puzzle posed by incongruent counterparts, the existence of which shows that Hanna's version of that argument in invalid, and which I argue, upon closer inspection, reveals itself to be Kant's own solution.[17]

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NOTES

[1] Hanna 2008. Hanna further argues that this conclusion is the best articulation of the thesis of non-conceptualism about mental representation, and provides other lines of support for it in a wide variety of places including his important book, Hanna 2006, and in a forthcoming article in the *European Journal of Philosophy*, Hanna and Chadha 2011.

[2] Obviously, Hanna himself is one prominent proponent of such a reading. One key piece of textual support for this interpretation is where Kant writes that his goal in the Aesthetic is to, 'isolate sensibility by separating off everything that the understanding thinks through its concepts so that nothing by empirical intuition remains [and then] detach from the latter everything that belongs to sensation, so that nothing remains except pure intuition and the mere form of appearances, which is the only thing that sensibility can make available *a priori*' (A22/B36). On the reading I will propose here, strictly speaking Kant cannot do what he proposes here because the understanding, conceptual structure, is implicated in all representations of complex states of affairs as complex, and the form of appearances (spatio-temporal form) is clearly such a representation.

[3] McDowell's Woodbridge lectures—reprinted as McDowell 2009—are the locus classicus of the conceptualist reading of Kant.

[4] Hanna also presents other arguments for non-conceptualism, and for reading Kant as a non-conceptualist, in Hanna 2001, Hanna 2005, Hanna 2006, and Hanna and Chadha 2011. Ginsborg 2008 is an attempt to articulate a conceptualist reading of Kant while accommodating certain important pre-theoretical intuitions that seem to favor some form of non-conceptualism. As Ginsborg admits, the account there ends up being very close to a kind of non-conceptualism. Before Hanna, Pippin 1982 makes a valiant effort to defend Kantian non-conceptualism, but one which Pippin himself deems a failure. Sellars 1967 also counts as a non-conceptualist on this way of dividing the terrain, although since Sellars holds that only representations that do not represent anything as complex are non-conceptual, his position is similar to the one that I will articulate.

[5] 'The Minimal Constraint includes three conjoined necessary sub-conditions on anything's being a conceptual content: (1) that the content be intrinsically descriptive; (2) that the content be intrinsically intersubjectively shareable; and (3) that the content be intrinsically such that the conscious cognizer need not be directly acquainted with or confronted by whatever is represented by it.' Hanna 2008: 51.

[6] I will cite quotations from the *Treatise* in the standard way, listing the paragraph numbers from Hume 2000, followed by the page numbers from Hume 1974.

[7] One obvious objection to such an account is that the mental items about which Hume is thinking are not located *spatially* at all, and so the notion that we can represent a spatial complex by relating such items to one another spatially is absurd. This, however, is a peculiarity of Hume's particular way of constructing his theory, and could be replaced with a more plausible alternative of the same kind and still be subject to the more important criticism of Kant's that we will be examining soon. As we see in a moment, that criticism applies to Hume's account of our representation of a temporal complex to which *this* objection cannot be raised.

[8] All citations from the *Critique* are taken from Kant 1998.

[9] Admittedly, *this* is a bit of an unfair portrayal of Hume's account, which actually would rely heavily here on his theory of abstract ideas. Insofar as that theory helps here it is because it moves Hume closer to the theory I will soon articulate on behalf of Kant. Insofar as it still fails, it is because Hume does not move close enough to Kant on this issue. Landy 2007 argues for Hume's ultimate failure on this issue on roughly these grounds.

[10] Kant's version of inferentialism has received a good deal of attention in recent years, beginning with Sellars 1967, and then prominently again with McDowell 2009 and Brandom 2002. Landy 2009b is another recent attempt to fill in the details of Kant's inferentialist account of concepts, with an eye towards the kind of dialectic that we are outlining here.

[11] Of course, Kant's argument is only against Hume. Contemporary theories of mental representation and of non-conceptual content can certainly fair better against such considerations, although it is not clear that some such argument cannot be leveled against any account possessing certain relevant features.

[12] This new example is essentially a temporal version of Strawson's mirror chessboard universe, Strawson 1959: 123, or Black's bronze sphere universe, Black 1952.

[13] This is one of the manifestations of Kant's thesis of the essential co-dependence of representations of a single, unified self persisting through time and of the world as a network of causally related substances.

[14] In fact, providing representations of the parts of spatio-temporal objects that we do not see, but which nonetheless get synthesized into our representations of such objects, is *exactly* the role that Kant assigns to the imagination at B151.

[15] 'The genus is representation in general (*repraesentatio*). Under it stands the representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A perception that refers to the subject as a modification of its state is a sensation (*sensatio*)' (A320/B337).

[16] The details of the relation of these non-conceptual sensations to conceptually structured intuitions, and of how the latter come to have the former as their 'matter' (as Kant puts it) is a delicate philosophical matter. In particular, how Kant can rely on such a process in his theory of perception without thereby falling prey to one form or another of what Wilfrid Sellars has famously dubbed the Myth of the Given is a very real and immanent worry. One aid to understanding how to walk this fine line can be a detailed examination of the nature of perceptual synthesis as Kant delineates it in the A-Deduction. I provide such an examination in Landy (under review).

[17] An early version of this paper was presented at the Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I would like to thank the participants of that workshop for their feedback, as well as Drew Johnson for his comments on a still earlier version of the paper, and especially Margo Landy for her help throughout and in all aspects of the writing of this paper.

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