

KANT ON TRUTH

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Abstract: This essay discusses Kant's account of truth, arguing that he offers us a weak coherence theory: weak for his insistence on an independent, sensuous content for intuition, coherentist for the transcendental apparatus supporting experience. While Kant is free to use the language of correspondence within experience, "empirical truth" will always be limited by the formative requirements set by "transcendental truth." The difficulty, for Kant, is the role played by sensuous content since the sameness of this content in intersubjective experience seems to point outside the conditions of synthesis to a transcendently real object. While the consequence of this would seem to leave Kant in a contradiction—denying transcendental realism at the same time that he must affirm it—we must read Kant's insistence on a merely negative use of noumena as evidence that he adopts the role of the skeptic as a means for maintaining his epistemic goals.

In the *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770 Kant argues for an account of truth that is based on the agreement between the subject and object of a judgment.¹ This agreement is achieved, according to Kant, only insofar as each can be said to stand under the same common laws of the understanding as their original condition, and not, then, as a result of any reference to an external object—indeed, this possibility is rejected from the start given Kant's belief that objects cannot present their own forms to the senses.² Similarly, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the synthesis described there requires that any agreement among representations rest on the categorial function of the transcendental unity of apperception as opposed to some object external to that synthetic process.³ In the *Critique*, reference to objects "outside" the mind's synthetic conditions is barred for the simple reason that synthesis grounds the possibility of knowledge and to move outside these conditions is therefore to move into the realm of the unknowable. Kant's account of truth is thus concerned with relationships *internal* to the conditions of synthesis as early as 1770, and while he is consistent from that time on in his rejection of immaterialism—arguing that sensible intuitions serve as the material content for the mind—the insistence that objects cannot present their own forms to intuition requires that the mind itself take on formative responsibility for the phenomenal world. The result of this is a position that after 1780 Kant will describe as transcendently idealist and empirically realist. Kant considers his idealism transcendental insofar as it refers to the synthetic conditions for the possibility of *knowing* objects. Empirical idealism, by contrast, would consider the *existence* of objects to be dependent upon the mind. This difference notwithstanding, the fact that the mind stands as the synthetic condition for all appearances requires that appearances take

on the status of mental representations (e.g., A369). It is this feature of Kant's position that leads to his empirical realism. While a transcendental realist argues that objects stand independent from the operations of the mind and thus function as their own ground for all judgments regarding them, the empirical realist recognizes from the start that objects of experience are only meaningful as a result of mental conditioning. This means that in judgments of experience to say that truth rests on an agreement between subject and object is to say only that truth requires a necessary agreement between representation and appearance.

Kant's position on these points has been taken up by commentators specifically interested in his account of truth. The debate here centers on questions concerning Kant's place between "coherentist" and "correspondence" theories of truth with little consensus regarding his position. While some take Kant's account of experience supported by the rules of the understanding to be testimony to his coherentism,⁴ others cite Kant's rejection of immaterialism to be certain evidence for a correspondence theory of truth.⁵ Connected with all this is a discussion started by Hilary Putnam's initial alignment of his own "internal realism" with what he took to be Kant's coherence theory of empirical realism.⁶ Once again, however, there is little agreement. While some commentators will argue that Kant is best understood to be an anti-realist along the lines of Putnam's account,⁷ there are others who argue the very opposite.⁸ What becomes clear in surveying the literature, finally, is that any account of Kant's position on truth requires that a decision be made with respect to his place in the contest between realism and idealism, and it is in these terms that we can see the point of discussing coherence and correspondence in Kant's theoretical philosophy. While the question concerning the relationship between epistemic conditions and ontological commitments is a familiar one in Kant scholarship, the framing of this inquiry in terms of Kant's commentary on truth will provide us with a new perspective on an old problem.

In approaching this discussion I begin by identifying what I take to be the key features of Kant's position in order to use them as a basis for establishing Kant's place in the contemporary debates. My argument, in brief, is that correspondence in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is a necessary feature of empirical realism at the same time that it is rendered nearly trivial as a result of the emphasis Kant places on the role of synthesis in the Transcendental Logic. Nevertheless, Kant's materialism requires that an independent, sensuous content fill out our concepts and he is thus only mistakenly portrayed as an anti-realist. The true difficulty in Kant's account, in my view, turns on the fact that intuitions can be intersubjectively identical. The fact that two subjects can experience the same event in the same temporal order may well speak to the universality of the transcendental conditions of experience, but the sameness of *content* seems to point outside of the conditions of synthesis to a transcendently real object as the original source of our sensible intuition. While the consequence of this would seem to leave Kant in a contradiction—denying transcendental realism at the same time that he must affirm it—my suggestion, in closing, is that we read Kant's insistence on a merely negative use of the thing in itself as evidence that he adopts the role of the skeptic as a means of maintaining his epistemic goals.

I. “*Truth consists in the agreement of knowledge with its object*” (A191/B236)

A good place to begin a discussion of Kant’s remarks on truth is in the passages designed to introduce us to the Transcendental Analytic. It is here that Kant first pauses for some reflection on the possibilities for General Logic’s contribution to our understanding of truth. Referring us to “the question, famed of old, by which logicians were supposed to be driven into a corner,” Kant asks, “What is truth? The nominal definition of truth, that it is the agreement of knowledge with its object, is assumed as granted; the question asked is as to what is the general and sure criterion of the truth of any and every knowledge” (A58/B82).⁹ Posing the question in this manner, Kant draws a distinction between definitional and criteriological conditions and thus presents us with an account that remains, for many, contemporary: truth, defined in name as agreement between knowledge and its objects, is correspondence; the main task is finding the criterion or test for determining that truth.¹⁰ With respect to this task, General Logic turns out to be helpful only insofar as the *form* of our knowledge is concerned. As Kant considers it, “a general criterion of truth must be such as would be valid in each and every instance of knowledge, however their objects may vary” (A58/B83). Since, however, truth concerns precisely the *content* of any instance of knowledge (the object or referent of the claim), such a general criterion is impossible. In the absence of this, Kant limits himself to the form of knowledge since, “(leaving aside all content) it is evident that logic, in so far as it expounds the universal and necessary rules of the understanding, must in these rules furnish criteria of truth” (A59f/B83f). General logic, with its focus on the establishment of the conditions for consistent thinking, furnishes “criteria of truth” by asking whether our truth claims are at least formally consistent with the laws of understanding and reason. General logic, as Kant puts it, can “inquire, in accordance with logical laws, into the use of this information and its connection in a coherent whole, or even better to test it by these laws” (A60/B85), its limitation, then, coming only with respect to content. At this point Kant’s position regarding truth seems to be the following: truth is itself defined as the correspondence between knowledge and its object; the criterion whereby we are able to test this correspondence is furnished by General Logic’s asking after the coherence of our claims with respect to the laws of the understanding and reason.

The final position, however, turns out to be a bit more complicated. With the declaration that “only in experience is there truth,” Kant qualifies the nominal definition of truth by limiting it to our empirical experience (Ak. IV, 374). This leaves him free to draw a further distinction between empirical and transcendental truth. In his words, “Since truth consists in the agreement of knowledge with its object, it will at once be seen that we can here inquire only regarding the formal conditions of *empirical truth*” (A191/B236, my emphasis). In other words, the definition of truth requires the presence of an object or empirical referent; objects, however, only present themselves within experience, which leads Kant to the conclusion that “only in experience is there truth.” The next piece of this follows from consideration of what Kant actually understands by “experience.” For Kant, experience is supported by a synthesis at the hands of the understanding under the guidance of Transcendental Logic. Unlike General Logic, which abstracts from all content and thus concerns the generation of rules for internal consistency—the *form* of thought—Transcendental Logic offers us the possibility of *content* by concentrating on

those acts of the understanding that are the necessary precondition for the experience of objects at all.¹¹ It is at this point that Kant can introduce an account of Transcendental Logic in terms of a “transcendental truth which precedes all empirical truth and makes it possible” (A146/B185). Transcendental Logic is “a logic of truth,” according to Kant, for “no knowledge can contradict it without at once losing all content, that is, all relation to any object, and therefore all truth” (A62f/B87). As Kant puts it elsewhere, “Only through the fact that [the] concepts express a priori the relations of perceptions in every experience, do we know their transcendental truth, and this, indeed, independently of experience, though not independently of all relation to the form of an experience in general, and to the synthetic unity in which alone objects can be empirically known” (A221/B269). At the end of this we can see that the nominal definition of truth as a correspondence between knowledge and its object remains in place, but it is a correspondence that is limited to the realm of empirical truth and thus tempered by its place relative to the constitutive role played by the activity of the understanding.

Given correspondence’s restriction to the realm of empirical truth, we might ask whether General Logic’s use of coherence as a criterion of truth is similarly subject to Kant’s distinction between empirical and transcendental truth. In the *Prolegomena*, Kant seems clear that within experience coherence provides the test for distinguishing truth from illusion. Empirical truth is discoverable in experience not simply because it is only there that we have referents for our claims; the coherent unity of experience is itself necessary insofar as it grounds the possibility for the distinction between truth and error at all. Kant writes,

The appearance depends upon the senses, but the judgment upon the understanding; and the only question is whether in the determination of the object there is truth or not. But the difference between truth and dreaming is not ascertained by the nature of the representations which are referred to objects (for they are the same in both cases), but by their connection according to those rules which determine the coherence of the representations in the concept of an object, and by ascertaining whether they can subsist together in experience or not.¹²

Error, dreaming, and illusion announce their presence by their inability to “subsist together” or fit in with a coherent stream of experience. Within the field of appearances, empirical truth thus combines a correspondence account of the relation between knowledge and object (the nominal definition of truth) with an account of the test for our claims by means of coherence within this same unified experience (the logical condition for truth).¹³

The case with transcendental truth is quite different. Here there is no room for a correspondence between knowledge and its objects, since it is only at this level that empirical objects themselves are in some sense made available for their subsequent investigation. In light of this, the distinction between a definitional versus a criteriological account of truth itself seems to fall away. Truth properly considered belongs to experience. Transcendental truth, understood in the terms of a Transcendental Analytic introduced as a “logic of truth,” underlies and is the condition for the very possibility of experience and empirical truth with it.

Reflection on this fact has led some to the conclusion that whatever sense of correspondence existed in Kant's account in the first place is by this point rendered trivial in the face of a general synthetic coherence yielded by the understanding.¹⁴ This, however, cannot be quite right given Kant's particular epistemic goals. The twin theses of transcendental idealism and empirical realism allow for a response to skepticism while still managing to ward off immaterialism. Recall only Kant's diagnosis of Berkeley's position: Berkeley, recognizing that Newtonian realism could only entail skepticism as a result of the gap left between material objects and immaterial ideas, veered off into an immaterialist, dogmatic idealism that could only be supported by God's continual input of ideas. As Kant rehearses this,

Transcendental realism, on the other hand, inevitably falls into difficulties, and finds itself obliged to give way to empirical idealism, in that it [transcendental realism] regards the objects of outer sense as something distinct from the senses themselves, treating mere appearances as self-subsistent beings, existing outside of us. On such a view as this, however clearly we may be conscious of our representations of these things, it is still far from certain that, if the representation exists, there exists also the object corresponding to it. (A371, cf. A369, B71)

By contrast, Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideality of all appearances—an ideality wherein appearances and representations become isomorphic (A369, A493/B521)—closes the gap between object and idea in a manner that leaves no room for skepticism while still avoiding material idealism with the demand that sensuous content be required to fill out our concepts (A51f/B75f). Sense, for Kant, “realizes the understanding,” (A147/B187) and this is not to be undone at the hands of a transcendental synthesis. As he remarks at one point, “Representation in itself does not produce its object insofar as its existence is concerned, for we are not here speaking of its causality by means of the will” (A92/B125). This aspect of Kant's position, namely, the emphasis placed on the need for an independent sensible content (which Kant describes variously as *die Realität*, *realitas phaenomenon* (A168/B209), *das Reale* (B207ff), and *der Stoff*) marks the celebrated bow to Empiricism. Given this, even the less-than-full-blooded presence of correspondence in his account would seem to be necessary if we are to have experience of a world that is not only predictably uniform but one in which we can engage in the discovery of truth.¹⁵

II. Correspondence and Coherence: “What, then, is to be understood when we speak of an object corresponding to, and consequently also distinct from, our knowledge?” (A 104)

This last piece of the discussion raises a question which will move me to the second part of this essay, namely, whether it is possible to call consistently for the role of sense while denying the kind of correspondence entailed by transcendental realism. Consider only what has just been said: the role played by sensuous content and the possibility of experiencing correspondence at the empirical level are each vital components of Kant's “Empiricism,” but there is a sense in which they are at odds with one another. The restriction of correspondence to the empirical level is expressly designed to avoid the epistemic gap that would seem to open up before any correspondence with a *Realität* required to

fill out our concepts. To put this in different terms, we cannot consider the empirically real “real” in quite the same manner as we consider the sensuous content of sense. The former, as a result of the ‘Copernican revolution in philosophy,’ is knowable only as far as it “conform[s] to our knowledge” (Bxvi). Indeed, it is Kant’s insistence that “we can know apriori of things only what we ourselves have put into them” (Bxviii) that defeats skepticism on the basis of a synthetically conditioned experience. At the same time, however, an unthematized (and therefore unknowable) sensation is said to lie at the heart of intuition. And this is where the intertwining of ontology and epistemology—an admixture captured by the language of “empirical realism” and “transcendental idealism”—finally unravels: empirical realism as epistemically conditioned ontology is fundamentally different from sensation as ontologically independent reality. Nevertheless, Kant clearly rejects transcendental realism, declaring that “[w]ere we to yield to the illusion of transcendental realism, neither nature nor freedom would remain” (A543/B571, cf. A491/B519), even as he argues that sensation is an ineliminable component of knowledge.

The exegetical problem this poses has been dealt with by commentators in a number of ways. Putnam, intent on accommodating Kant and his own internal realism, argues that correspondence is entirely compatible with coherence so long as it is recognized that the facts or objects at the other end of the correspondence relation are not independent of one’s conceptual scheme. In his words,

Internalism does not deny that there are experiential *inputs* to knowledge; knowledge is not a story with no constraints except *internal* coherence; but it does deny that there are any inputs *which are not themselves to some extent shaped by our concepts*, by the vocabulary we use to report and describe them, or any inputs *which admit of only one description, independent of all conceptual choices*.¹⁶

Here, however, Putnam departs from Kant because the point of sensuous “input,” for Kant, is primordial and thus ultimately inaccessible. A logical distinction exists, in other words, between the apprehension of sensible intuitions and their subsequent synthesis or interpretation into something meaningful that can then be called a determinate object of knowledge open to vocabulary choice in reportage. Think only of Kant’s remark in the *Anticipations of Perception* (although the *Axioms* would serve just as well in this regard): “Apprehension by means merely of sensation occupies only an instant [*Augenblick*]” and “[a]s sensation is that element in the appearance the apprehension of which does not involve a successive synthesis proceeding from parts to the whole representation, it has no extensive magnitude” (A167/B209). Sensation’s apprehension is thus logically prior to its conceptualization and Putnam’s version of Kant appears to be ultimately insensitive to this distinction.

The opposed tactic of assimilating Kant to the position of the transcendental realist is similarly implausible. As Michael Dummett characterizes realism, “The very minimum that realism can be held to involve is that statements in the given class relate to some reality that exists independently of our knowledge of it, in such a way that reality renders each statement in the class determinately true or false.”¹⁷ But surely this cannot be Kant’s position with respect to the content of sense. Apart from his view that truth can only be a feature of experience—and this is experience supported on the foundation of transcendental

synthesis—Kant is clear that appearances do not simply represent things-in-themselves. In his words, “[E]ven if we could by pure understanding say anything synthetically in regard to *things-in-themselves* (which, however, is impossible), it still could not be applied to appearances, which do not represent things-in-themselves” (A276/B332). Indeed, if appearances were attempting to represent things-in-themselves it is not clear what the point of transcendental idealism could be since we would then be left with the same epistemic gap Kant is determined to overcome. Kant thus explains that it is only because reason is driven towards systematic completeness that it posits a non-sensible object as the logical correlate for our appearances; apart from this, nothing positive can be said (A250, A494/B522). Noumena are posited only in a negative sense, then, to mark the limits of our knowledge. “The division of objects into phenomena and noumena,” Kant tells us, “and the world into a world of the senses and a world of the understanding, is therefore quite inadmissible in the positive sense,” (A255/B310); what *is* admissible is the negative use of a noumenon, “to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves” (A254/B310).

All of this notwithstanding, it must be admitted that the question of content remains. It is this question, in my view, that poses the only real difficulty for Kant’s account. Surely it is the case that we experience the same objects not simply because of the universality of our forms of intuition but indeed through the sameness of content as well. In a passage from the A-deduction Kant effectively rejects this, however, insisting that the object cannot deny my representations a state of arbitrariness.¹⁸ This injunction is reinforced much later in the *Critique* with the account of “conviction.” Kant explains that while we might presume that the object lies at the basis of our holding a judgment to be true, the “touchstone” is rather “the possibility of communicating it and of finding it to be valid of all human reason” (A820/B848); the point being that intersubjective coherence, and not independent reality, is once again identified as the criterion for the validity of judgment.¹⁹

Drawing this discussion to a close, I want to suggest one possible avenue of approach to the question just raised. This, by asking ourselves what it is precisely that Kant is trying to do. Is he working to provide an ontology? Here I think the answer is clearly ‘no.’ As Kant describes his position,

[S]ince that which is not appearance cannot be an object of experience, the understanding can never transcend those limits of sensibility within which alone objects can be given to us. Its principles are merely rules for the exposition of appearances; and the proud name of an Ontology that presumptuously claims to supply, in systematic doctrinal form, synthetic a priori knowledge of things in general (for instance, the principle of causality), must, therefore, give place to the modest title of a mere Analytic of pure understanding. (A246f/B303)

In Kant’s working, therefore, to provide a theory of the limits and extent of knowledge versus an ontology, the next question to ask is whether, despite this, Kant’s project still requires an ontological commitment. This certainly seems to be the case with correspondence theories of knowledge, given that the metaphysical independence of objects is built into their very definition. Similarly, pure coherence theories of knowledge are continually forced to explain why they are not tantamount to immaterialism.²⁰ Kant, however, offers us

neither correspondence nor coherence in either of their traditional forms and here I think we can find some room to maneuver. Transcendental idealism with its attendant empirical realism is perhaps best seen as offering us an impure coherence theory of knowledge—impure for the obvious fact of sense.²¹ Whether this commitment to sense is likewise a bow to transcendental realism is something that remains textually denied to us even as Kant suggests that it is precisely towards such an explanation that the Understanding is driven (B306ff).²² And this is where I think Kant's position with respect to the transcendently real is perhaps best left, namely, as adopting an attitude of staunch metaphysical neutrality regarding it. This essentially skeptical position allows Kant to remain consistent while yet achieving his epistemic goals—whether one's Understanding could be satisfied with such a state of affairs, however, is an entirely different question altogether.²³

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Notes

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1. Immanuel Kant, *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World [Inaugural Dissertation]* (1770), trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1992), p. 132, corresponding to Kant's *Werke*, Ak. II, 11, 397.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 128; Ak. II, 4, 393.

3. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Bedford: St Martin's Press, 1965), p. 134, corresponding to Kant's *Werke* Ak. III, 104f. Hereafter all first *Critique* citations will be in-text with Academy pagination and "A" corresponding to Kant's 1781 edition and "B" to the 1787 edition.

4. See Robert Hanna, "The Trouble with Truth in Kant's Theory of Meaning," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 10 (1993), pp. 1–20; and "Kant, Truth, and Human Nature," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, vol. 8 (2000), pp. 225–250; and Ermanno Bencivenga, "Understanding and Reason in the First Critique," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1986), pp. 195–205.

5. See R. C. S. Walker, "Empirical Realism and Transcendental Anti-Realism," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 57 (1983), pp. 155–177; and "Idealism: Kant and Berkeley," in *Essays on Berkeley*, ed. John Foster and Howard Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 109–129.

6. Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See esp. chap. 3, "Two Philosophical Perspectives," pp. 49–74: "Kant is best read as proposing for the first time what I have called the 'internalist' or 'internal realist' view of truth," p. 60.

7. In addition to Putnam, see, for example, Leslie Stevenson, "Empirical Realism and Transcendental Anti-Realism," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 57 (1983), pp. 131–153.

8. See A. J. Clark, "Why Kant Couldn't Be an Anti-Realist," *Analysis*, vol. 45 (1985), pp. 61–63; Paul Abela, "Putnam's Internal Realism and Kant's Empirical Realism: The Case for a Divorce," *Idealistic Studies*, vol. 26 (1996), pp. 45–56; and Paul Abela, *Kant's Empirical Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Walker, "Empirical Realism"; and R. C. S. Walker, *The Coherence Theory of Truth* (London, New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 61–82; and Carol A. Van Kirk, "Kant's Reply to Putnam," *Idealistic Studies*, vol. 14 (1984), pp. 13–23.

9. Kant repeats the formula of truth as knowledge's agreement with its object at A157/B196f., A191/B336, A237/B296, and A820/B848. Despite these formulations, Heimo Hofmeister and Gerold Prauss each believe that there can be no meaningful role for correspondence in Kant's theory of knowledge. See Heimo Hofmeister, "The Problem of Truth in the 'Critique of Pure Reason,'" *Proceedings of the Third International Kant Congress*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Dordrecht: Reidel Publishing, 1972), pp. 316–320. For Prauss, the fact that Kant switches in the German to the narrative tense in the passage cited above indicates that Kant takes the nominal definition of truth to be an assumption made by the *logicians*, not one that Kant accepts. See "Zum Wahrheitsproblem bei Kant," *Kant-Studien*, vol. 60 (1969), pp. 166–182. "Während sein Hauptsatz im Präsens steht, in dem Kant durchwegs seine Lehren darlegt, tritt im Nebensatz ganz plötzlich und ausnahmsweise historisch-erzählendes Imperfekt auf," p. 168.

10. Nicholas Rescher discusses contemporary positions akin to this in *The Coherence Theory of Truth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), see esp. chap. 1, pp. 1–22.

11. As Kant puts this, the "rules of understanding are not only true a priori, but are indeed the source of all truth (that is, of agreement of our knowledge with objects) inasmuch as they contain in themselves the ground of the possibility of experience viewed as the sum of all knowledge wherein objects can be given us" (A237/B296).

12. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena Concerning Any Future Metaphysics that will be Able to Come Forward as a Science* (1783), trans. James Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), Ak. IV, 290; see also Ak. IV, 337 and 375, and A492/B520f.

13. This test cannot be "ascertained by the nature of the representations which are referred to objects" because of the material isomorphism between representations and appearances. This isomorphism requires, in other words, that correspondence in dreams have the same status as correspondence in the empirical reality of "experience." It is at points like this that some insist on the essential *triviality* of Kant's notion of correspondence. See note 14.

14. See Hanna, "The Trouble with Truth in Kant's Theory of Meaning": "Looking at it more broadly, we can thus see that Kant's theory of empirical meaning, taken together with his transcendental idealism and the Transcendental Deduction, *trivially* yield a correspondence-theory of truth," p. 9. Nevertheless, Douglas McDermid argues that even given the apparatus of transcendental idealism, Kant is rightly viewed as restricting coherence to a criteriological role since coherence is not "constitutive of the nature of truth." See Douglas McDermid, "Putnam on Kant on Truth: Correspondence or Coherence?" *Idealistic Studies*, vol. 28 (1998), pp. 17–34, p. 23.

15. Thomas Nenon argues similarly: "The notion of agreement with the object, the central tenet of the correspondence theory, is retained to express the finitude of our knowledge, which is constantly aiming at something other than ourselves that we do not produce or control, so that our knowledge is always subject to error. Hence we see that the specific form of the correspondence theory of truth that one finds in the *Critique* was adopted by Kant very consciously and is a genuine product of his critical thinking." See "Limitations of a Coherence Theory of Truth in Kant's Critical Philosophy," *International Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 26, pp. 33–50, p. 41. Two points are worth noting here. First, Nenon himself takes the role played by correspondence in Kant to ultimately trump that of coherence. For a fuller discussion of his position see his *Objectivität und endliche Erkenntnis. Kants transzendentalphilosophische Korrespondenztheorie der Wahrheit*. Freiburg, München: Karl Alber, 1986. Second, Kant's use of the words "correspondence" should not necessarily entail (as Nenon seems to assume) that Kant had something so formal as a correspondence theory of truth.

16. Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 54. The intuition behind this position is similarly at work in Simon Blackburn's account. For Blackburn, a "CCC [controlled, comprehensive, and coherent] conception of truth is, like idealism, an optional gestalt-switch: you can see things, willfully and

in the study, as if the virtues of systems of beliefs are all that we have to build a notion of truth out of, just as though you can think as though the world is a mental construction. But out of the study the vision goes; objects, facts, reemerge and demand their independence of us and our beliefs." See Simon Blackburn, *Spreading the Word* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 247–248.

17. Michael Dummett. *The Seas of Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 230. Putnam characterizes realism in like fashion: From the perspective of metaphysical realism "the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects. There is exactly one true and complete description of 'the way the world is.' Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words and thought-signs and external things or sets of things." Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, p. 49.

18. "What, then, is to be understood when we speak of an object corresponding to, and consequently also distinct from, our knowledge? It is easily seen that this object must be thought only as something in general=X, since outside our knowledge we have nothing which we could set over against this knowledge as corresponding to it [A 104]. . . . [I]t is clear that, since we have to deal only with the manifold of our representations, and since that x (the object) which corresponds to them is nothing to us—being, as it is, something that has to be distinct from all our representations—the unity which the object makes necessary can be nothing else than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations" (A105).

19. Conviction is mentioned first in the opening sections of the Transcendental Analytic as a species of Applied General Logic which "is directed to the rules of the employment of understanding under the subjective empirical conditions dealt with by psychology" (A53/B77).

20. As Simon Blackburn characterizes this, "Idealists always face the problem of finding an acceptable way of putting what they want to say about the involvement of the mind in the world. . . . The problem for the idealist, or the anti-realist in general, is to steer a course between platitude and paradox" (1984), p. 218–219.

21. Given the fact of sense there are some who see Kant's position as necessarily rejecting coherence, this whether they identify sense with the *Ding an sich* or not. See Walker, "Empirical Realism," p. 161; and Walker, "Idealism: Kant and Berkeley," p. 127; John Peterson, "Kant's Dilemma of Knowledge and Truth," *The Thomist*, vol. 48 (1984), pp. 241–248, p. 245; and Paul Healy, "Kant, Blanshard, and the Theory of Truth," *Idealistic Studies*, vol. 18 (1988), pp. 266–274, p. 271.

22. Peter Strawson takes the problem to be intractable for Kant, arguing that he simply cannot maintain what he wants, namely, transcendental realism on the side of sense and empirical realism on the side of thought. See "The Problem of Realism and the A Priori," in *Kant and Contemporary Epistemology*, ed. Paolo Parrini (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), pp. 167–173, p. 172. Paolo Parrini, though considerably more sympathetic to Kant's position, agrees on this point with Strawson. See "On Kant's Theory of Knowledge: Truth, Form, Matter," *ibid.*, pp. 195–230, p. 222ff. Needless to say, a position such as that taken by Henry Allison's "two-aspect" account gains considerable attraction at this point. For a good discussion of the new complications introduced by Allison's account, see Hoke Robinson, "Two Perspectives on Kant's Appearances and Things in Themselves," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 32, no. 3 (1994), pp. 411–441.

23. As for Kant's ultimate position on the role played by things external to sense, his last statements on the matter continue in a similarly skeptical vein: "[S]ince it is unavoidable that we regard the idea of such supersensible objects as at least problematic, an open question (since otherwise the sensible would lack a non-sensible counterpart, and this would evidence a logical defect in our classification), the idea belongs to pure practical knowledge, which is detached from all empirical conditions." Immanuel Kant, "Letter to J. H. Tieftrunk, December 11, 1797." Immanuel Kant, *Immanuel Kant. Philosophical Correspondence, 1759–99*, trans. Arnulf Zweig (Chicago: Midway Reprint, 1986), p. 247.