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Kant and the concept of an object

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Abstract

"Object" is one of the most important concepts in Kant's philosophy. I argue that Kant's concept of an object involves a hitherto neglected distinction, between what I call the "quantificational" concept of an object (q-object) and what I call the "representational" concept of an object (r-object). I examine the relation between these two concepts and argue that there is a close connection, even in the case of q-objects we cannot sensibly intuit (negative noumena) and the r-objects of non-sensible intuition (positive noumena). Even in the non-sensible case, our only way of representing a concept as having non-sensible instances (q-objects) is by conceiving of a kind of intellect that would intuit those objects. We cannot know that such intuition or such objects are possible, but it is only by thinking of such intuition that we can think of such objects as instances of concepts (e.g., the concept "negative noumena").

1 | INTRODUCTION

In a passage at the end of the Transcendental Analytic, Kant makes a very pregnant remark:

> The highest concept with which one is accustomed to begin a transcendental philosophy is usually the division into the possible and the impossible. However, because all division presupposes a

concept that is divided, a yet higher concept must be given, and this is the concept of an object [*Gegenstand*] in general [*überhaupt*]. (A290/B346)[1]

The concept <*object*> (*Gegenstand*)[2] is the highest concept of transcendental philosophy, and the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*KrV*) is the preparatory critique that will pave the way for a complete system of transcendental philosophy.[3] It is perhaps unsurprising then that many of the central doctrines of the *Kritik* explicitly involve the concept <*object*>. To take only a few main instances:

- The objects (*Gegenstände*) we intuit are appearances, not things in themselves.
- The categories are necessary conditions of experience of objects.
- The conditions of the possibility of experience of objects are also the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience.
- Although we possess the concept of objects that cannot be sensibly intuited (noumena in the negative sense), the categories cannot be used to cognize (*erkennen*) such objects.

This list could easily be extended. Nor then is it surprising that at least two of the most important debates about Kant's theoretical philosophy involve the concept <*object*>:

1 Are appearances and things in themselves the same *objects* (considered under different aspects, or as possessing different properties), or are they distinct?[4]
2 Does intuition by itself, without the contribution of the understanding, give us *objects* or something more minimal (e.g., mere sense impressions)?[5]

My aim in this article is to clarify the Kantian concept of an object (*Gegenstand*). It is to be expected that this will help clarify these two debates, but that is not my primary project here.

That there are multiple senses of the word "object" (*Gegenstand*) in Kant's philosophy is something of a platitude among scholars. In this article, though, I am going to focus on a distinction that is more fundamental, I will argue, than the distinctions most scholars focus on: the distinction between what I call the "quantificational" concept of an object (the objects there are) and the "representational" concept of an object (what a representation represents). In Section 2, I argue that Kant possesses a forerunner to the Quinean "quantificational" concept of an object (an object *there is*, or *q-object*, *for short*). After briefly introducing the representational concept of an object (r-object, for short) in Section 3, I argue in Section 4 that the representational, rather than the quantificational, concept of an object is the highest concept in Kantian transcendental philosophy, the concept to which Kant refers in the passage quoted at the beginning of this article. The concept of an object of representation is not the quantificational concept of an object because talking about the object of a representation does not commit one to claiming *that there is* an object (in the quantificational sense) that corresponds to that representation. In the remainder of the article, I argue that there is a tight connection between q-objects and the r-objects of a particular kind of representation: intuition. In Section 5, I examine this connection in the case where Kant has the most to say: q-objects in space and time (the objects there are in space and time) and the r-objects of spatiotemporal intuition (the objects represented by such intuition). In Sections 6 and 7, I raise the more general question of the relation between q-objects and r-objects of intuition *überhaupt*, and focus on a specific subcase: the relation of q-objects that cannot be sensibly intuited to r-objects of non-sensible intuition. In Section 6, I argue, on the basis of several key passages in the "Phenomena and Noumena" section, that Kant does not identify the concept of a q-object in general with the concept of an r-object of intuition in general; if he did, the distinction between "negative noumena" (q-objects that cannot be sensible intuited, I argue) and "positive noumena" (q-objects that are r-objects of non-sensible intuition, I argue) would collapse. Instead, as I argue in Section 7, Kant is committed to a more subtle (and more plausible) view of the relation between q-objects and r-objects in general: our only representational vehicle for thinking of q-objects in general

(what objects there are *überhaupt*) is by thinking of them as the r-objects of intuition in general. Consequently, to think that there are non-sensible q-objects we must think of them as the r-objects of non-sensible intuition. This is not a metaphysical or modal connection, but a conceptual one; given the nature of our intellects, the only way we can think of there being a q-object of some kind is by thinking of a kind of intellect that would intuit this object.

Before continuing, I want to make a linguistic/terminological remark. Kant uses two German words that I am translating as "object": the Latinate *Objekt* (sometimes *Object*) and the more Germanic *Gegenstand*. Some scholars claim that these terms have distinct technical meanings.[6] I do not believe there is such a distinction. There may be passages where Kant associates different meanings with the two members of this pair, but I do not see any good reason to think that he maintained this distinction consistently throughout his writings. So while I will be careful always to note which German word is being translated as "object" I will be arguing that there is no consistent distinction between *Objekt* and *Gegenstand*.

2 | THE QUANTIFICATIONAL CONCEPT OF AN OBJECT

Kant is widely—and, I think, correctly—credited with anticipating (indeed, influencing) the modern theory of existence as a quantifier, developed first by Frege and then by Russell.[7] What is less often appreciated is that this means that Kant anticipates the modern quantificational notion of an *object* as an admissible value for a bound variable, although, of course, putting it that way presupposes a logical apparatus that Kant did not possess.

Consider these two passages, the first from the 1763 essay *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* and the second from the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*:

> Existence is the absolute positing [*Position*] of a thing and is thereby distinct from all predicates, which, as such, are merely posited in relation to another thing [*welches als ein solches jederzeit blos beziehungsweise auf ein ander Ding gesetzt wird*]. The concept of positing [*Position*] or setting [*Setzung*] is entirely simple and is the same as the concept of being in general [*Sein überhaupt*]. Something can be posited merely relationally, or, to put it better, the mere relation (*respectus logicus*) of something to a thing of which it is a mark can be thought, and then the positing of this relation is nothing other than the connecting concept [*Verbindungsbegriff*] in a judgment. If it is not the relation, but the thing, considered in and for itself, that is posited, then this being is the same as existence. […] If I say "God is omnipotent" only the logical relation between God and omnipotence is thought, because the latter is a mark of the former. Nothing further is here posited. Whether God is, that is, whether God is absolutely posited or exists, is by no means contained therein [*ist darin gar nicht enthalten*]. E.g., the God of Spinoza is subject to ceaseless alteration. (*EMB*, Ak. 2, p. 73)

> I would hope to destroy this over-subtle argumentation, without any digression, through a precise determination of the concept of existence. […] Being […] is merely the positing of a thing, or certain determinations, in itself. In its logical use it is merely the copula of a judgment. The sentence "God is omnipotent" contains two concepts, each of which has its object: God and omnipotence. The little word "is" is not another predicate, but rather that which posits the predicate in relation to the subject. If I take the subject (God) together with all of his predicates (among which belongs omnipotence) and say "*God is*" or "there is a God" I posit no new predicate in the concept of God, but only the subject in itself with all of its predicates, and indeed posit the object in relation to my concept. (A599/B627)

In both passages Kant distinguishes between positing a relation between predicates—for example, judging that God is almighty[8]—and the positing of an object—for example, there is a God. In the second case, which in *Beweisgrund* he calls "absolute" positing, one posits that there is an object that falls under a given concept (e.g., <*God*>). In the

Beweisgrund passage he identifies absolute positing with existence: to judge that God exists *just is* to posit absolutely that there is an object that falls under the concept *<God>*. In the *KrV* passage one might initially think his theory of absolute positing is only a theory of what it is to say that *there is a God* but not yet a theory of what it is to say that *God exists* (or that *there exists a God*). But in context, this is not a viable reading. I have supplied the sentences that introduce his famous claim that "being [*Sein*] is obviously no real predicate" in which Kant makes clear that, in what follows, *Sein* means *Dasein*: "I would hope to destroy this over-subtle argumentation, without any digression, through a precise determination of the concept of *existence*" (my emphasis). For the Critical Kant, as for the pre-Critical Kant, existence is absolute positing; to judge that *God exists* (*Gott existiert*) or that *there exists a God* (*es existiert ein Gott*) just is to absolutely posit an object that falls under the concept *<God>*.[9]

A few points about this:

1 Kant does not merely say that if you make an existential judgment (e.g., there exists a God) you also posit an object (e.g., there is an object that falls under the concept *<God>*). He says that the existence of an object *is* its absolute positing, so the judgment that there exists an object that falls under a given concept is absolutely positing an object that falls under that concept.[10] Since they are identical, this means that any absolute positing of an object under a concept is the making of an existential judgment. This means that to say that there *is* an object that instantiates the concept F is to judge that there exists an object that instantiates F. This entails that there are no non-existent objects, in the sense of "object" (*Gegenstand*) involved here.[11] This line of reasoning is presented more formally as follows:

  a Absolute positings have the form: *There is an object that falls under F*. [By definition]
  b Judgments of existence have the form: *There is an existing object that falls under F*. [By definition]
  c Absolute positings are equivalent to corresponding judgments of existence. [Asserted in both passages quoted above]
  d ∴There is an object that falls under F ↔ There is an existing object that falls under F. [From (a)–(c)]
  e If there are objects that do not exist then there are objects that do not fall under the concept *<exists>*. [Trivial]
  f ∴ If there are objects that do not exist then there are existing objects that do not fall under the concept *<exists>*. [From (d) and (e)]
  g There are no existing objects that do not fall under the concept *<exists>*. [Assumption]
  h ∴ It is not the case that there are objects that do not exist.

It is worth pointing out that the conclusion of this argument, (h), does not entail that every concept is instantiated by some object, something Kant does not hold. There may be concepts instantiated by *no* objects.

We could resist the conclusion of this argument if we claimed that "existence" is ambiguous between two meanings. In the first meaning, the "existence" of an object under a concept just means that there *is* an object that falls under that concept. This is the sense of "existence" (*Dasein*, *Existenz*) Kant is discussing in the passages quoted; it is this sense of "existence" that is equivalent to absolute positing. But we might introduce a different sense of "existence" in which it expresses a predicate—call it *<exists*>*—which applies to only a subset of the objects there are. If we introduce this restricted existence predicate, we can reject the corresponding version of (g):

(g*) There are no existing objects that do not fall under the concept *<exists*>*.

For instance, we can let *<exists*>* be a predicate that applies to causally efficacious objects that exist independently of any single discursive intellect's representation of them. In fact, I think that Kant does precisely this. In certain passages he accepts a restricted existence predicate that applies to only a subset of the objects there are. For instance, he writes in the Preface to *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* that "in the concept [of mathematical figures] nothing is thought that would express an existence [*ein Dasein*]" (Ak. 4:468n). Given Kant's rejection of the ontological argument, I take it that if something in a concept is "thought" to "express an existence" this means that "existence" (or some concept thereof) is a predicate contained in that concept (a mark of that concept). Kant is here claiming that mathematical concepts, unlike other concepts (e.g., concepts of bodies), do not contain *that* existence

predicate. But this notion of existence, which is a mark of some but not all concepts, cannot be absolute positing, because in absolutely positing an object we are precisely not asserting a relation between predicates (between concepts). So 4:468 would appear to assert that there is a predicate that applies to a restricted set of objects; I will refer to this restricted existence predicate as <*exists**>. While this passage alone leaves undetermined what this predicate is, one plausible candidate is that it is the predicate that applies to causally efficacious objects in space and time.[12]

This also leaves open the possibility (which I also take to be actual) that Kant has other notions of *object*. But if we restrict ourselves to the notion of existence and the notion of object involved here, then if existence is absolute positing (as Kant says it is) and if absolutely positing an object for the concept F is just judging that there are objects that fall under F (as Kant says it is) then there are no non-existent *objects*.[13]

i More importantly for our purposes, this entails that all and only *objects* are what falls under concepts (with a caveat—see below). If there could be a non-object that falls under a concept F then to say that there are Fs would not be identical to absolutely positing an object that falls under F. Likewise, the hypothesis that there are objects that fall under no concept is self-defeating. If there are objects that do not fall under any concepts then trivially they do not fall under the concept <*object*>, and so they are not objects, contra the hypothesis.

j Objects are what fall under concepts, and when we say there is an *x* that falls under the concept F the only thing that can meaningfully be filled in for *x* is an object. Kant does not have Frege's function-argument conception of judgment (though there might be grounds to think he anticipates that as well),[14] so he does not yet have all the materials at his disposal to realize that quantifier expressions like "there is" bind *variables*, much less that variables have a range of admissible values and that there may be different kinds of variables, distinguished by their different ranges of admissible values (the idea of higher-order logics, etc.). But if we abstract from these points we can see that Kant is operating with a certain concept of object in these passages: objects are what can be absolutely posited (as I argued above, all and only objects can be absolute posited). We can expand this thought slightly, while still remaining within the domain of what is thinkable for Kant, to the following: objects are what can make true acts of absolute positing of the form *There is an x that falls under the concept F*. But this just is the thought that would be expressed in modern lingo as: objects are all and only the admissible values of bound variables. Kant not only has a forerunner to the quantificational notion of *existence*, but *thereby* has a forerunner to the quantificational notion of *object*.[15]

3 | THE REPRESENTATIONAL CONCEPT OF AN OBJECT

Leaving Kant aside for the moment, it is clear that we post-Fregeans (and post-Quineans) possess the quantificational concept of an object. But this is not the only concept of an object we possess. We also have the concept of the object of a representation. This is the sense of "object" we deploy when we talk about how some object is represented by some intentional act or attitude. It is this notion of object that we are using when, for instance, we say that the object of my current visual experience is this room or that the object of my current thinking is Kant. Put very roughly, the object of an act or an attitude is what the act or attitude is *about* or *of*. This notion of "object" is inherently relational: to be an object in this sense is to be the object of some intentional act or attitude. For shorthand, I will refer to this concept of objects as the concept of "representational objects" (r-objects for short). So if I think of a red square my thought has for its r-object a red square.

It is crucial to understand that these are distinct senses of "object." The easiest way to see this is to observe that the concept of a q-object is not a relational concept; to be a q-object is not to be an r-object for any actual or possible intentional act, or at least this is not settled by the definitions of these concepts alone. (I am not trying to rule out by fiat a philosophical view on which necessarily every q-object is an r-object for some representation by some mind, since I will argue below that Kant holds a version of this view.) Conversely, the definitions of these notions *alone* do not settle whether every r-object is a q-object. Confusion of this notion of r-object with the quantificational

notion of q-object gives rise to a familiar "short" argument for idealism: to be an object is to be the object for some subject. This is true of r-objects, but why should we think that every q-object is an r-object?

Consider the following two arguments:

(1.a) I am imagining a unicorn.

(2.a) ∴ There is a unicorn I am imagining.

(3.a) ∴ There is a unicorn.

(1.b) I am drinking a cup of coffee.

(2.b) ∴ There is a cup of coffee I am drinking.

(3.b) ∴ There is a cup of coffee.

The sentences in (a) and the corresponding sentences in (b) appear to have the same form, and argument (1.b–3.b) is intuitively valid. This suggests that the underlying logical form of (1.a) is the same as (1.b), namely:

(1.c) ∃x(Fx & R[a, x])

which does, as a matter of elementary logic, entail a sentence of the form:

(3.c) ∃xFx

In the case of (a), this would mean that (1.a) entails that there is a unicorn (3.a). (1.a) is a paradigm case of talk about an r-object; a unicorn is the r-object of my imagining, according to (1.a). This brief argument purports to show that every r-object is also a q-object: if I am imagining a unicorn then *there is* a unicorn I am imagining.

But this conclusion is optional. One can hold that the surface grammar of attitude reports like (1.a) does not reveal their deep logical structure, and the underlying logical form of (1.a) is quite different from (1.b); in particular, one can deny that (1.a) asserts a *relation* between me and a q-object (a unicorn). This is the familiar doctrine that reports of attitudes (beliefs, desires, etc.) create contexts into which one cannot quantify (replace a referring term with a variable bound by a quantifier).[16] If some expression (e.g., "Santa Claus" in "I had a dream about Santa Claus") cannot be replaced by a variable bound by a quantifier then, by the definition of q-objects, it does not have an object as its semantic value. In our terminology, this doctrine could be stated as: not all r-objects are q-objects. For instance, when one imagines a unicorn there is no q-object one is imagining (assuming there are no unicorns!). At this point I do not want to argue either for or against the claim that attitude reports cannot be "quantified into"; I want merely to point out that the availability of this position shows that *the definitions of these concepts alone* do not entail that every r-object is a q-object. We have an at least prima facie coherent way of talking about the contents of attitude reports without assuming that the objects of those reports (r-objects) are q-objects, although further philosophical argumentation may show this to be mistaken.

This also shows that we need to be somewhat more careful in how we formulate our conclusion. It is seriously misleading to say that not all r-objects are q-objects, because this suggests *there are* objects that are not q-objects, which is incoherent. It would be better to say: having an attitude that represents an r-object does not entail that there is a q-object to which one is thereby related. Some contentful attitudes lack a q-object.[17]

4 | KANT AND THE REPRESENTATIONAL CONCEPT OF OBJECT

I have argued that Kant possesses a forerunner to our modern notion of a q-object and sometimes uses "object" (*Gegenstand, Objekt*) in this sense. In this section, I will argue that Kant also sometimes uses "object" in the sense of r-object.

Kant frequently talks about "*the* object" of a concept (*der Gegenstand eines Begriffs*), or, referring to a concept, about "its object" (*ihr Gegenstand*).[18] If we have q-objects exclusively in mind, the use of this singular expression (rather than the plural, "the object<u>s</u> of a concept") should strike us as odd, since (a) not all concepts as such are

instantiated (some of them are necessarily uninstantiated), and (b) concepts as *general* representations do not typically have *only one* q-object in their extensions. We might be tempted to say that the object of a concept, in general, is the property picked out by the concept, but Kant denies the existence of universals, understood as properties instantiated by multiple objects. Kant is instead a conceptualist about universals: talk about the universal property redness is really a disguised way of talking about the concept <red>, for instance, what all red objects have in common in virtue of instantiating the concept <red>.[19] So we have to understand talk of properties via talk of concepts, specifically in terms of what they are concepts *of*, that is, their *objects*, and not vice versa. So universals will not help us understand the idiom "*the* concept of an object." Kant does believe in individual accidents[20] (tropes, in contemporary lingo) but the "object" of a concept cannot be an individual accident, for then it would not be a general representation; my concept <red> is not the concept of the red-accident in any particular substance.[21]

That Kant sometimes uses the term *Gegenstand* in the sense of an r-object, and not always in the sense of a q-object, is clear from the text with which we started, from the "Table of Nothings":

> The highest concept with which one is accustomed to begin a transcendental philosophy is usually the division into the possible and the impossible. However, because all division presupposes a concept that is divided, a yet higher concept must be given, and this is the concept of an object [*Gegenstand*] in general [*überhaupt*]. (A290/B346)

The highest concept of transcendental philosophy is <object>(*Gegenstand*). Within the concept <object> we can distinguish two non-overlapping and presumably exhaustive subconcepts: the impossible (nothing), and the possible (something). Since these are divisions within the concept <object>, they are the concepts <impossible object> (nothing) and <possible object> (something). Kant is distinguishing between impossible objects and possible objects.

However, at this point we must ask ourselves: is this a distinction between q-objects or a distinction between r-objects? On an *intensional* reading Kant is distinguishing between different kinds of *representations* of objects (in this case, concepts) in terms of a difference in their content: do they represent r-objects that are possible, or do they represent r-objects that are impossible? On the intensional reading of, for instance, the concept <impossible object> (=nothing), Kant is not claiming that there *are* q-objects that are impossible; rather, he is claiming that some representations represent their r-objects in such a way that it is *not* possible for there to be q-objects that match that representation. For instance, the concept <four-sided triangle> is not a concept whose extension contains impossible q-objects; it is a concept whose r-object is a triangle with four sides, so it is impossible for there to be any q-objects in its extension. On what I will call the *extensional* reading, on the other hand, Kant is distinguishing, within the set of all q-objects in general, between two subsets: the impossible q-objects and the possible q-objects. In contemporary terms, we might say he is "quantifying" over impossible objects.

We do not have to choose (or we do not have to choose only once!) between the intensional and the extensional readings, however, because Kant's initial distinction between the impossible (*das Nichts*) and the possible (*Etwas*) turns out to be four different distinctions. In his "Table of Nothings" Kant distinguishes four different types of "nothing" (impossible object) of which he remarks, "the corresponding division of Something [*etwas*] follows of itself" (A291/B348). I interpret this to mean that each "nothing" corresponds to its own distinction between something and nothing; for instance, the fourth moment of the table, the "logical nothing," corresponds to the distinction between the logically consistent (something) and the logically inconsistent (nothing).

The extensional reading is highly implausible in the case of the logical nothing. The logical nothing (*nihil negativum*) is the object of a logically inconsistent concept: "*the object of a concept* [*Gegenstand eines Begriffs*] that contradicts itself is Nothing [*Nichts*], because the concept is nothing, the impossible, like the straight-line figure of two sides (*nihil negativum*)" (A291/B348; Au's emphasis).[22] If *Gegenstand* here means "q-object" then Kant is claiming there are q-objects that have contradictory properties, for example, that are both four-sided and triangular. This would mean that the principle of non-contradiction is not true of absolutely all q-objects, but is a restricted principle that applies only to (logically) possible q-objects. Much more plausibly, however, *Gegenstand eines Begriffs* when

means the r-object of a concept. All Kant here is claiming is that some concepts contain incompatible marks, and so we can say of them that their r-objects are logically impossible (logical nothings). In doing so, we are *not* saying that there is a kind of q-object that is impossible or contradictory or "nothing." So the fourth of Kant's four distinctions between "something" and "nothing" is an intensional distinction between r-objects of concepts, not an extensional distinction between sets of q-objects. But this means that *<object überhaupt>*, the concept that is said to be divided into something (possible) and nothing (impossible) at the beginning of the Table of Nothings (in the passage quoted at the beginning of this article), is not the concept of q-objects but of r-objects.[23] The "highest" concept in transcendental philosophy, higher even than the traditional distinction between the possible and the impossible, is the concept of the object of representation in general, r-object.

However, the distinction between logically impossible r-objects and logically possible r-objects in the Table of Nothings can teach us an important point about reading Kant's texts. It shows, first of all, that r-objects are not *in general* always also q-objects for Kant. Kant will sometimes talk about the object of a concept where he specifically means the r-object and does not mean there is any corresponding q-object (as he does when he talks about the contradictory "object" of an inconsistent concept). This means that we cannot conclude merely from the fact that Kant talks about some objects that he means to be "quantifying over" those objects (in the contemporary parlance); he may mean merely to talk about the contents of some concepts or other representations, and may thus be talking only about r-objects. In other words, we cannot read Kant's ultimate views about what q-objects there are off the surface grammar of his sentences.[24]

I noted at the beginning of this article that it is something of a commonplace that there are multiple senses of "object" in Kant's philosophy, but most of the specific "concepts of an object" on which previous scholars have focused are logically downstream of the more basic distinction between the quantificational and the representational concepts of an object. To take one notable example, Henry Allison maintains in his 2015 book that there is an important distinction between the concept of an object of discursive cognition in general and the concept of an object of a specifically human spatiotemporal cognition. In my terminology, however, these are clearly more specific instances of a representational concept of an object, for they are concepts of the object of specific kinds of representation. Likewise, Kant's famous discussion of the "pure concept of the transcendental object" (A109) is a discussion of a concept of an r-object (how a particular class of representations, apperceptively unified cognitions, represent their r-object). These concepts of an object are downstream of the more basic distinction I am focusing on.[25]

5 │ INTUITION AND ITS OBJECTS: THE SENSIBLE CASE

The passages I quoted earlier from Kant's 1763 work *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Dasein Gottes*, and his famous rejection of the ontological argument, already introduce a sharp distinction between concepts and q-objects: even at the idealized limit, analysis of the marks of our concepts will not inform us of which q-objects there are; what is more, it will not put us in a position to think about any particular q-objects, but only indefinitely large conceptually specified sets of them.[26] But in that pre-Critical text Kant does not yet have a developed explanation of how knowledge of existence or thought about particulars is possible.

Kant's Critical explanation crucially involves *intuition*. Intuition is the means by which q-objects are "given" to us.[27] Kant defines intuitions as *singular* representations of objects, whereas concepts are *general* representations.[28] A concept is a *general* representation because it represents *all* of the objects that share certain common *marks*; these objects make up the extension (in the contemporary sense)[29] of the concept, while the marks of the concept make up its *intension*.[30] We can *use* a concept to pick out a single object by combining a concept with a demonstrative or indexical expression (e.g., "*that* chair") but the concept itself remains a general representation; "singular concept," for Kant, is a contradiction in terms.[31] By contrast, intuitions are singular in their very content. I interpret this to mean that an intuition is "of" at most one object. Of any intuition we can ask "What is the object of that intuition?", and

the answer *cannot* be a plurality (those two ducks) or a conceptually specified set of objects (all the ducks in the pond).

But this does not yet tell us *what* mental state intuition *is*, nor does it explain what "giving" an object means, or *why* intuitions play this role. There is an ongoing scholarly controversy on this topic, which I cannot enter into in this article. Instead, I will draw on the interpretation of Allais (2015). On Allais's reading, that intuitions *give* us objects means that intuition *acquaints* us with objects. Allais understands acquaintance on the model of Russellian acquaintance (while acknowledging the differences between Russell's and Kant's theories): to be acquainted with an object is to be in cognitive contact with the object, such that, provided one has concepts that can refer to it, one could have a referential thought about that very object. A referential thought is a thought about some particular object that *it* instantiates some concept. For instance, my thought *This is a cup of coffee* is a referential thought. Two qualifications are necessary if we want to bring this notion of a "referential thought" into a Kantian context. First, referential thoughts should not be confused with judgments whose quantity is logically singular (singular judgments, for short). A singular judgment has a subject-concept (e.g., <cup of coffee>) and a predicate concept (e.g., <cold>), but the subject-concept (which is intrinsically general) is restricted to apply to only one object, for example, *This cup of coffee is cold*. The role of a referential thought, and Kantian intuition, lies one level prior: it is the mental act by which we *subsume* this object under the concept <cup of coffee>. What I am calling "referential thoughts" (which Kant sometimes calls "subsumption," although this is a broader category that includes judgment) express relations between a single object and a concept, as opposed to singular judgments, which express a relation between a subject-concept (albeit restricted to a single object) and a predicate concept. Intuition is the vehicle for referential thoughts, the mental acts by which we subsume individual objects under concepts. The second qualification is that intuition alone does not put one in the position to have referential thoughts; referential thought involves concepts, and thus the activity of a distinct faculty (namely, understanding). There may in principle be beings (e.g., animals) that can intuit objects but cannot *think* about them using concepts. Referential thought involves two ingredients: (a) being aware of an object and (b) subsuming it under a concept. The role of a Kantian intuition is to make (a) possible.

I now want to argue that all intuition is intuition of a q-object: in other words, for any subject *s*, if *s* intuits (*s* has an intuition), then there is a q-object *x* such that *s* intuits *x*. First of all, Kant is pretty clear that every intuition *gives* us an object: "Intuition occurs only insofar as an object [*Gegenstand*] is given to us" (A19/B33). So the only question that remains is: is every object given to us in intuition a q-object? That is, can one have an intuition where there is no q-object one is intuiting? An intuition, in virtue of being a representation (or at least an objective representation), has an r-object: it has a representational content in that it presents the world as being a certain way. An intuition with an r-object but no q-object would be an intuition *as of* a q-object. But if this is correct, what object would be *given* to us? What object would we thereby be in a position to have referential thoughts about? One might answer: the r-object; but the r-object is not an admissible subject of a referential thought. If I am having an intuition *as of* a cup of coffee, what referential thoughts can I thereby have (if we are not assuming that there is a cup of coffee I am intuiting)? I can think of *this* cup that it is full of coffee, but if there is no cup present (perhaps I am hallucinating) then my intention to refer to this cup fails. I might also think that *this* is a cup, but again, if there is no q-object here then the demonstrative expression "this" fails to refer.[32]

The natural source of resistance to this principle—that every intuition is the intuition of some q-object—is hallucinations and other cases of non-veridical perception.[33] If I am currently hallucinating then presumably I am having some intuitions, but arguably there are no q-objects I am intuiting. There are two potential responses to this objection.[34] First, it might be doubted whether, on Kant's view, cases of hallucination are cases of intuition in the first place. On such a reading, one mental state can be subjectively indistinguishable from another, even though one involves intuition (the veridical case) while the other does not (the non-veridical case).[35] Secondly—and, I think, more promisingly—even if we admit that hallucination does involve intuition, we can identify the object of this intuition as being different than it would be in ordinary cases. This response divides into two possible sub-options. On the first option, we identify the q-objects of hallucination as "hallucinatory versions" of ordinary objects; for instance, my hallucinatory intuition of a unicorn is an intuition of a *hallucinatory unicorn*, a q-object that does not exist* in Kant's

stronger sense,[36] and exists (i.e., apt to be absolutely posited) only in virtue of being intuited by me. On the second sub-option, when we hallucinate we do not intuit tables, chairs, etc., or even *hallucinatory* tables, chairs, etc.; rather, we intuit manifolds of sensory qualities arrayed in space.[37] If I am hallucinating this cup of coffee then I am intuiting not a cup of coffee but an array of sensible qualities, and I *can* have referential thoughts about those; for instance, I can think about this brown patch *here*. One might doubt whether these are *objects*, and there is surely a central Kantian notion of *Gegenstand* on which these are not objects; but we are here concerned with whether intuition always has a q-object. Recall how minimal the notion of q-object is: whatever there is, is a q-object.[38] It might be argued that Kant's claim that the cognitive *function* of intuitions is to give us objects does not entail that all intuitions succeed in giving us objects; similarly, to say that the function of beliefs is to accurately map the world is not to say that all beliefs are accurate. But Kant does not say merely that the *function* of intuitions is to give us objects (i.e., that giving objects is the end or *telos* of intuitions); he says instead that intuition "takes place [*findet statt*] only insofar as an object is given to us" (A19/B33) and that the function of intuition is to give those objects to cognition.[39]

Every intuition, I have argued, is of a q-object. But the concept of an r-object is the concept of what a representation is *of* (the "relative" notion of object from above). So we can reformulate this as: the r-object of any intuition is a q-object.[40] So in the case of intuition our two different concepts of object come together: an intuition is a representation "of" a single object *there is*.

This also explains the crucial role that intuitions play in justifying existential judgments or acts of absolute positing. Kant repeatedly reminds us that we can never know through analysis of a concept whether it has an instance; for this we need intuition. He writes:

> In the mere concept of a thing [*Ding*] no characteristic of its existence can be encountered at all. For no matter how complete [*vollständig*] a concept may be, even if it lacks nothing that would be required for thinking a thing with all of its inner determination, existence has nothing to do with all of this, but instead with the question: whether such a thing is given to us, so that that perception of it could, if need be, precede the concept. (A225/B272–273)

In most such contexts, Kant is concerned with spatiotemporal existing* objects with causal powers, not with mere objects of absolute positing.[41] So he emphasizes the epistemic dependence of judgments of existence* on consciously apprehended sensory manifolds (which he calls "perceptions").[42] But a more general points holds: if I intuit an object then there is a q-object I am intuiting. If I can subsume that object under a concept F then I can make a warranted assertion of absolute positing: there is an *x* that is F. This is possible because intuition as such acquaints us with q-objects, admissible values of acts of absolute positing.[43,44]

Kant of course holds that all objects in space and time (all sensible objects) are possibly intuited. I take this to mean: all the q-objects there are in space and time are possibly intuited. It may be that, due to the contingencies of our sense organs, we cannot in fact intuit some of the q-objects there are in space and time, but if there are such q-objects, another discursive intellect with a spatiotemporal form of intuition and appropriately constituted sense organs could intuit them.[45] What is more, his view is that the possibility of there being q-objects in space and time just is the possibility of there being spatiotemporal intuitions.[46] It is worth pointing out that by intuiting an object we do not thereby think it under a concept: that requires the participation of the intellect. So, while we can say that any object in space and time is possibly intuited, if we want to say anything more determinate about their possible range of properties (e.g., having causal properties) we need to bring in a higher-level form of representation: what Kant calls *experience*. Any spatiotemporal object that has an empirical property F is possibly experienced as (intuited and thought under the concept of) F. In fact, the possibility of there being a spatiotemporal object with empirical property F just is the possibility of a spatiotemporal object being experienced as (intuited and thought under the concept of) F. But in this article I will be concerned mostly with the possibility of there being q-objects, not with the possible range of properties they can have, so experience will not play much of a role in what follows.

In Kant's view, then, there are at least three connections between sensible intuition and q-objects in space and time:

1 *A representational connection*: for any spatiotemporal sensible intuition *s*, there is a q-object *x* such that *s* is an intuition of *x*.
2 *An epistemic connection*: the only possible epistemic warrant for an absolute positing of a q-object in space and time is a (conscious) intuition of some object in space and time (though not necessarily the same object). We cannot be warranted in judging that there are *any* objects in space and time, except on the basis of intuiting *some* objects in space and time.
3 *A metaphysical connection*: any possible object in space and time is possibly intuited. The possibility of an object in space and time just is the possibility of a spatiotemporal intuition of an object.[47,48]

6 | INTUITION AND ITS OBJECTS: THE NON-SENSIBLE CASE

Do these connections between intuition and its objects hold in general, or only for the case of sensible spatiotemporal intuition and its objects? I will argue that the first two connections hold, but the third does not, for intuition and its objects *überhaupt*. Our spatiotemporal sensible intuition is one instance of the more general phenomenon of sensible intuition, intuition that gives an object only in virtue of the affection of the sensible faculty by the object.[49] It is conceivable that there are non-spatiotemporal forms of sensible intuition, but Kant thinks we cannot know whether such intuition is really possible.[50] In order to understand the concept of sensible intuition, Kant thinks, we must also form the concept of non-sensible intuition and contrast the two. Non-sensible intuition is a form of intuition in which the object is given to a mind, but not in virtue of the object causally affecting that mind. A mind with non-sensible intuition is not passive in intuiting its objects, but spontaneous. Kant sometimes refers to non-sensible spontaneous intuition as *intellectual* intuition. Just as in the case of non-spatiotemporal sensible intuition, we can form the concept of intellectual intuition, but this does not prove that such a form of intuition is really possible. The function of this concept is to distinguish our mode of intuition (receptive/sensible) from a conceivable alternative form of intuition (spontaneous/intellectual), not to claim knowledge of the existence or even the real possibility of any such form of intuition or its objects.

If we now turn to the non-sensible case it is pretty clear that the representational and epistemic connections hold. First of all, an intellectual intuition for which there is no q-object that is thereby intuited would not be an intuition at all, that is, a singular and immediate presentation of an object. Secondly, Kant sometimes describes an intellectual intuition of an object as one that produces or grounds the existence of its object.[51] If this is the case, then a non-sensible intuition which is not the intuition of any q-object is incoherent.

With respect to the epistemic connection, things are slightly more complicated because Kant thinks that an intellect that non-sensibly (intellectually, spontaneously) intuits its objects lacks the characteristic feature of a discursive intellect: the division between concepts and intuitions. But this means that an intuitive (non-discursive) intellect, one that possesses non-sensible intuition,[52] would not *judge*, because judgment is the discursive activity of consciously combining concepts in order to represent objects. But if an intuitive intellect does not judge then it becomes difficult to make sense of the notion of "epistemic warrant." Kant's theory of what I am calling "epistemic warrant" is a theory of the modes of holding-for-true (*Fürwahrhalten*), and what is held-true is a judgment. However, a corresponding principle holds in the case of non-sensible intuition. Since the intuitive intellect does not have our two distinct faculties (spontaneous understanding passive intuition) but only a single mode of cognition (intellectual intuition) it follows that the intuitive intellect can cognize the existence of q-objects only by intuiting them. It may not be appropriate to think of this as conferring some epistemic warrant on the absolute positings of an intuitive intellect, but it is clear that Kant thinks the intuitive intellect cognizes its object as absolute posited, and that this is the *ne plus ultra* of cognition, for there is nothing in its object that is not cognized by such an intellect.[53]

This raises the question of whether the metaphysical connection between intuition and q-objects holds in the case of non-sensible intuition as well, that is, whether Kant thinks that the possibility of a q-object quite generally is nothing "over and above" the possibility of an intuition of that object, or whether he restricts this (idealist) view to the case of spatiotemporal q-objects and sensible intuitions of them. In fact, the close connection between q-objects and r-objects of intuition in both the sensible and the non-sensible case might make one suspect that Kant *identifies* the concepts <q-object> and<r-object of intuition>, so that talking about non-sensible q-objects just is talking about putative possibly non-sensible intuitions of them. If these are identical concepts in general, the metaphysical connection would hold in general, and for non-sensible objects in particular: the possibility of a non-sensible q-object is nothing "over and above" the possibility of a non-sensible intuition of an object.

The natural place to turn to in order to answer this question is the section of the *KrV* entitled "On the ground of the distinction all objects [*Gegenstände*] *überhaupt* into phenomena and noumena." This section contains (outside of the Table of Nothings) Kant's most extensive discussions of the concept of an object in general, and of the concept of non-sensible intuition. What is more, Kant draws a close relation between the concept <q-object> and the concept <r-object of intuition> but does not, I will argue, identify them. In the next section, however, I will argue that despite being distinct concepts, they are very intimately related on Kant's view: <r-object of intuition> is our representational vehicle for thinking about the concept <q-object>.

The first question we need to ask when investigating the Phenomena/Noumena section is: to what does "all objects *überhaupt*" refer? In my terminology, we can specify this question as: does this refer to all objects of representation (r-objects) *überhaupt*, or to all the objects *there are* (q-objects) *überhaupt* (or to some more specific subset of either, e.g., all objects of experience *überhaupt*). It is plain that it cannot mean the former, for as we have seen, the most general concept of r-object *überhaupt* includes objects that are never discussed in the Phenomena/Noumena section, including logically contradictory objects (e.g., squares with three sides). As we will see in more detail below, the most basic division in the concept of an object *überhaupt* in the Phenomena/Noumena section is between objects that are possibly sensibly intuited (phenomena)[54] and those that are not possibly sensibly intuited (noumena). Logically contradictory objects are not possibly sensibly intuited, but this does not mean they are noumena; it means that logically contradictory objects are not supposed to be included in this division at all.

Instead, I propose that "all objects *überhaupt*" should be taken to refer to all q-objects *überhaupt*, all of the objects *there are*. One of the main issues in this section is whether we have epistemic warrant to posit (absolutely) objects in addition to those we can sensibly intuit, that is, whether we have the epistemic warrant to assert that *there are* noumena, which in my terminology can be stated: that noumena are among the q-objects.[55] The notion of object that Kant has in mind here is the quantificational notion of an object, and one of Kant's principal questions in this section is: do we have the right to assume that the domain of objects there are (our ontology, in Quine's sense) divides into phenomena and noumena? Indeed, do we have the right to even assert that it is really possible that there are q-objects in the extension of the latter concept?[56] I will proceed on the assumption that "all objects *überhaupt*" refers to all q-objects *überhaupt*.[57]

But it would be misguided to assume that "q-object" is the only notion of object at play in the Phenomena/Noumena section, for Kant is clearly also invoking the notion of an r-object. For he distinguishes between objects that can be sensibly intuited (phenomena) and objects that can be non-sensibly intuited (noumena in a positive sense). Both of these concepts describe an object in terms of its relation to a representation, and thus they are both notions of an r-object: the r-object of a sensible intuition and a non-sensible intuition, respectively. Figure 1 summarizes Kant's distinctions among different kinds of intuition and their respective r-objects.

It might seem that Kant asserts an especially strong connection between q-objects and intuition in "Phenomena and Noumena" because he appears to identify "object in general" (which I have argued is: q-object in general) with "object of intuition in general."[58] If this were the case, it would provide a handy explanation of why the "metaphysical connection" holds in the case of sensible intuition: the concept of a q-object just is the concept of an r-object of intuition. However, this cannot be the case, for Kant distinguishes (explicitly in B, implicitly in A) between the concept <noumenon in the negative sense> and the concept <noumenon in the positive sense>. The former is the concept

FIGURE 1   Objects of intuition
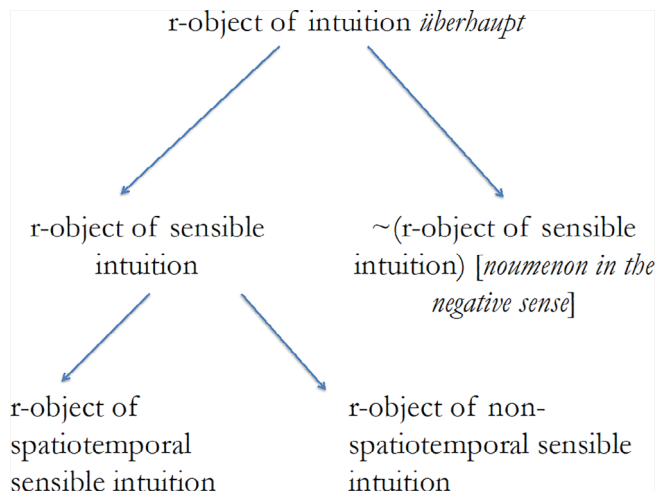
of an object that cannot be sensibly intuited; the latter is the concept of an object that can be non-sensibly intuited (in my terminology, the r-object of a non-sensible intuition). Kant's point in introducing this distinction is that, although the Transcendental Aesthetic proved that the objects we sensibly intuit are appearances of objects that we cannot sensibly intuit (noumena in the negative sense), we cannot assume that these objects are given to a non-sensible intuition, or, in Kant's terms, that they are noumena in the positive sense. But this conceptual distinction entails that the concept *<q-object>* is not identical to the concept *<r-object of intuition>*, as the following argument makes explicit:

1 *<Negative noumenon>* = *<∼(r-object of sensible intuition)>*. [By definition]
2 *<∼(r-object of sensible intuition)>* = *<q-object & ∼(r-object of sensible intuition)>*. Note: the mark *<q-object>* can be added as a mark to any (first-order) concept without changing it, since q-objects are all and only the things that can fall under concepts. For instance, *<red>* = *<q-object & red>*.
3 If *<q-object>* = *<r-object of intuition>* then *<negative noumenon>* = *<r-object of intuition & ∼(r-object of sensible intuition)>*. [From (1) and (2) by substitution]
4 *<r-object of intuition & ∼(r-object of sensible intuition)>* = *<r-object of non-sensible intuition)>*. [From Figure 1]
5 *<r-object of non-sensible intuition)>* = *<positive noumenon>*. [By definition]
6 If *<q-object>* = *<r-object of intuition>* then *<negative noumenon>* = *<positive noumenon>*. [From (3) and (4)]
7 *<Negative noumenon>* ≠ *<positive noumeon>*. [Obvious from the text]
8 ∴ *<q-object>* ≠ *<r-object of intuition>*.

Before continuing, I want to comment briefly on premise (2). Every concept is a concept *of* q-objects in the following sense: it is a concept whose extension, if it has any, is composed of q-objects. The marks of the concept determine which marks q-objects must have in order to be in that extension. This is why we can add *<q-object>* as a mark to any concept without changing that concept; *<q-object>* is, so to speak, a "dummy mark" that can be added to any concept.

A few comments about the conclusion of this argument. Since an object that can be non-sensibly intuited cannot be sensibly intuited, it follows that every positive noumenon is also a negative noumenon.[59] However, the distinction between these concepts means that it is not a conceptual truth that every negative noumenon is a positive noumenon. In other words, by the very nature of these concepts, *<negative noumenon>* is more general, and *<positive noumenon>* is more specific (though this does not entail that it is really possible for there to be a negative noumenon that is not also a positive noumenon). But this means that we can form the concept *<merely*

negative noumenon>, that is, the concept of q-objects that fall under *<negative noumenon>* but *not* under *<positive noumenon>*. This is the concept *<∼(r-object of sensible intuition) & ∼(object of non-sensible intuition)>*, or more intuitively, the concept of q-objects that are not r-objects of any intuition whatsoever. This is a concept *of* q-objects in the sense in which all concepts are *of* q-objects; it does not entail that it has any instances (or that it is even really possible for it to have any instances). The fact that *<q-object>* is not the concept *<r-object of intuition>* means that the concept *<merely negative noumenon>* is logically consistent; in other words, we cannot rule out through conceptual analysis alone the possibility that there are (or could be) q-objects that are not intuitable at all.[60] The coherence of the concept of merely negative noumena threatens to open up a significant gap between the concept of a q-object and the concept of the r-object of intuition in the non-sensible case, and therefore in the general case (what is false of the species is false of the genus). It may be that Kant nonetheless maintains the metaphysical connection between the real possibility of non-sensible q-objects and the real possibility of non-sensible intuition of them (the former is "nothing over and above" the latter), but if so, it is not because the former is conceptually identical to the latter.

7 | NON-SENSIBLE INTUITION AND NON-SENSIBLE OBJECTS: BRIDGING THE GAP

In the previous section, I argued that Kant does not identify the concept of a q-object in general with the concept of the r-object of an intuition in general. In particular, this identity does not hold in the non-sensible case (*<non-sensible q-object>* is not the same concept as *<r-object of non-sensible intuition>*), so it does not hold in the general case. Nor, as I will argue in this section, does he assert a non-sensible version of the modal connection that obtains in the sensible case (see Section 5). Instead, I will argue that although Kant does not assert either conceptual identity or a modal connection, he does hold that there is a very close connection between these concepts: the concept *<r-object of intuition>* is our representational vehicle for making sense of the concept *<q-object>*. I will explain in what follows what exactly this means and I will sketch some reasons for thinking it is true.

One of the core doctrines of the *KrV* is that we cannot know through theoretical means whether there are non-sensible objects (things in themselves, negative noumena) that instantiate the categories.[61] What is more, Kant maintains that we cannot even know through theoretical means whether it is really possible that there are non-sensible objects that instantiate the categories. This agnosticism about the nature of supersensible reality sharply separates Kant from his rationalist predecessors (like Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten); consequently, we should expect Kant not merely to assert this claim, but to *argue* for it. However, explicit arguments for these two claims are not especially easy to find in the text of the *KrV*. For one thing, pointing out (as Kant does in the B-Deduction) that our access to a priori knowledge of the real possibility of the categories (their connection to intuition) does not explain any putative knowledge of the real possibility of non-sensible objects falling under the categories does not amount to an *argument* that we cannot possess such knowledge; it merely points out that one way to such knowledge is closed to us.

In fact, there is good reason to think that Kant's main argument for this agnosticism occurs in the Phenomena/ Noumena section, for it is in precisely that section that Kant emphasizes that the logical consistency of the concept *<noumenon>* does not entail that it has any instances, or even that it really possibly has any instances. However, when we examine the texts in which Kant argues for this agnosticism, we find that he makes a connection between objects and intuitions that might be thought to undermine the argument of the previous section and beg serious questions against his rationalist opponents. Consider for instance, this representative text:

> Now, however, the possibility of a thing [*Ding*] can never be proved merely through the non-contradictoriness of a concept of it, but only by vouching for it with an intuition corresponding to this concept. If, therefore, we wanted to apply the categories to objects [*Gegenstände*] that are not considered as appearances, then we would have to ground them on an intuition other than the sensible one,

and then the object [*Gegenstand*] would be a noumenon in a positive sense. Now since such an intui-
tion, namely intellectual intuition, lies absolutely outside our faculty of cognition, the use of the cate-
gories can by no means reach beyond the boundaries of the objects [*Gegenstände*] of experience […].
(B308–309)[62]

The first sentence of this passage shows that Kant is concerned with the problem of proving the real *possibility* of
noumena instantiating the categories, whereas the second sentence might be read as claiming that in order to know
this we must actually intuit a non-sensible object instantiating the categories. However, I do not think that Kant's talk
of "an intuition corresponding to this concept" should be read as referring to an actual intuition, but to the real possi-
bility of such an intuition. After all, Kant does not hold the corresponding principle in the case of sensible intuition
and the categories. To prove a priori that it is really possible for a sensibly given object to instantiate the concept F
we do not need to actually intuit an instance of F; it is sufficient that we are able to prove the real possibility of such
an intuition of an object. Indeed, throughout the Phenomena/Noumena section when Kant talks about "providing a
concept with an object" or a "corresponding intuition" he often means the *modal* problem of proving that it is really
possible for an object instantiating that concept to be given in intuition.[63] So I think that this paragraph should be
read as concerned not with actuality but with real possibility.

Consequently, I would reconstruct Kant's argument in this paragraph as follows:

(P1) We cannot know that it is really possible for there to be non-sensible intuition of objects that instantiate the
categories.
(P2) We can know that it is really possible for there to be non-sensible objects that instantiate the categories only if
we can know that it is really possible for there to be non-sensible intuition of objects that instantiate the
categories.
(C)∴ We cannot know that it is really possible for there to be non-sensible objects that instantiate the categories.

Premise (P1) is relatively unproblematic. We might reconstruct it as the outcome of the following line of reasoning:

(S1) We can know that non-sensible intuition of objects is really possible only if we actually possess non-sensible
intuition.
(S2) We do not possess non-sensible intuition.
(C1)∴ We cannot know that non-sensible intuition of objects is really possible.
(C2/P1) ∴ We cannot know that non-sensible intuition of objects instantiating the categories is possible.

The premises of this argument are not uncontroversial, either in the context of pre-Kantian rationalism or post-
Kantian German idealism, but I will forego discussion of them here.[64]

One thing that stands out about (P2) is that none of Kant's rationalist predecessors, against whom this argument
is (in part) directed, would accept it. Nor could Kant reasonably expect them to accept it, since, as he is at pains to
emphasize, they did not sharply separate concepts from intuitions.[65] We should expect, therefore, that Kant has
some argument in its favor. Crusius, for instance, who distinguishes logical possibility from real possibility, would
deny that our epistemic access to real possibility for objects in some domain (e.g., non-sensible ones) depends upon
our epistemic access to the real possibility of intuitions of objects in that domain (e.g., non-sensible intuition). Kant
has objections to Crusius's own theory of our epistemic access to real possibility, but none of these support (P2).
After all, as a matter of basic logic the fact that one's opponent's theory is false does not entail that your theory
is true.

What reasons could Kant give in favor of (P2)? He could simply claim that the real possibility of non-sensible
q-objects is nothing "over and above" the real possibility of non-sensible intuitions of objects. However this would
raise two further worries. First, what is Kant's warrant for making this assumption? The "metaphysical connection"

between non-sensible q-objects and non-sensible intuitions of them is not something that would be accepted by most of Kant's rationalist predecessors (though Spinoza and Malebranche are possible exceptions). If his argument for modal ignorance rests on this brute assumption that non-sensible q-objects are nothing "over and above" non-sensible intuitions of them, then it is quite weak. Secondly, if this argument rests on the brute assertion of a metaphysical connection between non-sensible q-objects and non-sensible intuitions of objects (the real possibility of the former is nothing "over and above" the real possibility of the latter) then it is unclear how this assumption is compatible with Kant's *own* epistemology. As I argued in the previous section, the concepts *<q-object>* and *<r-object of intuition>* are not identical (nor are they identical in the non-sensible case), so the assertion of the metaphysical connection is not an analytic judgment, but a synthetic one. Therefore, there seems to be no explanation, consistent with Kant's epistemology, of how we can acquire the synthetic a priori knowledge that the real possibility of q-objects in general is "nothing over and above" the real possibility of non-sensible intuitions of objects. I conclude that Kant's argument does not rely on a non-sensible version of the modal connection that obtains in the sensible case (see Section 5).

Kant never explicitly defends (P2). The scholarly literature has largely ignored this problem, and I am aware of no scholars who explain Kant's grounds for assuming (P2) or something equivalent to it. This is in part due to the tendency among commentators to adopt the Kantian assumption that intuition is the necessary epistemic vehicle for knowledge of real possibility. But that is an assumption that would be shared *neither* by Kant's rationalist predecessors *nor* by contemporary realist metaphysicians, many of whom think that intuition is strictly irrelevant to our epistemic access to real possibility. However, (P2), or something very like it, is essential to Kant's project in the *KrV*, for without it he cannot conclude, from the fact that we possess only sensible intuition (which warrants (P1) in the reconstruction above), that we cannot know on theoretical grounds what is really possible for non-sensible objects (things in themselves, negative noumena). What follows is my attempt to say something on Kant's behalf in defense of (P2), which will partially amend the separation between the concepts *<q-object>* and *<r-object of intuition>* argued for so far.

This article began with the quantificational concept of an object, the concept of what can be absolutely posited. I argued that this can be expanded, without threat of anachronism, to the following: a q-object is what can be assigned the value of *x* in an act of absolute positing, the general form of which is: *There is an x such that x is F*. This means that a q-object is what can be assigned the value of *x* in *x is F* such that the latter attains a determinate truth value. What is assignable as the value of *x* in *x is F* (so that the latter is determinately true or false)? The formula *x is F* expresses the content of what I called in Section 5 a "referential thought," a thought that subsumes a particular object under a concept. Intuition, I argued there, is the presentational vehicle for referential thoughts, the vehicle by which values of *x* become available to us to be subsumed under concepts in thoughts of the form *x is F*. If this is correct, then it would not be surprising if Kant answered our question above as follows: since the form of a referential thought content is *x is F*, my only grasp on what it is to be an admissible value of *x* in *x is F* is via the thought of being a possible referent of a referential thought (one that subsumes its referent under the concept *F*). In other words, to think of there being a value of absolute positing is to think of a possible referent of some referential thought. Since the idea of intuition is the idea of the presentational vehicle for referential thought, it follows that to think of an admissible value of an act of absolute positing we have to think of it as possibly intuited. In other words, to think of q-objects in general we must think of them as r-objects of some possible intuition or other.[66,67]

Take a concept F, like *<non-sensible object>*. What is it for this concept to be instantiated by one or more q-objects? It is for there to be something that could be assigned the value of *x* and make true the referential thought *x is a non-sensible object*. Now, in order for us to think that there is such an *x* we need to think that there is something that could be the referent of *x* and make true the referential thought *x is a non-sensible object*. The thought of there being something that could be the referent of this referential thought and make it true is the thought of there being an intuition of something that would instantiate this concept. Therefore, our only way to get a grip on the thought that there are non-sensible objects (that is, the thought that an object is absolutely posited for the concept *<non-sensible object>*) is to think of a way in which q-objects could be referents of true referential thoughts that predicate this

concept of their referents. In other words, our only grip on the thought that there are non-sensible objects is via thinking of a non-sensible form of intuition in which such objects would be given to some intellect (not our own).

Some care is required here, for the conclusion of this argument cannot be: to be a q-object *is to be* the r-object of some intuition. If that were the case, we could positively conclude that merely negative noumena are impossible, but as I argued in the previous section, we cannot conclude this. However, the above line of reasoning does not claim that for there to be an *x* that makes *x is F* true is for there to be a possible presentation that would present to an intellect an object that instantiates the concept F. Rather, it claims that *our only means of representing* the thought that there are such values of *x* is to think of a possible presentation of such a value to an intellect. It claims that our only grip on the quantificational notion of an object is via the notion of what could be the referent of a referential thought. We cannot get anywhere with the thought *There is an x such that x is F* unless we think of this in terms of there being some possible presentation (intuition) to a mind that would present it with a referent that would make true the referential thought that subsumes its referent under the concept F.[68] Our representational vehicle for thinking of q-objects (instances of concepts) is to think of potential r-objects of some intuition or other. This is why our epistemic access to the real possibility of the instantiation of the concept *<non-sensible object>* is via our epistemic access to the real possibility of an intuition that would present an instance of this concept.

We could put these thoughts in a slightly more general frame by saying that the concepts of object, existence, what there is, quantification (i.e., absolute positing), singular term, and reference all move in a very tight circle.[69] To possess any of them we have to possess all of them (at least implicitly). What is more, our understanding of the concept of a q-object depends upon our understanding of the concept of absolute positing (in contemporary terms, quantification). And our understanding of the concept of absolute positing depends on our understanding what can be the *referent* of a referential thought, which itself depends on our understanding of what can be presented to an intellect for referential thought. This does not mean that to think that there are q-objects instantiating a certain concept is to think of objects that could be presented to *us* for referential thought. All it entails is that to think of there being q-objects instantiating a certain concept we must think of a kind of intellect to which these objects could be presented, that is, a kind of intellect that could have referential thoughts about them.

Since an intuition of an object that instantiates the concept *<non-sensible object>* must be a non-sensible intuition, our epistemic access to the real possibility of the instantiation of *<non-sensible object>* must be via our epistemic access to the real possibility of a non-sensible intuition of an object. In particular, our epistemic access to the real possibility of non-sensible objects instantiating the categories—which is equivalent to the real possibility of the instantiation of *<non-sensible object & C>*, where C represents some category—is via our epistemic access to the real possibility of non-sensible intuition of objects instantiating the categories. If we grant Kant the short argument for (P1) and conclude that we cannot know the real possibility of non-sensible intuitions of objects (since we do not ourselves possess such intuition) it follows that we cannot know the real possibility of non-sensible objects. Consequently, while the concept *<q-object>* is not *identical* to the concept *<r-object of intuition>*, our only grip on the former is by means of the latter; or, as I formulated it above, the latter is our "representational vehicle" for thinking about the former.[70]

ENDNOTES

[1] The *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is cited in the standard way: the page in the 1781 edition (A), followed by the page in the 1787 edition (B). Other works of Kant are cited by volume and page number in the Akademie edition (Ak.); a complete list of works cited, as well as a list of abbreviations of the titles of Kant's works, can be found in the Bibliography at the end of this article. Translations are mainly taken from the Guyer-Wood edition of the *KrV*, Kant (1998), with some modifications by me.

[2] I use angle brackets to refer to the concepts that would normally be expressed by the italicized expression within; for example, *<substance>* is the concept of substance. I use italics to denote propositions; the sentence "Gold is a yellow metal" expresses the proposition *Gold is a yellow metal*. I refer to the relation between an object and a concept whose extension includes that object as "instantiation," for example, particular substances instantiate *<substance>*.

[3] A12/B25–26.

[4] For an overview of this debate see Ameriks (1982) and Stang (2016a).

⁵ This is a debate between so-called "conceptualist" readings of Kant, on which the activity of the understanding is required for intuitions to give us objects, and "non-conceptualist" readings of Kant, on which intuition can give us objects without the participation of the understanding. In recent Kant literature, one can trace this debate back to the defense of non-conceptualism in Allais (2015) and Hanna (2005); see also Allais (2009) and Hanna (2008, 2011a,b). Influential articulations of the conceptualist reading of Kant include Ginsborg (2006), Longuenesse (1998), and McDowell (1994). There is now a vast literature on this topic, including Gomes (2010, 2014), Grüne (2008, 2009, 2011), McLear (2011, 2015, 2016), Stephenson (2015), and Tolley (2013); see McLear (2014) for a helpful overview. However, the debate about the independence of intuition of objects from understanding goes back at least as far as Hegel's *Glauben und Wissen*.

⁶ The *locus classicus* of such a distinction in English-language Kant scholarship is Allison (1983); in the second edition, Allison (2004), he abandons the claim that *Objekt* and *Gegenstand* carry distinct technical meanings for Kant. In Allison 2015 he writes: "In response to philologically oriented criticisms, which point to a certain randomness in Kant's use of these terms, I ceased placing any weight on the terminology; but I have continued to insist upon the importance of distinguishing between the two senses of 'object' for understanding the B-Deduction" (Allison 2015, p. 379 n. 6). The two senses of "object" Allison distinguishes are not, however, the two senses I am considering in this article, for in my terminology they are two subordinate senses of "r-object"; I am considering what I take to be a more fundamental distinction between the quantificational and the representational concept of objecthood.

⁷ Frege cites Kant's critique of the ontological argument as a forerunner to his own theory of existence (Frege 1968, p. 65). Rosenkoetter (2010) objects to what he calls the "Frege-anticipation" thesis.

⁸ To contemporary ears it might sound odd to claim that "God" is a predicate rather than a name. However, Kant thinks that judgments are composed of concepts, and concepts are inherently general, so it is not clear he can account for *names* in judgments. Compare *JL* Ak. 9, p. 111.

⁹ Consider, though, Kant's claim a page earlier in *Beweisgrund* that "existence pertains to the narwhal, but not to the unicorn [*dem Seeeinhorn kommt die Existenz zu, dem Landeinhorn nicht*]. This says nothing other than: the representation of the narwhal is an empirical concept [*Erfahrungsbegriff*], that is, the representation of an existing thing" (2, p. 72; Au's emphasis). One might read him here as claiming that to judge *Narwhals exist* is to posit not merely an object falling under the concept <*Narwhal*>, but an existing object. But if this is correct, then a judgment of existence is not identical to absolutely positing an object under a concept, as Kant states repeatedly (for one could absolutely posit an object without absolutely positing an existing object). Consequently, I take it that "existent" in the quoted passage is redundant. I defend this interpretation further in Stang (2016b).

¹⁰ The identity of existence and absolute positing is also confirmed by Kant's metaphysics lectures: *MH* (2, pp. 28–30), *MK₁* (28, p. 524), *MM* (29, p. 822), *MV* (28, pp. 412–455), *ML₂* (28, pp. 554, 598–599), *MvS* (28, pp. 493–494), *MD* (28, pp. 629–630), and *MK₂* (29, pp. 722–723).

¹¹ Kant uses the term *Ding* in *Beweisgrund*, but in this essay I am focusing on the notion of *Gegenstand* in his Critical philosophy. See Stang (forthcoming) for a comparison of the concepts of *Gegenstand* and *Ding* in the *KrV*.

¹² This point holds independently of whether Kant intends to absolutely posit objects for mathematical concepts. For even if he does not, <*exists*> is a restricted predicate in the sense that it is logically possible for there to be (absolutely posited) objects that do not fall under it. I think that it is existence* that figures in Kant's account of the dynamical categories as conditions of representing *existing* objects in space and time. See A160/B190, A176, B219, A182, B225, B233, B257, A215–16/B262–63. The notion of existence must be a restricted predicate rather than absolute positing because the point of the Analogies is that to represent outer objects as distinct from perceptions of them (states in us) is to represent the latter (and not the former) as *existing*. It might be replied that Kant is only concerned to absolutely posit objects that exist in this sense (outer objects), and hence that existence* is not a restricted predicate (it applies to all objects there are), but, on the contrary, Kant must absolutely posit inner states because he thinks they are causally affected by objects outside us: see A28, A92/B125, B208, A168/B210, A213/B260, Ak. 4, p. 289, 4, p. 476. I take it that both *relata* of causation must be absolutely posited (there must be a cause and an effect). Some caution is required in defining existence*, however. If we define it as being causally efficacious in space and time then the conclusion of the second Analogy—representing objects as existing requires <*cause-effect*>—is trivial. I think that in the Analogies it is equivalent to being an object in space and time distinct from any discursive intellect's perception of it. Kant then proves that such objects must be causally efficacious substances, or accidents thereof. In other contexts, he just collapses the initial definition with the characterization of them as causally efficacious; see, for instance, in the Preface to *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* (quoted in main text) and similar passages in his metaphysics lectures (Ak. 28, p. 49, 411, 492, 553, and 629). For more on this issue, see Stang (2016b), Chap. 10.7. Thanks to an anonymous referee for urging me to be more careful on this point.

¹³ In other words, I think Kant holds the view of Frege, Russell, and Quine that there are no objects that do not exist; the opposite view, that there are non-existent objects, is associated with Alexius Meinong. See Meinong (1904) for the original presentation of *Gegenstandstheorie* and Marek (2013) for a clear and systematic presentation of Meinong's views. A

sophisticated Meinongian reading of Kant has recently been offered by Tobias Rosefeldt (2008, 2011). See Stang 2016b for a critique of Rosefeldt's view. See *KrV* A594–95/B622–23, *MH* (28, p. 134), *MV* (28, p. 455), *ML₂* (28, p. 598), and *MK₂* (28, p. 723).

[14] For the function-argument conception of judgment see Frege's essay "Funktion und Begriff" (Frege 1891). The case for Kant having anticipated the Fregean conception of judgment can be found in Stang (forthcoming).

[15] The *locus classicus* for what I am calling the quantificational concept of an object is Quine (1948); for further exposition of the Quinean view of existence, objects, and ontological commitment I have found these essays particularly useful: Quine (1951a,b, 1953a, 1953b, 1964, 1983), as well as the seminal essay Carnap (1950).

[16] Quine (1953b) contains a classic argument for this.

[17] The classic defense in modern analytic philosophy of the neo-Meinongian view that attitude reports can be "quantified into" is Parsons (1980).

[18] For example, A220/B267, A234/B287, A291/B348, B298, A327/B384, A489/B517, and A596/B624n. Compare 10, p. 414, 24, pp. 904–905, 28, p. 1033 and 1156.

[19] Kant's skepticism about the existence of universals is found throughout his metaphysics lectures (see 28, p. 422, 28, p. 503u, 28, p.560u, 28, p.636), as well as in *On a Discovery* (8, p.218n4). See my entry on "Eigenschaft" in Willaschek, Stolzenberg, Mohr, & Bacin (2015).

[20] "Inherence" is one half of the first category of relation in the *KrV* (A80/B106); in parentheses Kant clarifies that "inherence" refers to accidents. For Kant's views on accidents, see A187/B230, 8, p. 225n, 28, 562–563, 28, p. 639, 28, p. 1104. See my article on "Inharënz" in Willaschek, Stolzenberg, Mohr, & Bacin (2015).

[21] Alternately, we might identify "the" object of a concept as the extension of the concept. This runs up against the problem that, if the argument of Section 2 is correct, non-instantiated concepts have null extensions but Kant seems willing to speak of the "the" object of a concept, regardless of whether it is instantiated or not. In a contemporary vein, we might identify the extension of an uninstantiated concept as the empty set, but (a) the realization that the empty set is a set in its own right was a later development in the theory of sets, and (b) this would entail that all non-instantiated concepts have the object, which contradicts the passages I cited above in note 20. In an even more contemporary vein, we might identify "the object" of a concept as the set of possible objects that instantiate it. However, if the argument of Section 2 is correct, this is identical to the set of objects that instantiate it; if there are non-existent possible objects that instantiate a concept then existence is not identical to absolute positing. So I think the quest to find something in Kant's ontology (his theory of what q-objects there are) to identify as "the" object of a concept should be abandoned.

[22] "Gegenstand eines Begriffs, der sich selbst widerspricht, ist Nichts, weil der Begriff Nichts ist, das Unmögliche, wie etwa die geradlinige Figur von zwei Seiten (*nihil negativum*)."

[23] If it were q-object then all of the further distinctions Kant draws in the Table of Nothings would be extensional distinctions among kinds of q-objects, which would have the absurd consequence that the *nihil negativum* is a q-object.

[24] For example, *EMB*, 2, p. 72, 74; A599/B627. I mention these in particular because they are marshaled by Tobias Rosefeldt as evidence that Kant has a Meinongian ontology. See Rosefeldt (2008, 2011).

[25] However, they are closely related to the notion of a q-object. As I will explain in the next section, I think that Kant's view is that the only q-objects we can know (*wissen*) to exist are also r-objects in the highly determinate sense that Allison and many other Kant scholars focus on, "objects of experience," which I take to mean r-objects of experience.

[26] The exception might be a concept that necessarily has at most one instance, for example, *<God>*. I discuss below whether we can have singular thoughts through such concepts (including completely determinate concepts).

[27] A19/B33, A50/B74.

[28] A19/B33, A50/B74, and A320/B77. There is a growing literature on the Kantian notion of intuition, much of it centering around the debate between "non-conceptualist" and "conceptualist" readers (an issue on which I will not take a stand here). See the references in note 5.

[29] Kant sometimes identifies the extension of a concept with the set of concepts in which it is contained as a mark, rather than the set of objects to which it applies; see *JL* (Ak. 9, pp. 95–100) and *VL* (Ak. 24, p. 240, 569), as well as Longuenesse (1998, pp. 86–87) and Anderson (2004, p. 512–513) for discussion.

[30] *JL* 9, pp. 95–96.

[31] *JL* 9, p. 91.

[32] In the wake of Allais (2015) there has been much discussion of the alleged object-dependence of Kantian intuition: whether intuition requires that its object exist (or have existed at some time). The state of the art of the discussion is represented by Grüne (2017), McLear (2017), Schafer (2017), and Stephenson (2015, 2017), which also contains extensive

citations. Even Stephenson, the most incisive critic of the object-dependence view, states explicitly that his view is not meant to undermine the dependence of intuition on objects in the minimal sense I am claiming here (Stephenson 2017, p. 110).

[33] Stephenson (2015) contains a comprehensive discussion of how to think about non-veridical perception in a Kantian context.

[34] Compare Willaschek (1998, p. 547).

[35] This is the view of Allais and Hanna: Allais (2009, 2010, 2015), and Hanna (2001, 2005, 2008).

[36] It is not causally efficacious; see Section 2 above.

[37] In this article, I remain neutral among these options. The textual evidence for Kant's views on hallucination and non-veridical intuition is ambiguous, precisely because of the ambiguity in his notion of "object." None of the texts cited in Stephenson (2015) are incompatible with my interpretation, though for reasons of space I forgo a detailed examination of them. See especially 7, p. 153, 167, 28, p. 449, 28, p. 673, 29, p. 881.

[38] Bearing in mind, however, that not every q-object exists* (is a causally efficacious being independent of a single discursive intellect's perception of it).

[39] A51/B75.

[40] This is (strictly speaking) a simplification, but for the purposes of this article it will suffice. In a longer presentation, I would follow Clinton Tolley and distinguish between the act (intuition), its content (r-object), and its referent (q-object). See Tolley (2013).

[41] As becomes clear in the rest of this passage, from the Postulate of Actuality. In fact, I think the Postulate of Actuality is concerned specifically with how we cognize q-objects that exist*, which I take to be the schematized second category of modality, the unschematized (general) version of which is absolute positing itself. See Rosenkoetter (2018) and my reply in Stang (2018) for more.

[42] See especially Kant's remarks at the end of the section "On the impossibility of an ontological proof of the existence of God," A600–601/B627–28.

[43] This point can be recovered by careful attention to the Schematism: "the schema of actuality is the existence of an object in time" (*das Schema der Wirklichkeit ist das Dasein eines Gegenstandes in der Zeit*) (A145/B184). That actuality is defined in terms of existence means that existence is more general than actuality. What does existence mean here? The natural answer is: absolute positing. So we can read the schema of actuality as: the absolute positing of an object in time. But this also allows us to see that the schema of actuality can be applied *before* we introduce the categories of relation, at the level of mere quality. The schema of a reality is "the quantity of something insofar as it fills time [*der Quantität von etwas, so fern es die Zeit erfüllt*]." So whenever we have a sense-manifold of non-empty time (i.e., time filled with sensation of varying magnitudes) we can apply the category of actuality: there is *this* sensory manifold at *this* moment in time. So prior to bringing in the categories of relation to experience objects that exist* in space and time we can make warranted acts of absolute positing. Kant's manner of presentation—giving the Postulates after all of the other Principles and defining the modal categories using the relational categories (e.g., the actual is defined as what is in "connection" [*Zusammenhang*] with sensation, where "connection" appears to mean *causal* connection)—might be thought to conflict with this reading, but I take his presentation to make a slightly different point: the complete system of modal concepts and principles, as given in the Postulates, applies to objects only once they have been brought under relational (and quantitative and qualitative) categories, but a more minimal core use of modal categories is possible at the level of purely quantitatively and qualitatively determinate inner states. In the case of actuality, this more minimal core is absolute positing. I discuss this issue in more detail in Stang (2016b), Chap. 10.7. Thanks to an anonymous referee for urging me to be more careful on this point.

[44] Kant does not assume that we must consciously intuit an F in order to warrantedly make a judgment of existence (*there is an F*), for he think we can know the existence of some objects in space that we cannot intuit (at least not consciously). His view instead is that in order to make an existential judgment *There is an F*, we must consciously intuit *some* object, either an object that is itself an F, or an object whose existence we can connect to the existence of Fs through known causal laws (e.g., the example of the magnetic matter at A225–26/B272–74).

[45] I take this to be Kant's point at A225/B273.

[46] "Der unbestimmte Gegenstand einer empirischen Anschauung, heißt Erscheinung" (A20/B34). The possibility of a q-object in space and time = the possibility of an appearance in space and time (because objects in space and time are appearances) = the possibility of an intuition of an object in space and time (because an appearance by definition is an object of intuition). The equation of the possibility of q-objects in space and time with the possibility of intuitions of objects in space and time is confirmed, directly and indirectly, by many texts: A26/B42, A30/B45, etc.

[47] To some readers, this formulation will sound like it begs the question in favor of a "two world" reading of Kant's idealism. I think there are two sources of this impression: (a) if objects in space and time are numerically identical to things in themselves, then it would entail that the possibility of a thing in itself is the possibility of it appearing as an object I intuit (by the transitivity of identity); (b) it seems to entail that the possibility of an object in space and time amounts to nothing more than a "going on" in my mind, and hence to entail a "two worlds" or phenomenalist reading of Kant's idealism. However, this impression is mistaken. Re: (a), neither Henry Allison nor most contemporary "metaphysical" one-world readers of Kant are committed to the numerical identity of appearances and the things in themselves that appear (see Allais 2015, p. 72; Allison 2004, p. 459n19; Marshall 2013). So even if the conditional claim in (a) is true, this does not beg any questions against sophisticated "one world" readers. Even a "one world" reader who wants to maintain numerical identity can accept my "metaphysical connection" for they need not hold that the object of an intuition (what that intuition gives to us) is merely the thing that appears (the thing that also has *an sich* nature); rather, they can take the object of intuition to be that thing *qua* appearing, or that thing's manifest qualities. Re: (b), this assumes that the having of an intuition is a purely mental "going on", whereas I take it that Kant's view is that intuition (for discursive beings) essentially involves causal affection and that things in themselves are among the causes of this affection (A190/B235, A387, A494/B522; Ak. 4, p. 289, 4, p. 314, 4, p. 318, 4, p. 451, and 8, p. 215). So there is no implication that a mere mental "going on" summons an object into existence. Thanks to an anonymous referee for urging me to be clearer on this point.

[48] This is not the claim that the possibility of an object in space and time with some further property F is the possibility of such an object being intuited. As the discussion in the main text makes clear, the possibility of any further properties requires the contribution of a further faculty, namely, understanding. So the metaphysical connection I am asserting is much weaker than it might initially appear. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me on this issue.

[49] I forgo considering whether all three connections hold in the case of sensible intuition in general, because it is not crucial to my argument.

[50] Real possibility is distinct from logical possibility. Any logically consistent concept is logically possibly instantiated, but the logical possibility of the instantiation of a concept does not entail that it is really possibly instantiated. What exactly real possibility is for the Critical Kant is a complex and controversial matter. I explore this question in detail in Stang (2016b). For the purposes of this article, not much will be lost if we take "real possibility" to refer to what is now called "metaphysical possibility" in contemporary philosophy.

[51] For example, B138–139.

[52] I remain neutral on whether "intellectual intuition" and "intuitive understanding" refer to the same thing. See Gram (1981), Förster (2011), and Leech (2014).

[53] "For an understanding to which this distinction (between concepts and intuitions) did not apply, all objects that I cognize would be (exist)" (Ak. 5, p. 404; cf. 28, p. 1051).

[54] In the A edition Kant defines "phenomena" as appearances (objects of possible sensible intuition) thought according to the categories (A248–249), but this definition is missing in the B Edition and does not correspond with how Kant defines "phenomena" in other texts (e.g., *Prol*. Ak. 4, p. 314). In order to preserve the symmetry between phenomena and noumena (defined as objects that cannot be sensibly intuited), I propose that we define "phenomena" as r-objects of a possible sensible intuition.

[55] For example, A259/B315.

[56] Kant's answer to both questions seems to be no: see A243/B301, A255/B310.

[57] A point of clarification: <*phenomenon*> (=<*sensibly intuitable*>) and <*noumenon*> (=<*not sensibly intuitable*>) are concepts that (by definition) exhaustively divide the concept <*q-object*>. The question is whether we can absolutely posit objects under the second concept.

[58] It would be pointless for Kant to identify r-object in general with r-object of intuition in general, for it would collapse the distinction between conceptual representation and intuitional representation.

[59] This may seem to beg the question in favor of a "two world" reading of Kant's idealism. Let me explain why I do not think that it is. As I explained in note 46, many "one world" readers are not committed to the numerical identity of things in themselves (noumena, in either the positive or negative sense) and phenomena. So my claim in the body of the article is compatible with such a "one world" reading. For an extensive argument that even "one world" readers should not accept numerical identity see Stang (2014).

[60] What Williamson (2007) calls "elusive objects."

[61] This is a weaker claim than: we cannot know anything about things in themselves. For it may be that Kant thinks we can know certain things about things in themselves, namely, that there are things in themselves, without knowing that they are determined by the categories. See especially *Prol*., Ak. 4, p. 315 (cf. A252, Bxxvi-ii).

[62] Compare A252, A254–55/B310–11, and A256/B311–12.

[63] As I argue in Stang (2016b, Chap. 5).

[64] Specifically, anyone who thinks we possess non-sensible intuition (e.g., Fichte, Schelling) will reject (S2). (S1) will be rejected by anyone who thinks that we can know that non-sensible intuition is possible in some other way than by possessing it ourselves, perhaps by inferring to the existence of a divine non-sensible intuition distinct from ours (e.g., Leibniz).

[65] For example, A43/B60.

[66] Thus my argument does *not* proceed as follows: (a) a q-object must be intuitable, so (b) the thought that there is a q-object (there is an *x* such that F*x*) must involve thinking that *x* is intuitable. This would fallaciously import the modal connection in (a) into the content of the thought in (b). My argument is rather that the thought that there is an *x* such that F*x* is the thought that there is an *x* of which the referential thought F*x* is true (whether or not any thinker actually thinks it). Since the very idea of an intuition is the idea of what contributes a value of *x* to a referential thought of this form, this is the thought that there could be an intuition of *x* (whether or not any intellect actually has this intuition). Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me to be clearer on this point.

[67] As usual with Kant, we are operating at a high level of idealization of the cognitive capacities of ordinary agents. I am not claiming that the "person on the street" when thinking about an object of absolute positing (that there is an F) is explicitly aware that they are thinking of this by means of the thought of some intellect to which the object would be immediately given in intuition. I am claiming that if we unpack the thought *there is an F* we will find this dependence on the thought of an intuition of such an object. Thanks to an anonymous referee for urging me to clarify this point.

[68] One might object at this point that I can think *there is a unicorn* merely by grasping the concepts <horse>, <horned>, etc. (the marks of <unicorn>) and thinking that they are instantiated. But merely thinking of the marks of <unicorn> as individually instantiated is not sufficient; I must think of them as being jointly instantiated by the same object. This means I must think there is a value of *x* that makes *x is a horse & x is horned*, etc. true. Then my argument in the main text applies at the level of that (referential) thought (what it is to be a value of *x*, etc.). But even if this response fails, the most it shows is that as long as I can think *there is an F* I can think there is an x that is *F&G&H* for arbitrary conjunctions involving F. But notice that the concept we are most interested in, <non-sensible object> is precisely not a conjunction of unproblematic concepts. So this strategy will not explain our ability to entertain the thought that there are non-sensible objects. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me on this point.

[69] For the sake of readability I temporarily suspend the convention of putting names of concepts in brackets.

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