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Kant on Existential Import

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Abstract

This article reconstructs Kant's view on the existential import of categorical sentences. Kant is widely taken to have held that affirmative sentences (the **A** and **I** sentences of the traditional square of opposition) have existential import, whereas negative sentences (**E** and **O**) lack existential import. The article challenges this standard interpretation. It is argued that Kant ascribes existential import only to some affirmative synthetic sentences. However, the reasons for this do not fall within the remit of Kant's formal logic. Unlike traditional logic and modern standard quantification theory, Kant's formal logic is free from existential commitments.

Keywords: logic, existential import, categorical sentences, judgements

Introduction

This article reconstructs Kant's view on the existential import of categorical sentences. According to a widespread view (e.g. Peirce 1960–6: §3.178; Ashworth 1974: 201; Wolff 1995: 159; Parsons 2008), philosophers before Frege typically held that the existential import of a categorical sentence depends on its quality. They held that affirmative sentences (the **A** and **I** sentences of the traditional square of opposition) have existential import, whereas negative sentences (**E** and **O**) lack existential import. Many scholars hold that Kant endorsed the pre-Fregean view on existential import (e.g. Thompson 1953: 257 n. 10; Peirce 1960–6: §2.381; Orenstein 1978: 97; 1999: 403, 406–7; 2000: 523; 2002: 142–4; Wolff 1995: 159–60, 222 n. 96, 291–2; Flage and Bonnen 1999: 226; Hanna 2011: §2.1.2). They make two claims:

[E1] All affirmative judgements (**A** judgements, as well as **I** judgements) have existential import for Kant.

[E2] No negative judgement (neither **E** judgements, nor **O** judgements) has existential import for Kant.

I call the conjunction of [E1] and [E2] the *standard interpretation* of Kant's view on existential import.

This article challenges the standard interpretation. Having presented four arguments in its favour (section 1), I argue that the standard interpretation is inconsistent with Kant's statements on analytic judgements (section 2). After rejecting three attempts to rescue the standard interpretation (section 3), I show that the arguments for [E1] are flawed (section 4) and I argue for an alternative interpretation of Kant's view on existential import (section 5).[1] On this interpretation, the only categorical judgements to which Kant ascribes existential import are some affirmative synthetic judgements. However, the reasons why Kant ascribes existential import to them do not fall within the remit of his formal logic. This is because, as we shall see in the final section, Kant's formal logic is free from existential commitments.

Five preliminary remarks are in place. First, I follow scholars' practice of calling formal logic the discipline that Kant calls pure general logic and that he contrasts with transcendental logic (A50–64/B74–88).[2] Second, I follow Kant in referring to categorical *judgements*, rather than categorical sentences. Judgements are the primary bearers of truth and falsity according to Kant (A293/B350). Hence, they are also the primary bearers of existential import. Space limitations prevent me from discussing the nature of Kantian judgements. Third, I assume that, from the point of view of formal logic, Kant regards singular judgements as a type of universal judgements (A71–2/B96–7; *Refl.* 3068 [*c.*1776–89], 16: 640). Hence, I focus on universal (**A** and **E**) and particular (**I** and **O**) judgements, without devoting a separate discussion to singular judgements. Fourth, I understand existential import in the following, rather conventional way. To say that a judgement has existential import is to say that it is true only if at least one existent object falls under its subject term. A judgement can have existential import even if no existent object falls under its predicate term. Fifth and last, while I will go on to explain the broad notion of object that is relevant to Kant's views on existential import (221–223), a partial elucidation of the Kantian notion of existence that is at stake in this article is given by the following five points.

1. According to Kant, objects of experience are not the only objects that can exist. Existence could also be borne by non-sensible,

atemporal objects like God,[3] things in themselves, the *I think*, or by causally inefficacious items such as numbers.

2. Existence is a property of *objects* and not, as Frege claims, a property of properties, i.e. the property of being exemplified by at least one object (Rosefeldt 2008: 661–2, 666–7; 2011: 340–3, 348–9).

3. Existence is a *discriminating* property of objects, that is, a property that some objects have and other objects lack. I will argue that Kant admits merely possible objects (221–223). Kant qualifies existence as the absolute positing of an object, as opposed to the relative positing that concerns merely possible objects (A599/B627). These are posited only 'in my thoughts' (*MSchön* 28: 494; see *ML2* 28: 554), 'in myself' 'as a thought' (*MK2* 27: 723), relatively to my capacity of thinking (*KU* 5: 402), my thought (*MMrongovius* 28: 822; *MVolckmann* 28: 412, 413) or my understanding (*ML2* 28: 557). These statements suggest that Kant takes possibilia to be parasitical upon actual or possible thoughts.

4. Existence is 'not a real predicate, i.e., a concept of something that could add to the concept of a thing' (A598/B626). This means that existence is what Meinongians call an extra-nuclear property. It is not one of those properties through whose combination the space of logically possible objects is constituted (Rosefeldt 2011: 346–8).

5. The second postulate of empirical thinking in general ('[t]hat which is connected with the material conditions of experience [of sensation] is *actual*', A218/B266) and the passages where Kant relates existence to time (e.g. A145/B184) or perception (e.g. A376, B521) do not entail that only what is in time or perceivable exists. They do not introduce a second notion of existence, narrower and more metaphysically robust than the first, that only applies to spatio-temporal objects. They only spell out rules for ascribing existence to objects of experience (A159/B198; *Prol.* 4: 302).

1. Arguments for the Standard Interpretation

Scholars have put forward four arguments for the standard interpretation. They are based on:

- a passage on existence,
- Kant's endorsement of the dictum 'non entis nulla sunt praedicata',
- his account of the difference between categorical and hypothetical judgements, and
- his account of the difference between infinite and negative judgements.

Each of these arguments supports either [E1], or [E1] and [E2]. Ultimately, as we shall see in section 4, these arguments are flawed. Nevertheless,

collectively they provide significant *prima facie* evidence for the standard interpretation.

Argument from Existence for [E1] and [E2]

Alex Orenstein has based an argument for [E1] and [E2] on a passage from Kant's attack on the ontological argument:

> [1] *Being* [*Sein*] is obviously not a real predicate, i.e., a concept of something that could add to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing [*Position*] of a thing or certain determinations in themselves. In the logical use it is merely the copula of a judgement.[4]

According to Orenstein, this passage sheds light on the existential use of the verb 'to be'. The last sentence shows that 'Kant thinks of existence in terms of the copula' (Orenstein 2002: 142). Kant must be referring to the copula unaccompanied by negation because, generally speaking, 'is not' hardly expresses existence. On this reading, passage [1] relates existential import to the use of the verb 'to be' unaccompanied by negation. This is the traditional view that the affirmative quality of a judgement determines its existential import.

Argument from the Non Entis Dictum for [E1]

What I call the *non entis* dictum is the dictum 'non entis nulla sunt praedicata'. Kant introduces it when commenting on pairs of opposite synthetic propositions such that 'both, the affirmative as well as the negative part, taken in by transcendental illusion, have as their ground an impossible concept of the object' (A792/B820). In this case,

> [2] the rule holds that *non entis nulla sunt praedicata*, i.e., both what one asserts affirmatively as well as what one asserts negatively of the object are incorrect … So, for example, if it is presupposed that the sensible world is given in its totality *in itself*, then it is false that it must be *either* infinite in space *or* finite and bounded, just because both of these are false. (A792–3/B820–1)

Several interpreters take the expression '*non ens*' to refer to nonexistent objects (e.g. Brittan 1974; Orenstein 1999: 406, 412, n. 7; 2002: 144; Mariani 2002: 160–1; Angelelli 2006: 44–5). If this is correct, the *non entis* dictum states that 'what one asserts affirmatively as well as what one asserts negatively' of a nonexistent object is not true.

What does it mean to assert something negatively? Kant's example of a 'negative assertion' is not a judgement of the form '*a* is not *P*', such as 'the world is not finite in space'. It is a judgement of the form '*a* is *non-P*', namely, 'the world is infinite in space'. Kant calls judgements of this kind infinite judgements and he distinguishes them from negative judgements. From the point of view of formal logic, infinite judgements are a kind of affirmative judgement (A71–2/B97). The judgement '*a* is *non-P*' 'asserts something negatively' because it ascribes the property of being *non-P* to *a*. On this reading, the *non entis* dictum states that,

> for every pair of predicates *P* and *non-P* and every object *x*, if *x* does not exist, then neither '*x* is *P*', nor '*x* is *non-P*' is true.

From this follows that,

> for every predicate *P* and every object *x*, if *x* does not exist, then '*x* is *P*' is not true.

This is to say that affirmative judgements have existential import.

Argument from Hypothetical Judgements for [E1]

Some of Kant's predecessors (e.g. Lambert 1764/1990: vol. 1, pp. 84–5) held that hypothetical judgements can be transformed into categorical judgements without any change in meaning. Against this view, Kant's lecture transcripts state that, when one transforms an affirmative hypothetical judgement into a categorical judgement,

> [3] what is maintained is no longer the same . . . It does seem to be the same if I say, 'All men are mortal', or, 'If something is a man, then it is mortal'. But they are different. For in the second judgement it is problematic whether something is mortal. Being mortal is not maintained categorically but holds only when being man holds. Consequently it is completely different with categorical propositions than with hypothetical ones. In a hypothetical proposition it is not maintained at all *that something is*, but that it is if something, namely, the ground, is accepted. In the case of categorical propositions, however, there is no settled condition. They are judgements essentially distinct from one another, then.[5]

This passage contrasts an affirmative universal categorical judgement (an **A** judgement) with a hypothetical judgement, i.e. in modern terms,

a conditional of the form $\forall x(Sx \to Px)$. The passage makes clear that Kant does not endorse the modern interpretation of **A** judgements as conditionals. **A** judgements state 'that something is'. They imply that the objects designated by their subject term exist. This means that they have existential import. Since Kant accepts the inference by subalternation from **A** judgements like 'all humans are mortal' to **I** judgements like 'some humans are mortal' (A303/B360), **I** judgements too must have existential import. Hence, all affirmative judgements have existential import for Kant (Thompson 1953: 257–8 n. 10).

Argument from Infinite Judgements for [E1] and [E2]

This argument is based on Kant's distinction between negative and infinite judgements.

> [4] [I]n regard to the content of our cognition in general, that is, whether it is expanded or limited by a judgement, negative judgements have the special job solely of *preventing error*. (A709/B737)

'Viewed in this way, then, negative judgements simply reject affirmative judgements as erroneous and affirm nothing about objects in the world', not even the existence of objects exemplifying their subject concept (Thompson 1953: 257–8 n. 10; see Wolff 1995: 159). Hence, Kant endorses [E2].

Unlike negative judgements, infinite judgements do more than prevent errors. Kant highlights this by contrasting the negative judgement 'the soul is not mortal' with the infinite judgement 'the soul is immortal':

> [5] If I had said of the soul that it is not mortal, then I would at least have avoided an error by means of a negative judgement. Now by means of the proposition 'The soul is immortal' I have certainly made an actual affirmation as far as logical form is concerned, for *I have placed the soul within the unlimited domain of undying beings*. Now since that which is mortal contains one part of the whole domain of possible beings, but that which is undying the other, nothing is said by my proposition but that the soul is one of the infinite multitude of things that remain if I take away everything that is mortal.[6]

If the infinite judgement 'the soul is immortal' implies that the soul is a member of the set of immortal beings, it must ascribe the property of

being immortal to the soul. Hence, since *non entis nulla sunt praedicata*, 'the soul is immortal' implies that the soul exists. If this is correct, passage [5] shows that infinite judgements have existential import. Since, 'as far as logical form is concerned', infinite judgements are affirmative judgements, passage [5] supports [E1]: for Kant, affirmative judgements have existential import.

2. A Problem for the Standard Interpretation: Analytic Judgements and Existential Import

Kant's statements on analytic judgements imply that

> [E3] affirmative analytic judgements lack existential import for Kant.

Consider the italicized parts of the following three passages:

> [6] An analytical [assertion] takes the understanding no further, and since it is occupied only with that which is already thought in the concept, *it leaves it undecided whether the concept even has in itself any relation* to *objects*, or only signifies the unity of thinking in general (which entirely abstracts from the way in which an object might be given); it is enough for him to know what lies in its concept; what the concept might pertain to is indifferent to him.[7]

The analytic judgement

> [7] [t]hat all bodies are extended is necessarily and eternally true, *whether they exist* now *or not*, and whether that existence is brief or lengthy, or goes on throughout all time, i.e., eternally. (*Entd.* 8: 235)

The analytic judgement 'a triangle has three angles'

> [8] does not say that three angles are absolutely necessary, but rather that *under the condition that a triangle exists* (is given), three angles also exist (in it) necessarily.[8]

The standard interpretation states that all affirmative judgements have existential import, but passages [6] to [8] imply that analytic judgements lack existential import.[9] If this is the case, then [E1] must be rejected.

Assuming that some affirmative synthetic judgements have existential import, Kant's view will be as follows:

> [E4] Some affirmative synthetic judgements have existential import for Kant.
> [E3] Affirmative analytic judgements lack existential import for Kant.
> [E2] No negative judgement (neither **E** judgements, nor **O** judgements) has existential import for Kant.

I call the conjunction of [E2], [E3], and [E4] the *alternative interpretation* of Kant's view on existential import.

One should not dismiss [E1] lightly because, as we saw in section 1, there are several arguments for [E1] which are based on Kant's texts. Is there any interpretation of his statements on analytic judgements which renders them compatible with [E1]? If there is, we can rescue the standard interpretation.

3. Three Attempts to Rescue the Standard Interpretation

One can attempt to make Kant's statements on analytic judgements compatible with the standard interpretation in three ways. To illustrate them, it is helpful to take the judgement 'all bodies are extended'. Adherents to the standard interpretation can provide the following argument for the claim that 'all bodies are extended' has existential import, that is, it is true only if bodies exist.

> (1) 'All bodies are extended' is an affirmative categorical judgement. (*Assumption*)
> (2) Affirmative categorical judgements are true only if existent objects fall under their subject concept. (*Assumption*)
> (3) 'All bodies are extended' is true only if existent objects fall under its subject concept. (*From (1), (2)*)
> (4) The objects which fall under the subject concept of 'all bodies are extended' are bodies. (*Assumption*)
> (5) 'All bodies are extended' is true only if bodies exist. (*From (3), (4)*)

Assumption (2) is equivalent to [E1], the first component of the standard interpretation. The conclusion of the argument is in contrast with passages [6] to [8], according to which

> (6) 'All bodies are extended' is true even if no body exists.

The three attempts to rescue the standard interpretation remove the conflict between (5) and (6) by denying either (6), or two of the assumptions on which (5) depends, namely (1) and (4). As we shall see, all three attempts are unsuccessful.

First Attempt: Analytic Judgements are about Concepts

The first attempt to rescue the standard interpretation denies (4) on the ground that analytic judgements are not about objects, but about their subject concept (Gram 1980: 179). On this reading, the analytic judgement 'all bodies are extended' is not about bodies, but about the concept of body. It actually states that the concept of extension is one of the marks or component concepts of the concept of body. In order to make the logical form of 'all bodies are extended' apparent, one should paraphrase it as 'the concept of body has the concept of extension as one of its marks'.

If analytic judgements are about their subject concept, passages [6] to [8] will not imply that analytic judgements lack existential import. Passages [6] to [8] imply that 'all bodies are extended' can be true even if no bodies exist. If 'all bodies are extended' is a judgement about bodies and it has existential import, it will be true only if bodies exist. If 'all bodies are extended' is about the *concept* of body and it has existential import, it will be true only if that concept exists. That concept can exist even if no bodies exist. According to Kant, concepts are mental items (A320/B376–7). Their existence depends on whether some thinker entertains them, not on whether they are instantiated.

The claim that analytic judgements are about their subject concept is in contrast with several statements that Kant made from the 1760s, when he first distinguished between analytic and synthetic judgements, up to the Critical period.[10] Those statements make clear that, for Kant, analytic judgements are not about their subject term, but about the objects that instantiate it (Longuenesse 1998: 87). Consider for instance this passage from the first *Critique*:

> [9] Judgement is therefore the mediate cognition *of an object*, hence the representation of a representation of it. In every judgement there is a concept that holds of many [the predicate concept], and that among this many also comprehends a given representation [the subject concept], which is then related immediately *to the object*. So in the judgement, e.g., 'All bodies are divisible', the concept of the divisible is related to

various other concepts; among these, however, it is here particularly related to the concept of body, and this in turn is related to certain appearances that come before us. *These objects* are therefore mediately represented by the concept of divisibility. All judgements are accordingly functions of unity among our representations, since instead of an immediate representation a higher one, which comprehends this and other representations under itself, is used for the cognition *of the object* . . . [11]

'All bodies are divisible', being an analytic judgement, can be known to be true because of the relation between the concepts of body and divisibility. However, it is not *about* those concepts, but rather, about bodies. Passage [9] expresses this by stating that 'all bodies are divisible' is a cognition or representation of *objects* ('appearances that come before us') by means of the concepts of body and divisibility. Passage [9], like the passages mentioned in n. 10, shows that Kant endorses assumption (4) of the argument above. Hence, the first attempt to rescue the standard interpretation is inconsistent with Kant's texts.

Second Attempt: Some Analytic Judgements Lack a Truth-Value
The second attempt to rescue the standard interpretation removes the conflict between (5) and (6) by denying (6). One can do this in two ways. One can claim that only analytic judgements on existent objects can be true because judgements on nonexistent objects lack a truth-value (e.g. Brittan 1974, 2006: 229–30). If all true analytic judgements are on existent objects, analytic judgements have existential import. Alternatively, one can deny that analytic judgements are truth-apt for Kant (e.g. Heckmann 1981: 43–7).

The first suggestion should be rejected because it clashes with passages [6] to [8], which entail that 'all bodies are extended' could be true even if no bodies existed. The second suggestion should be rejected because it clashes with passage [7] and with two other passages. The first passage states that the 'truth' of an analytic judgement 'must always be able to be cognized sufficiently in accordance with the principle of contradiction' (A151/B190–1). The second passage describes a judgement whose subject concept contains the reason for ascribing the property designated by the predicate to the object designated by the subject. This must be an analytic judgement. It has 'the reason . . . for its truth in itself' (*Entd.* 8: 198). These passages make clear that analytic judgements are truth-apt for Kant.

Third Attempt: Analytic Judgements are Hypothetical Judgements
Passage [8] suggests that analytic judgements can be rephrased as
conditionals. This paraphrase is the basis for the third attempt to rescue
the standard interpretation. This is the denial of (1) on the ground that
'all bodies are extended' is not a categorical judgement. Analytic judge-
ments may seem to have subject-predicate form, but they are actually
hypothetical judgements because they ascribe features to objects only
under certain conditions. For instance, passage [8] suggests that the
analytic judgement 'a triangle has three angles' can be paraphrased as
'for every *x*, if *x* is a triangle, *x* has three angles'. If the categorical
judgements that appear to be analytic are in fact hypothetical, all truly
categorical judgements will be synthetic. Hence, affirmative categorical
judgements can have existential import, as [E1] states, even though
analytic judgements lack it, as [E3] states.

This suggestion must be rejected because Kant states that judgements
'constituted in whatever manner according to their logical form' can be
divided into analytic and synthetic 'according to their content' (*Prol.* 4:
266). This prevents us from holding that a judgement cannot be
analytic because it has a categorical logical form or, vice versa, that
analytic judgements cannot be categorical because they all have a
hypothetical logical form. Additionally, when Kant introduces the dis-
tinction between analytic and synthetic judgements, he regularly
explains it with reference to categorical judgements, i.e. judgements with
subject-predicate form.[12] He rejects the claim that all judgements
express a relation between a subject concept and a predicate concept
precisely because it does not apply to hypothetical (and disjunctive)
judgements (B141; *LDohna* 29: 763). Given Kant's insistence on the
'essential distinction'[13] between categorical and hypothetical judge-
ments, if he held that all analytic judgements are hypothetical, it would
be inconsistent for him to regularly refer to categorical judgements in his
explanations of analyticity.

Kant appears to face a dilemma. If he maintains that all affirmative
categorical judgements have existential import, as [E1] states, he must
give up the claim that some affirmative analytic judgements are cate-
gorical. If he maintains that some affirmative analytic judgements are
categorical, he must deny that all affirmative categorical judgements
have existential import. The standard interpretation endorses the first
horn of the dilemma, but it is inconsistent with Kant's statements on
analytic judgements. We have seen that three attempts to remove the
inconsistency are themselves inconsistent with Kant's texts.

4. Against the Standard Interpretation: Some Affirmative Judgements Lack Existential Import

In this section, I show that Kant can endorse the second horn of the dilemma because the four arguments for [E1] are flawed. I start by arguing that the arguments from existence and from the *non entis dictum* rely on mistaken interpretations of Kant's texts. I then show that Kant ascribes properties not only to existent objects, but also to nonexistent objects. Finally, I argue that the arguments from hypothetical and infinite judgements support [E1] only by making the tacit assumption that nonexistent objects cannot bear properties. Once we reject that assumption, the arguments from hypothetical and infinite judgements no longer succeed in supporting [E1].

On the Argument from Existence

Many Kantian texts from the 1760s onwards contrast what they call the relative positing of a thing with its absolute positing and equate the latter with existence (e.g. *Beweisgrund* 2: 73, 75; *Refl.* 6276 [*c.*1785–8], 18: 543; *MVolckmann* 28: 413; ML2 28: 557). The argument from existence presupposes that the last sentence of passage [1] is about the existential use of the verb 'to be'. The text immediately following passage [1] makes clear that that assumption is mistaken:

> [10] The proposition *God is omnipotent* contains two concepts that have their objects: God and omnipotence; the little word '*is*' is not a predicate in it, but only that which posits the predicate *in relation* to the subject. Now if I take the subject (God) together with all his predicates (among which omnipotence belongs), and say *God is*, or there is a God, then I add (*setze*) no new predicate to the concept of God, but only posit the subject in itself with all its predicates . . . (A598–9/B626–7)

The first sentence of this passage provides an illustration of the claim made at the end of passage [1], namely that that 'being', 'in the logical use', is merely the copula of a judgement. It is not by chance that Kant italicizes the phrase 'in relation'. By stating that, in 'God is omnipotent', 'the little word "is" . . . posits the predicate ["omnipotent"] *in relation* to the subject ["God"]', Kant indicates that the use of 'to be' as the copula of a judgement expresses a relative rather than an absolute positing. The following sentence describes the existential judgement 'God is' as the positing of 'the subject in itself', i.e. an absolute rather than a relative positing. Unlike in the judgement 'God is omnipotent', in the judgement 'God is' the verb 'is' does not relate a subject to a predicate.

It does not function as a copula. Precisely for this reason, the verb 'is' does not posit a predicate relatively to the subject. Instead, it posits 'the subject in itself', i.e. absolutely, affirming its existence. By sharply distinguishing existential and predicative uses of 'to be', Kant denies that the use of 'to be' as a link between subject and predicate in an affirmative categorical judgement, as such, determines the existential import of the judgement.

On the Argument from the Non Entis Dictum

According to this argument, Kant takes the dictum to imply that only judgements on existent objects can be true. Instead, I will argue that Kant takes the dictum to imply that only judgements whose subject concept does not have incompatible marks can be true:

> for every pair of predicates P and *non-P* and every term '*x*', if '*x*' expresses a concept that has incompatible marks, then neither '*x* is P', nor '*x* is *non-P*' is true.

Affirmative judgements on nonexistent objects can be true, provided their subject concept does not have incompatible marks. Hence, the *non entis* dictum does not support [E1].

The mention of concepts with incompatible marks might raise some perplexity. The *Prolegomena* mentions concepts with incompatible marks such as the concept of 'round square', only to state that '*nothing at all* is thought' through them (*Prol.* 4: 341). Kant regards concepts as mental representations and he holds that we cannot have any mental representation with incompatible marks. This is because they violate the law of contradiction. This law 'is valid for all that we can possibly think . . . whatever conflicts with this principle is obviously nothing (not even a thought)' (*Entd.* 8: 195; see Bxxvi n). Accordingly, so-called concepts with incompatible marks (or as Kant sometimes writes, concepts which contradict themselves) are not concepts in a strict sense (A596/B624). There are no concepts of round square, wooden iron or unextended body. Nevertheless, Kant sometimes uses the term 'concept' in a loose sense, writing that expressions such as 'square circle' express impossible concepts. I call them concepts with incompatible marks, using the term 'concept' in a loose sense.

Passage [2] states that the *non entis* dictum applies to pairs of judgements which have 'as their ground' not an empty, but 'an impossible concept of the object'. This must be a concept with incompatible marks

because a 'concept is always possible if it does not contradict itself' (A596/B624n). A possible concept 'can nonetheless be an empty concept' (A596/B624n). If the subject term of a judgement expresses a concept which is empty, but does not have incompatible marks, the *non entis* dictum does not apply to it. This is why passage [7] explains that 'all bodies are extended' would be true even if no body existed. The *non entis* dictum does not apply to that judgement because the concept of body does not have incompatible marks.

Passage [2] provides an example of application of the *non entis* dictum. That example confirms the present interpretation. Kant's example is of a sensible world which is 'given in its totality *in itself*'. The *Prolegomena* explains that the concept of such a world is not just an empty, but a 'contradictory concept' (4: 341). It is 'contradictory' because 'sensible' and 'in itself' express incompatible marks. On the one hand, to say that the world is sensible is to say that it 'is merely a sum total of appearance, whose existence and connection takes place only in representation, namely in experience' (4: 341). On the other hand, to say that something is in itself is to say that it exists independently of whether it can be experienced. However, 'it is patently contradictory to say of a mere mode of representation [the sensible world] that it also exists outside our representation' (4: 342), i.e. independently of whether it can be experienced.

The present reading of the *non entis* dictum fits nicely with Kant's claim that

> [11] [e]very thing . . . *as to its possibility*, further stands under the principle of thoroughgoing determination; according to which, among all possible predicates of things, insofar as they are compared with their opposites, one must apply to it.[14]

This and similar passages (*Refl.* 3069 [1780–9], 16: 640 = *Jäsche-L.* 9: 104; *Beweisgrund*, 2: 76) refer to possible objects. They employ a broad notion of possibility, according to which, for every singular term '*x*', if '*x*' does not express a concept with incompatible marks, then x is a possible object. Elsewhere, Kant uses a narrow notion of possibility, according to which all possible objects exist (A230–2/B282–4). By contrast, given the broad notion of possibility, there are merely possible objects. Passage [11] is true of objects which are possible in the broad sense of the term because several Kantian texts claim that possible, but nonexistent objects conform to the principle of thoroughgoing

determination (A600–1/B627–8; *Beweisgrund* 2: 76; *MDohna* 28: 630; *MK2* 28: 723). Hence, this principle implies that,

> for every pair of predicates *P* and *non-P* and every singular term '*x*', if '*x*' does not express a concept with incompatible marks, then either '*x is P*' or '*x is non-P*' is true.[15]

The *non entis* dictum is complementary to the principle of thoroughgoing determination. The subject term of every judgement expresses either a concept with incompatible marks, or a concept with compatible marks. In the first case, the *non entis* dictum applies. In the second case, the principle of thoroughgoing determination applies. To use Kant's expressions (A290–2/B347–9), the *non entis* dictum applies to *nihil negativum*, i.e. to those impossible items such as square circles, whose concept has incompatible marks.

Kant's Ascription of Properties to Nonexistent Objects
The *Non Entis* dictum, correctly understood, does not imply that affirmative analytic judgements have existential import. However, Kant's understanding of analytic judgements such as 'all bodies are extended' as categorical judgements might have precisely this implication. Consider a categorical, analytic judgement of the form 'every *S* is *P*'. This judgement ascribes the property of being *P* to certain objects. If only existent objects can bear properties, then such a judgement will be true only under the condition that existent objects exemplify its subject concept. Yet Kant states that whether the subject concept of an analytic judgement is exemplified by existent objects is irrelevant to its truth.

This difficulty would disappear if Kant held that possible, but non-existent objects can bear properties. In this case, the analytic judgement 'every perpetual motion machine is an artefact' could be a genuinely categorical judgement about nonexistent objects and it could be true even if no perpetual motion machines exist.

As it turns out, Kant's Critical texts contain a notion of object which is in line with this proposal. It is a broad notion of object which includes existent and nonexistent objects (A290/B346; *ML2* 28: 544, 555; *MDohna* 28: 622). I will call the items which fall under this broad notion of object thinkable objects. Kant makes statements like the following on them:

> [12] All representations, as representations, have their object, and can themselves be objects of other representations

in turn. (A108; see *Refl.* 5726 [1785–9], 18: 336; *LPölitz* 24: 567)

[13] Now one can . . . call everything, and even every represen-
tation, insofar as one is conscious of it, an object. (A189–90/
B234–5)

For Kant, we can have mental representations of any item which does
not have incompatible properties (Bxxvi n). Accordingly,

for every term '*p*', if the concept expressed by '*p*' does not have
incompatible marks, then *p* is a thinkable object.

Otherwise, '*p*' will designate *nihil negativum*. Unlike *nihil negativum*,
thinkable objects are subjected to the law of non-contradiction and to
the principle of thoroughgoing determination.[16]

The notion of thinkable object is not the only notion of object that can
be found in Kant's texts. He sometimes uses terms such as 'Gegenstand'
and 'Object' to designate only existent objects or only phenomenal
objects (e.g. B137; A191/B236; A494/B522). For our present purposes
it is sufficient to grant, first, that Kant also has a broader notion of
object which includes nonexistent objects; and, secondly that, in Kant's
view, we can ascribe properties to such thinkable objects, regardless of
whether they exist. Passages [12], [13], and similar passages (e.g. A290/
B346; *MDohna* 28: 622) prove the first point. The passages referred
to above, that apply the principle of thoroughgoing determination to
nonexistent objects, prove the second point. The most well-known
of those passages can be found in Kant's attack on the ontological
argument, where he states that a hundred real thalers 'do not contain
the least bit more than a hundred possible ones' (A599/B627). Not only
do nonexistent objects have properties, but they have all the properties
that they would have if they existed.[17] With this statement, Kant epito-
mizes his opposition (already voiced in *Beweisgrund* 2: 75–7) to the
view that what differentiates existent objects from nonexistent objects
is the possession of some additional property, be it thoroughgoing
determination (Baumgarten 1757: §54) or having a spatio-temporal
location (Crusius 1745: §46). In Kant's view, nonexistent objects too
have those properties. Kant counters the view that only existent objects
have the property of being completely determined by ascribing it to
'[e]very *thing* . . . as to its possibility' (A571–2/B599–600). He does not
counter the view that only existent objects have a spatio-temporal
location in the first *Critique*, but he had in *Only Possible Argument*.

There, he claimed that spatio-temporal location belongs 'to merely possible things as well' (2: 76). To see this,

> [14] Take any subject you please, for example, Julius Caesar. Draw up a list of all the predicates which may be thought to belong to him, not excepting even those of space and time. You will quickly see that he can either exist with all these determinations, or not exist at all. (*Beweisgrund* 2: 72)

If spatial and temporal properties 'belong to merely possible things' (*Beweisgrund* 2: 76), nonexistent objects can bear properties.

Kant's admission of nonexistent objects would not have surprised Kant's German predecessors and contemporaries. Wolffians and anti-Wolffians alike employed broad notions of object that encompass nonexistent objects (e.g. Wolff 1736: §243; Crusius 1745: §11). However, Kant's admission of nonexistent objects might surprise current-day scholars. Kant is often held to be a precursor of Frege's and Russell's view of existence, which entails that all objects exist (Wiggins 1994). My reply to this objection is that, in fact, Kant's account of existence is not Fregean in spirit and it is consistent with the admission of nonexistent objects. Since Tobias Rosefeldt (2008, 2011) has recently offered persuasive arguments for these claims, I will not provide further evidence for them.

The admission of possible objects avoids a conflict between Kant's nominal definition of truth and his views on analyticity. Kant's statements on the nominal definition of truth (e.g. A58/B82) imply that he takes true judgements to agree with the objects they are about. The fact that he characterizes it as a definition of truth as such, and not of empirical or synthetic truth, suggests that the definition is meant to apply to all truths, including non-empirical, analytic truths.[18] This implies that all true judgements are about some object, including analytic judgements like 'all unicorns have a horn'. If Kant admitted only existent objects, these judgements would not be about any object. However, being true, they are supposed to be about the objects with which they agree. The admission of nonexistent objects allows Kant to claim that there are objects which those judgements are about. The same applies, mutatis mutandis, to true negative judgements about nonexistent objects.

On the Argument from Hypothetical Judgements
Passage [3], on which this argument relies, states that affirmative hypothetical judgements ascribe properties to objects only if a 'ground'

or condition 'is accepted'. By contrast, affirmative categorical judgements ascribe properties to objects without any 'settled condition' (*WienerL* 24: 934–5; see Longuenesse 1998: 99–104). If only existent objects can bear properties, passage [3] implies that affirmative categorical judgements have existential import. They can only be true if the objects which fall under their subject term exist. This is because nonexistent objects cannot have the properties that categorical judgements ascribe to them, as Kant writes, unconditionally. However, the passage does not explicitly state that categorical judgements have existential import, nor is it necessary to assume it in order to account for the difference between hypothetical and categorical judgements.

The passage states that affirmative categorical judgements maintain 'that something *is*'. This expression is ambiguous. It could mean 'that something exists', thus implying that categorical judgements have existential import. Alternatively, it could mean 'that something has a property', namely, the property expressed by the predicate of the judgement. Kant uses 'is' in this sense, for instance, in his first statement of the law of identity: 'that which is, is', which can be read as $\forall x(Px \rightarrow Px)$ (*Dilucidatio* 1: 389). Since, for Kant, objects can bear properties without existing, categorical judgements can maintain that something has a property without maintaining that something exists. Hence, categorical judgements need not have existential import in order to maintain 'that something *is*'.

We can account for the difference between hypothetical and categorical judgements as follows. A hypothetical judgement of the form 'if (some/every) *S* is *P*, then it is *Q*' states that certain objects have the property of being *Q* under the condition that they have the property of being *P*. An affirmative categorical judgement of the form '(some/every) *S* is *P*' states that certain objects have the property of being *P*. This explanation accounts for the difference between categorical and hypothetical judgements without implying that judgements of either type, as such, have existential import. That implication only holds under the assumption that, for Kant, objects can bear properties only if they exist. However, Kant's texts do not make that assumption.

On the Argument from Infinite Judgements
This argument concludes that infinite judgements have existential import in order to account for their difference from negative judgements. Once one grants that Kantian objects can bear properties even if they do not exist, one can account for the difference between infinite

and negative judgements in a way that does not entail that infinite judgements have existential import. Infinite judgements with the form '(some/every) S is *non-P*' ascribe the property of being *non-P* to the objects which fall under their subject concept. For instance, the infinite judgement 'the soul is immortal' places the soul in a certain subset of 'the whole domain of possible [not only existent] beings' (A72/B97). Negative judgements with the form '(some/every) S is not *P*' do not ascribe any property to the objects which fall under their subject concept. They only deny that those objects have the property of being *P*. For instance, 'the soul is not mortal' denies that the soul has the property of being mortal.

The difference between these two judgements will become apparent if we assume, for the sake of argument, that the concept of soul has incompatible marks. In this case, the soul will be an instance of *nihil negativum*. As Kant explains in the *Prolegomena* (4: 341), affirmative and infinite judgements about *nihil negativum* are both false. No property can be veridically ascribed to *nihil negativum*, including the property of being immortal. Therefore, the infinite judgement 'the soul is immortal' will be false. Instead, the negative judgement 'the soul is not mortal' will be true, because it denies that the soul has the property of being mortal.

In this section, I have argued that the arguments for [E1] are flawed. The arguments from existence and from the *non entis* dictum rely on mistaken interpretations of the texts. The arguments from hypothetical and infinite judgements rely on the assumption that only existent objects can bear properties, an assumption that Kant does not make.

5. Why We Should Endorse the Alternative Interpretation

Having rejected [E1] and the standard interpretation along with it, we should endorse the alternative interpretation. This is the conjunction of [E2], which states that negative judgements lack existential import; [E3], which states that affirmative analytic judgements lack existential import; and [E4], which states that some affirmative synthetic judgements have existential import. We have already encountered reasons to endorse [E2] and [E3]. Passage [4] and a similar passage (*Logik Busolt* 24: 667) support [E2]. Passages [6] to [8] support [E3]. In this section, I show that Kant's views entail that some affirmative synthetic judgements have existential import ([E4]). More specifically, I provide an argument based on Kantian premises for the existential import of all affirmative synthetic *a posteriori* judgements. I close the section with a comment on synthetic *a priori* judgements.

In a true affirmative analytic judgement, the predicate concept is a mark of the subject concept (A6/B10; *Entd.* 8: 228). In principle, we can discover this by analysing the subject concept. The discovery that the predicate is a mark of the subject warrants belief in the truth of the judgement. However, conceptual analysis cannot justify our belief in the truth of synthetic judgements. To that end, we 'must have in addition to the concept of the subject something else (*X*) on which the understanding depends in cognizing a predicate that does not lie in that concept as nevertheless belonging to it' (A8; see A155–6/B193–4). This *X* is '*an intuition* [...], which, if they are judgements of experience, is empirical, and if they are synthetic judgements *a priori*, is a pure intuition *a priori*' (*Entd.*, 8. 241; see *Briefwechsel*, 11: 38; *MDohna*, 28: 622).

Kant holds that every true synthetic *a posteriori* judgement is in principle verifiable. He qualifies some true judgements as synthetic *a posteriori*, as opposed to synthetic *a priori* judgements, because their justification is provided by experience. More specifically, it is provided by intuition. This means that, for every true synthetic *a posteriori* judgement p, a person placed in an appropriate epistemic position would have empirical intuitions that justify her belief in the truth of p.[19] Intuitions can be conscious or unconscious (*Anthr.* 7: 135) and veridical or non-veridical. The only intuitions that can justify our beliefs are conscious (because we cannot rely on intuitions of which we are unaware[20]) and veridical.[21] Taking the requirements of consciousness and veridicality into account, we can say that, for every true synthetic *a posteriori* judgement p, a person placed in an appropriate epistemic position would have empirical, conscious, veridical intuitions that justify her belief in the truth of p. Kant calls conscious intuitions perceptions (*Prol.* 4: 300). Hence, for every true synthetic *a posteriori* judgement p, a person placed in an appropriate epistemic position would have veridical perceptions that justify her belief in the truth of p.

Assuming that p is an affirmative categorical judgement, it ascribes certain properties to the object(s) it is about. In Kant's view, two kinds of veridical perceptions can justify belief in such a judgement: perceptions of the objects that p is about and perceptions of events which involve other objects, from which we can infer the truth of p by applying the causal law (A225–6/B273). In the former case, we can infer that the objects p is about exist because veridical perceptions imply the existence of the objects they are about (A225–6/B272–4[22]). In the latter case, we can infer that the objects p is about exist because causal relations occur only between existent objects.

These Kantian claims provide an argument for the existential import of affirmative synthetic *a posteriori* judgements:

> (1) For every true affirmative synthetic *a posteriori* judgement *p*, a person placed in an appropriate epistemic position would have empirical intuitions that justify belief in the truth of *p*. (*Assumption*)
> (2) The only empirical intuitions that justify belief in the truth of *p* are veridical perceptions. (*Assumption*)
> (3) For every true affirmative synthetic *a posteriori* judgement *p*, a person placed in an appropriate epistemic position would have veridical perceptions that justify belief in the truth of *p*. (*From (1), (2)*)
> (4) The veridical perceptions that justify belief in the truth of *p* imply the existence of the objects *p* is about. (*Assumption*)
> (5) For every true affirmative synthetic *a posteriori* judgement *p*, a person placed in an appropriate epistemic position would have veridical perceptions that imply the existence of the objects *p* is about. (*From (3), (4)*)
> (6) If a person placed in an appropriate epistemic position would have veridical perceptions that imply the existence of the objects *p* is about, those objects exist. (*Assumption*)
> (7) For every true affirmative synthetic *a posteriori* judgement *p*, the objects *p* is about exist. (*From (5), (6)*)

Assuming that the objects a judgement is about are those that fall under the extension of its subject concept, (7) implies that affirmative synthetic *a posteriori* judgements have existential import. Thus, Kant endorses [E4].

I leave the question open as to whether, for Kant, some affirmative synthetic *a priori* judgements have existential import. However, at least some affirmative synthetic *a priori* judgements appear to lack existential import. Consider for instance the principle of the axioms of intuition. In its 1781 formulation, it states that '[a]ll appearances are . . . extensive magnitudes' (A162). Kant's argument for this claim (A162–3/B202–4) relies on the assumptions that appearances are objects represented as being in space and time and that space and time are extensive magnitudes. Kant's argument applies equally well to actual and merely possible appearances, provided they have spatial and temporal properties. As we saw above (222), Kant allows for the ascription of properties to merely possible objects. Merely possible appearances must have spatial and

temporal properties because space and time are their form (*Prol.* 4: 324). If this is correct, then the argument for the principle of the axioms of intuition applies to merely possible appearances. If no appearances existed and all appearances were merely possible, it would still be true that all appearances are extensive magnitudes. This is to say that the principle of the axioms of intuition is an affirmative synthetic *a priori* judgement that lacks existential import.

6. Kant's Free Logic

Of the three claims that make up Kant's view on existential import, [E2] and [E3] deny that certain judgements have existential import. The only claim that ascribes existential import to certain judgements is [E4]. In the previous section we have seen that Kant's texts provide an argument for [E4]. Interestingly, this argument is not mainly based on logical or ontological considerations, but on epistemological considerations. It relies on the fact that we can *justify* belief in synthetic *a posteriori* judgements only by making assumptions from which it follows that they are on existent objects. If the reason why Kant must ascribe existential import to synthetic *a posteriori* judgements is epistemological in nature, what do existence and existential import have to do with Kant's logic? The answer that I put forward in this section is: nothing. Kant's logic is free from existential assumptions.

We have seen that, for Kant, the distinction between judgements that have and lack existential import is related to the analytic/synthetic distinction. Leaving synthetic *a priori* judgements aside, an affirmative judgement has existential import if it is synthetic *a posteriori* and lacks it if it is analytic. The distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements depends on their content (*Prol.* 4: 266). Formal logic studies the 'mere form' of judgements and 'abstracts *from all content of cognition*' (A132/B171; see A54/B77). Therefore, formal logic does not look 'to see whether the cognitions belonging to it are analytic or synthetic' (*Prol.* 4: 276n, trans. modified; see A154/B193; *Entd.* 8: 243). Yet whether an affirmative judgement has existential import depends on whether it is analytic or synthetic. Therefore, Kantian formal logic cannot include any assumptions on which types of judgements have existential import.

As a consequence, in Kant's view, neither having an affirmative quality nor having a particular quantity are sufficient conditions for a judgement to have existential import. The claim that having an affirmative quality is not a sufficient condition for a judgement to have existential

import is in contrast with the common claim in traditional logic that all affirmative judgements have existential import. The claim that having a particular quantity is not a sufficient condition for a judgement to have existential import is in contrast with the Peircean, Fregean and post-Fregean claim that the particular quantifier carries existential import. Given the standard use of '∃' as expressing existence (as opposed to its use as an ontologically neutral quantifier), the inferences from Pa to $\exists x Px$ and $\exists x (x = a)$ are licensed by standard quantification theory, but not by Kant, for whom an object can bear properties even though it does not exist. It is not a theorem of Kant's logic that at least one object exists, as is the case in standard quantification theory.[23] In rejecting the inference from Pa to $\exists x Px$ and $\exists x (x = a)$, Kant's logic is in agreement with so-called universally free logics, developed since the 1970s as an alternative to standard quantification theory.[24] However, unlike universally free logics, Kant's logic does not license the inference from $\forall x Px$ to $\exists x Px$. For him, 'all bodies are extended' would be true even if no bodies existed. Thus, for Kant, the universal quantifier (typically expressed by the terms 'all' and 'every') ranges over possible objects. Free logics license the inference from $\forall x Px$ to $\exists x Px$ because they assume that the universal quantifier ranges only over existent objects.

Of course, if Kant interpreted the particular quantifier as an *existential* quantifier, as is the case in standard quantification theory, there would be no question that, for him, the particular quantifier carries existential import. However, Kant's statements entail that the particular quantifier (expressed in his logic by the particles 'some' and 'not all') does not carry existential import. This is because, as was mentioned above (212), Kant accepts the inference by subalternation from universal to particular judgements. Whenever the universal judgement is analytic and, hence, lacks existential import, the particular judgement too must be analytic and lack existential import, otherwise it would be possible to derive existential claims from analytic truths without relying on experience. Hence, in Kant's logic, the use of the particles 'some' and 'not all' does not determine the existential import of a judgement.

Within Kant's philosophy, existential import is not expressed by a dedicated existential quantifier, as in standard quantification theory. It is not expressed by the affirmative quality of judgements either, as for many pre-Fregean authors. Existential import is related to the analyticity or syntheticity of a judgement. However, since this claim relies on the analytic/synthetic distinction, it goes beyond the boundaries of Kant's formal logic.[25]

Notes

1 The interpretation defended in this article is hinted at in Cozzo (1988: 255–6) and Mariani (2002: 158–61).

2 References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* appeal to the 1st and 2nd edn pagination (A and B). Otherwise, the pagination to which I refer in Kant's texts is from the *Akademie-Ausgabe*. I use the following abbreviations: *Anthr.* = *Pragmatische Anthropologie; Beweisgrund = Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund; Dilucidatio = Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio; Entd.* = *Über eine Entdeckung; Jäsche-L.* = *Jäsche-Logik; LBlomberg = Logik Blomberg; LDohna = Logik Dohna; LPhilippi = Logik Philippi; LPölitz = Logik Pölitz; MDohna = Metaphysik Dohna; MK_2 = Metaphysik K2; ML_2 = Metaphysik L2; MMrongovius = Metaphysik Mrongovius; MSchön = Metaphysik von Schön; MVolckmann = Metaphysik Volckmann; Prol.* = *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik; Refl.* = *Reflexionen* from Kant's handschriftlicher Nachlaß; *WienerL* = *Wiener Logik*. Translations, where available, are from the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. I have replaced American spelling with British spelling in quotes.

3 See e.g. A641/B669 on God's atemporality.

4 A598/B626. Thompson (1953: 258 n. 10) and Wood (1978: 116) hinted at this argument.

5 *WienerL* 24: 934–5, trans. modified, italics added; see *WienerL* 24: 933; *LPölitz* 24: 580; *Jäsche-L* 9: 105–6.

6 A73/B97, trans. modified, italics added.

7 A259/B314, trans. modified, italics added.

8 A594/B622, italics added; see A595/B623; *MK2* 28: 723; *Beweisgrund* 2: 74.

9 Passage [7], by itself, only implies that the analytic judgement 'all bodies are extended' would be true even if no bodies *currently* existed. Passages [6] and [8] make clear that, for Kant, 'all bodies are extended' would be true even if bodies *never* existed.

10 See an addition from *c.*1768–75 to *Refl.* 3127, 16: 671, on which *Jäsche-L.* 9: 111, is based; *Refl.* 4634 [*c.*1772–6], 17: 616–17; *LBlomberg* 24: 232; *LPhilippi* 24: 443; A68–9/B93–4.

11 A68–9/B93–4, italics modified.

12 See e.g. A6–7/B10–11; *Prol.* 4: 266, 267; *Entd.* 8: 232.

13 This expression is used in passage [3].

14 A571–2/B599–600, italics modified.

15 The broad import of the principle of thoroughgoing determination conflicts with Kant's claim in the solution of the mathematical antinomies that the phenomenal world is neither finite, nor infinite. The conflict would have been avoided if Kant limited the import of the principle of thoroughgoing determination, if he denied that the phenomenal world is a possible object or if he denied that we can know whether the phenomenal world is finite or infinite.

16 I will not take a stand on whether Kant also admits a broader notion of object, encompassing thinkable objects as well as objects with incompatible properties. Kant's comments in A290/B347 may be taken to imply that he does. However, *Prol.* 4: 341 implies that every affirmative statement on hypothetical objects with incompatible properties is false. Additionally, Kant's use of the term 'nothing' in *Entd.* 8: 195 and *MMrongovius* 29: 792 may suggest that there are no such objects.

17 As Rosefeldt (2008: 664–6; 2011: 347–8) notes, this claim applies only to the properties that Kant calls real predicates. It does not apply to logical predicates like existence.

18 Kant claims that we know analytic judgements to be true in virtue of the relation between their subject and predicate concepts. This claim is compatible with the nominal definition of truth. True analytic judgements can both agree with the objects they are about *and* be such that a certain relation between their subject and predicate concepts obtains.

19 Kant stresses that this is true for synthetic *a posteriori* judgements that affirm the existence of objects and events (A492–3/B521, A495/B523–4). To be in an appropriate epistemic position, one must be in an appropriate location at an appropriate time, have a working perceptual apparatus, not be hallucinating, and so on.

20 Kant's equivalent to current notions of justification is what he calls sufficient assent. If our assent to *p* is based on an intuition and is sufficient, then, on reflection, we must be able to cite that intuition as the ground for our assent (Chignell 2007: 34, 47). To this end, we must be conscious of that intuition.

21 Kant's texts yield a criterion to discriminate veridical from non-veridical conscious intuitions. It is based on their conformity to certain necessary features of human experience and their coherence with the body of past experience.

22 This passage mentions perceptions as such, rather than veridical perceptions. Kant must be referring to veridical perceptions because he knew that it is possible to have hallucinations, which are non-veridical perceptions of nonexistent objects.

23 The following are theorems in standard systems of first order predicate logic with identity: $\exists x(x = a)$, $\exists x(Px \vee \neg Px)$, and $\exists x(x = x)$. Kant could accept them if he took '$\exists$' to denote an ontologically neutral particular quantifier, rather than an existential quantifier.

24 Bencivenga (1990: 14) claimed that the conceptual framework of transcendental idealism goes 'hand in hand' with free logics. Tolley (2007: 451) noted that Kant's logic is 'entirely non-committal on the "existence" of objects which are truly characterized by concepts at issue'.

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