

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Kant's central logical contribution is often taken to be the formality of logic. Recent influential work argues that it is only with the advent of transcendental idealism that the conceptual division between the logical exposition of *thought* and the metaphysical determination of its *object* is first possible. This distinction between thought and its object enables the formal structure of thought to become an independent discipline of study—namely, formal logic. The formality of this discipline is taken to rely on the hylomorphic distinction between the form of thought (syntactic structure) and its matter (semantic significance). While this account of logical hylomorphism is familiar to contemporary readers, it would not have been familiar to Kant. This historical narrative places Kant at the center of the formal achievements in contemporary logic at the cost of committing him to views antithetical to central tenets of his transcendental idealism. I argue that a closer look at Kant's pure general logic reveals a hylomorphic structure which distinguishes between two aspects of thought: (1) thought's relation to its object (matter) and (2) thought's relation to consciousness (form).

I orient my investigation of Kant's logical hylomorphism both historically and philosophically around the point at which his logical insight was lost. Following Bolzano (1837), Frege (1879), and Husserl (1900), contemporary logicians almost universally acknowledge that separating the activity of thinking from the proposition thought in it is a crucial step forward in the philosophical development of logic. It is only the latter aspect of thought, its propositional content, which is treated by logic. Transmogrified through history's backward glance, all preceding logic is remembered as failing to appreciate these two distinct notions of thought. However, both historically and philosophically the heroes of contemporary logic are sorely mistaken. Not only is this ambiguity in the concept of thought well known and much discussed throughout history, but Kant has deep metaphysical reasons for linking these two notions together. Kant's Copernican turn requires all thought to bear an essential relation to the nature of our capacity to think anything at all. Thinking and thought are not logically independent from one another but rather relate as *determining* and *determined*. It is the thinking activity of the subject, and the unity it imparts, which allows for thought to bear any relation to the object at all. I take Kant's pure general logic to highlight precisely this determining activity.

On my reading, pure general logic abstracts from the relation thought bears to its object (the intentionality of thought) and instead considers a different relation entirely—thought's relation to its subject (self-consciousness). I develop an account of logic which takes seriously Kant's claim that a science of the understanding must be both subjective (it takes reason as its object) as well as active (it analyzes the spontaneity which only the understanding can provide). This means that the primary logical act is not judgment, as many commentators have argued, but mere discursive determining. In order to develop this account of logical activity, I examine three distinct logical acts—the universality of concepts, the apperceptive unity of judgments, and the systematicity of inferences.

A closer look at Kant's logical hylomorphism (1) develops a closer reading of his logic and its place in the larger architectonic of his critical system, (2) provides a more accurate picture of Kant's place in the historical and philosophical development of logic, as well as (3) illuminates contemporary philosophical biases in philosophical logic. Together, these three aims help to uncover Kant's true logical insights and offer a novel (and I think promising) avenue for philosophical logic which has not been sufficiently appreciated or developed.