

My research is primarily located within Kant's philosophy of space and his metaphysics. I am particularly interested Kant's claims about the metaphysical priority of space and time over spatiotemporally extended objects. As such, my research stands at the intersection of Kant scholarship, history and philosophy of science and metaphysics. I also have work in feminist philosophy and philosophy of race and seek to bring it to bear on Kant scholarship.

### **Dissertation Summary – Kant, Incongruent Counterparts, and the Priority of Space**

Look at your right and left hand. Do they not seem like almost perfectly mirrored objects? Equal in size and shape? Now perform an idealization. Assume they are *actually* perfectly mirrored objects. Kant calls such objects incongruent counterparts. They are counterparts in that they are perfectly similar in size and shape, yet they are incongruent, we cannot superimpose one onto the other. He wonders in virtue of what they differ from each other. Kant also believes that this fact tells us something about the nature of space itself. This is not merely an issue from an 18<sup>th</sup> century vantage point. To this day, philosophers discuss how to properly account for chirality, the property of not being superimposable on one's mirror image by any combination of rotations and translations within a permissible frame. How are things constituted or composed such that chirality occurs? And at which level of fundamentality?

My dissertation primarily focusses on a proper account of Kant's arguments. These arguments shift and change and those changes remain subject to intense scholarly debate. In an early work, Kant argues from incongruent counterparts to substantivalism – the thesis that space is some metaphysically independent entity rather than a collection of objects and their relations. Two years later, he argues from counterparts to the independence of our faculty of sensibility. And in the critical philosophy, he seems to employ the argument to argue that space and time are not things in themselves. This is puzzling and suggests that there may be no continuous line of reasoning in the various iterations of the argument.

I offer an overarching interpretation of Kant's arguments from incongruent counterparts. I argue that Kant consistently appealed to incongruent counterparts to support the claim that space is metaphysically prior to the objects, relations, and systems of objects occupying it.

I draw on recent advances in understanding the centrality of Kant's views on grounding and metaphysical dependence which I bring to bear on the properties of space and spatial individuals. I argue that incongruent counterparts are possible only when we conceive of space as metaphysically prior to spatial objects. In this way, I provide an interpretation of the argument from incongruent counterparts that identifies a continuous line of reasoning throughout its different expressions. More specifically, I argue that Kant's theory of metaphysical reasoning, including his general views on grounding, and his specific views on what grounds what, are the primary reason why the arguments shift.

After an initial chapter which justifies my approach as fit for purpose, I argue for my claim in three central chapters of my dissertation. The second chapter provides an analysis of Kant's argument from incongruent counterparts before the idealist turn. I argue that Kant held on to a technical notion of determining ground according to which any determinate property such as left- or right-handedness allows an inference to a metaphysically prior entity, a determining ground.

The central thesis of the second chapter is that Kant's argument in 1770 involves the view that grounding explanations no longer hold for explaining the left- or right-handedness of spatial objects. The properties of appearances are now determined by space as the *form* of intuition. I argue that Kant invokes a theory of metaphysical priority on which what appears to us is embedded in the form of space and gains its properties from it, while the things as they really are - including substances and their forces - fall into the domain of the understanding which comprehends them.

In third chapter, I now deal with the articulation of the argument in the critical philosophy. The central question is how Kant could have argued, as he does, that incongruent counterparts give us an indication that space and time are not things in themselves, when the central claim of transcendental idealism is that we cannot know about the spatiality or non-spatiality of things in themselves. I argue against the majority view that this argument from incongruent counterparts violates critical strictures. I show in a first step that Kant argues that space grounds the difference between incongruent counterparts because it is the form of intuition, and in a second step that we can make sense of this claim if we presuppose Lucy Allais' view that the ideality of space follows from its intuitive and *a priori* nature, but that we have to ascribe to pure intuition a primitive topology evident in apprehension.

These chapters of my dissertation jointly support the thesis that Kant consistently held a theory of the metaphysical priority of space, where the scope of "metaphysical" shifts and thus accounts for the seeming incoherence of argumentation. My specifically advanced our understanding of Kant's philosophical development, and fills gaps in our understanding of Kant's first 1770 expression of idealism. To the contemporary philosopher I offer a view on which one can take certain properties of space as *fundamentalia* while avoiding explanatory realism.

### **Feminist and Antiracist Research**

The general problem is well-known: Like many scholars of the Enlightenment, Kant states his belief in a racial hierarchy among humans and claims people of color lack rational capacities. Kant also offers invaluable insight into our place as humans in the world. His theory seems at the same time humanist and anti-humanist. Frequently our response to this issue is to remind ourselves of the generality of philosophy. Some of us believe that our method is, at its core, *a priori*, and that this allows us to disregard the antihumanist aspects of Kant's work which frequently show up as *a posteriori* insights generated in experience. However, claiming that philosophy at its best is *too abstract to be racist* is not well-supported. Even if we accept that our investigation is *a priori*, we may not be entitled to get the far narrower claim that it is thereby *politically neutral*. This line of reasoning has recently been defended by Gillian Russell for a feminist logic. In conjunction with Lucy Allais, I investigate whether an anti-racist history of philosophy is possible. We identify the possible overlap of what antiracist 'science' can be and whether it aligns with the purposes of the history of philosophy.

In addition, I have been invited by scholars at LMU to explore a higher-order issue at the intersection of the metaphysics of value and of social construction. The question is this: Ask yourself, what happens to us when we see ourselves as less valuable *in virtue of* characteristics we have as member of a social group, say, women, despite a professed belief in women's equal value? Clearly, our judgment is unjustified because we rarely believe that there are special constraints on the value of people and their behavior when they are women. We know this is *wrong*. And yet, such value judgments express themselves frequently against our better judgment. With Scanlon, we might say that we behave as if social constructions gave us good reasons to behave in certain ways towards people.