

IMAGINATION AND INNER INTUITION

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Abstract

In this paper I return to the question of whether intuition is object-dependent. Kant's account of the imagination appears to suggest that intuition is not object-dependent. On a recent proposal, however, the imagination is a faculty of merely inner intuition, the inner objects of which exist and are present in the way demanded by object-dependence views, such as Allais's relational account. I argue against this proposal on both textual and philosophical grounds. It remains inconsistent with what Kant says about how the imagination functions and is ultimately incompatible with the relational account it is supposed to support. Kant's account of the imagination remains a serious obstacle for the view that intuition is object-dependent.

Key words: Kant, object-dependence, imagination, intuition, inner, hallucination, memory, relational, representational, consciousness

1. Object-Dependence and the Inner Intuition Proposal

The question of whether or not intuition is object-dependent is important for a number of reasons. Prominent among these is that the answer has implications for cognition. It is a core commitment of Kant's Critical philosophy that cognition requires some connection to intuition, the

defining role of intuition being that of giving us objects for cognition.¹ Different stances on the issue of object-dependence determine different stances on what it takes for intuition to play its role and this in turn determines different stances on the nature of cognition.² Another reason the question is important is simply because of what the answer might tell us about the nature of intuition itself, about the kind of state it is and the way in which it puts us in touch with the world. These topics are closely related. The latter is my primary concern here, focusing in particular on empirical intuition. Kant's conception of empirical intuition is intimately tied up with his conception of perception and perceptual experience. It is a topic of central concern for our investigation of Kant and the philosophy of mind.

One common view is that, for Kant, a subject can only intuit objects that exist and are present at the time of intuition (see §2 for details). The focus has typically been on *outer* empirical intuitions, where the objects of such intuitions are typically taken to be external, macrophysical things, like trees, houses, and ships.³ If one is to visually intuit a house, then the house one intuits must really exist and really be in view. If one is to have a tactile intuition of a tree, then the tree one intuits must really exist and really be at one's fingertips.

This view attributes a strong form of object-dependence to intuition. Something like it is held by a number of commentators with otherwise quite different stances on the nature of intuition, but recently it has become particularly associated with what we can call the 'relational' view. This is the view that intuition essentially involves the subjects of intuition standing in a certain kind of primitive, non-representational relation of conscious acquaintance to the objects of intuition. The obtaining of such relations – unlike that of certain kinds of representational relation – requires the concurrent existence and presence of their object-relata. Thus the relational view of intuition entails the kind of strong object-dependence view just sketched. More on the relational view in §4.⁴

¹ A19/B33, A50/B74, A62/B87, A92/B125, and also A95, B165, A155-6/B194-5, A239/B298, A719/B747.

² See Grüne ([this volume: §5](#)) and Gomes and Stephenson (2016).

³ Kant's examples – A19off./B235ff.; JL 9:33, 94.

⁴ For the relational view, also called an 'acquaintance' or 'naïve realist' view, see Allais ([this volume: §2](#); 2015: 156ff.; 2011; 2010: 59f.; 2009: 389), McLear ([this volume](#); forthcoming; 2011: 13), and Gomes (forthcoming; 2014). Others who seem to express an object-dependence view but not necessarily its relational version include Watkins and Willaschek (forthcoming; ms.), Buroker (2006: 37), Hanna (2005: 259; 2001: 209-10), Setiya (2004: 66), McDowell (1998b: 475), Warren (1998: 221), Willaschek (1997: 547), Cassam (1993: 117), and Thompson (1972: 331), though some of these are not clear cases – see n.15 below.

I have recently argued against the object-dependence view and the relational view in particular (Stephenson 2015). In short because, for Kant, ‘*Imagination* is the faculty for representing an object in intuition even *without its presence*’ (B151).⁵ Imaginational episodes – as occur, for example, in memory, dreams, and hallucination – involve the intuition of objects that are not, in the relevant sense, present. Perhaps the object intuited through the imagination is simply no longer in the intuiting subject’s line of sight (or at her fingertips, etc.). Perhaps it never was. Perhaps it no longer exists. Or perhaps it never did. All of these are possibilities, I argued, and all would nonetheless involve genuine, full-blown intuition, with its characteristic hallmarks of immediacy and singularity. Intuition therefore does not require the existence or presence of its objects and is in no substantial sense object-dependent. A much weaker, distal causal origin condition can just as well explain what Kant means in those texts where he has been taken to say otherwise (B72; Prol. 4:281-2), and only such a weak condition is textually or indeed philosophically compatible with Kant’s account of the imagination.⁶

Such considerations support a view on which intuition is object-independent. Call the following kind of view ‘representational’. Intuitions are mental states with a certain kind of object-independent representational content. This content determines a set of accuracy conditions for the state and is itself determined by internal features of the state. None of these aspects of intuition are themselves the objects of intuition – they are the vehicles not the objects of intuitional representation – for they constitute intuition, whereas represented objects are distinct from what represents them (A108, A189/B234, A197/B242). Instead, when the accuracy conditions of the state are suitably fulfilled, the object of intuition is what fulfils them – in the case of outer intuition, this will be some outer thing or state of affairs. When the accuracy conditions are not suitably fulfilled, as in the case of the intuitions involved in hallucinatory episodes, for instance, the object of intuition is something else, something that need not be present or even exist.

⁵Translations are my own. I note when differences to the Cambridge editions might be relevant. See §3 for extensive discussion of this particular passage, from the B-edition Transcendental Deduction.

⁶I talk throughout in terms of intuition being ‘involved’ in perceptual episodes like hallucination and veridical perception because it might be that intuition alone could not suffice for such and I take no stance on this here.

This sketch under-determines a number of important questions. For example concerning what specific account we should give of the ontological status of the objects of the intuitions involved in the relevant kinds of imaginational episode.⁷ Note also that nothing has yet been said about the objects of *consciousness*. It is significant that the representational view is more flexible than the relational view in this regard. One apparent problem for the relational view, which ties intuitions essentially to consciousness, is that Kant sometimes seems to allow for unconscious intuitions. He says: ‘The field of our sensible intuitions and sensations of which we are not conscious... is immense’ (Anth. 7:135). The representational view can accommodate this more easily than the relational view. For now I just want to note that there are ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ versions of the representational view. *If* the intuiting subject is conscious in her act of intuition, the former version of the view identifies the object of her consciousness with the object of representation, the latter with (some aspect or other of) the vehicle of representation, i.e. with (some aspect or other of) the state itself. On the indirect view, and *only* on the indirect view, subjects only ever enjoy indirect access to the objects of representation. More on this in §4.

So how might object-dependence readers of intuition deal with the problem of the imagination?

One common response has been to deny that the imagination is a faculty of intuition proper. Robert Hanna (2005: 267) talks about *quasi*-intuition, while Lucy Allais (2015: 156; 2010: 59) points out and thinks it significant that in connection with the imagination Kant very occasionally talks about *intuitive* representation rather than intuition per se (e.g. at B278).⁸ I argued – and we will see again here, starting with the above quote from B151 – that no such distinction is consistently reflected in the texts. On the view in question, then, either Kant is inconsistent in how he employs the term ‘*Anschauung*’ (‘intuition’), or he uses it equivocally, without

⁷ The discussion of existence in §2 is relevant to this issue. Some might prefer to talk in terms of the intuition *as of* objects in cases where the object does not exist. I do not think this locution does any substantial theoretical work that cannot be taken care of elsewhere. It could also be a misleading way of characterising the distinction that is my concern here. The problem is that ‘as of’ is often used to indicate a descriptive or otherwise characterisational mode of presentation, and, when used in this sense, the object-dependence view need not deny that subjects can have intuitions as of objects that do not exist. For instance, it might allow that a subject can have an intuition as of a pink elephant, even though no such animal exists, if what this means is that a subject can have an intuition of an existing and present elephant that is grey but this is perceived as pink. For these reasons I will not employ the locution.

⁸ See also Watkins and Willaschek (forthcoming).

acknowledgement, to range over two fundamentally different kinds of state. Neither option is wholly untenable, though nor is either option exegetically ideal. The inconsistency or unacknowledged equivocation attributed to Kant would by no means be an isolated incident and it would have significant repercussions elsewhere in their interpretations. For example, object-dependence readers often appeal to the immediacy of intuition and its role in giving us objects for cognition. Must these central features also be understood in two different ways, or does Kant sometimes use the term '*Anschauung*' to refer to something that lacks them altogether?

In this paper I want to explore an alternative, potentially more robust line of response that the object-dependence reader might take in light of Kant's remarks on the imagination. The idea is to avoid attributing to Kant inconsistency or unacknowledged equivocation by *assimilating* those remarks into an object-dependence view of intuition – rather, that is, than merely sidelining or otherwise downplaying them. The proposal runs as follows.

It is *inner* empirical intuition rather than outer empirical intuition that is involved in the relevant kinds of imaginal episode. The objects of such inner empirical intuitions are not external, physical things, but rather internal, mental things – certain kinds of sensory state that for convenience we can call 'images'. Thus the fact that such imaginal episodes can occur without the existence or presence of the relevant external, physical things does not show that there is a kind of intuition that does not require the existence or presence of its objects, for such things are not the objects of the inner empirical intuitions involved in such episodes, and the sensory state images that are the objects of such intuitions do indeed exist and are present in these episodes. Both kinds of empirical intuition, then, require the existence and presence of their objects. The difference lies not in whether or not the intuitions are object-dependent in this way, but rather in what kind of thing the object of intuition is. For example, if I hallucinate a tree when there is no tree really there, this does not mean that the intuition this involves has no existing and present object – it's just that the existing and present object is the mere image of a tree.

There would still be a difference in kind, on this view, between the intuitions involved in the relevant kinds of imaginal episode and those involved in other kinds of episode, such as veridical perception (or indeed illusion, where the object of intuition exists and is present but is misperceived in some way). But it would be a difference which Kant marks and makes much of – that between inner empirical intuition and outer

empirical intuition. And the inner empirical intuitions of the imagination would be intuitions proper – singular and immediate representations that give us objects.

Call this the ‘inner intuition proposal’.⁹ It is important to be clear that this proposal is significantly stronger than the simple claim that the imagination produces images and can do so without the concurrent presence or existence of real objects in space matching those images. This much is clear from the texts and should be uncontroversial. It is not in itself enough to reconcile the object-dependence view of intuition with Kant’s account of the imagination, and, correspondingly, there are a variety of ways in which it can be assimilated into views on which intuition is object-independent.¹⁰ The inner intuition proposal is rather a series of far more specific claims about inner intuition and its objects, namely those outlined above – that the relevant kinds of imaginal episode, such as hallucination, involve inner intuitions whose present and existing objects are images. It is these specific claims that are designed to render the object-dependence view textually and philosophically compatible with Kant’s account of the imagination, and it is these specific claims that are in dispute here. For if they are correct, and if they succeed in their aim, then the inner intuition proposal would mark a significant advance in defence of the object-dependence view of intuition.

In §2 I clear some terminological ground, explore the relevant kind of object-dependence a little more carefully, and bring out a purely formal feature of the condition that will be important in what follows – what I call its ‘particularity’. In §3 I look closely at how the inner intuition proposal fares with regard to the texts. I argue that it remains inconsistent with what Kant says about the imagination, namely that imaginal intuition occurs without the presence of the particular object of intuition. Inner images may be present in imaginal episodes, but they therefore cannot be the objects of whatever intuition such episodes involve. In §4 I turn to two problems with the proposal that are of a more systematic nature. First, it would leave Kant with a philosophically bad account of memory, which account would also stand in tension with certain other of his commitments. Second, the inner intuition proposal would obscure the theoretical role of the relational view’s commitment to object-dependence. For the role it gives to inner objects in its account of imaginal episodes would ‘screen off’ the role given to outer objects in the relational view’s account of non-

⁹ See especially McLear ([this volume](#)) and also Leech (2016: 15) and McLear (2014b: §6). The proposal is cited with approval in Gomes (forthcoming: n.19) and Allais (2015: 156) and discussed in Schafer (ms.).

¹⁰ One example of how this might go is given in the discussion of particularity in §2.

imaginational episodes. Ultimately, the two views are philosophically incompatible.

Like the relational view itself, the inner intuition proposal is intriguing and contains important insights, but Kant's account of the imagination remains a significant obstacle for any version of the view that intuition is strongly object-dependent.

2. Strong-Particular-Dependence

The condition in question is what I called 'Strong-Particular-Dependence':

(SPD) If, at time t , a subject s intuits an object o , then: at t ,
 o exists and is present to s

First some remarks on the terms involved, then on the logical form of the condition. I focus on issues pertinent to the employment of SPD in the inner intuition proposal.¹¹

Subject and Intuition

As already indicated, my focus here remains on empirical intuition, specifically on mature human empirical intuition. I will generally leave this implicit. When, for instance, I distinguish between inner and outer intuition, I am distinguishing different species of empirical intuition.

Object

Regarding external, physical things, I assume only that macrophysical entities like trees can exist and be the objects present in intuition, even though, fundamentally, for Kant, matter consists of moving force centres (MFNS, especially 4:536ff.). Kant's scientific realism is not of such a kind as to rule out realism about the everyday objects of common sense. Not all object-dependence views need commit on this, but it is common to do so, and a key part of the relational view. Regarding internal, mental things, the

¹¹ One thing this means I ignore is the concurrency aspect of the condition. There are at least two questions here. First, what happens when it is dropped, resulting in what I called 'Weak-Particular-Dependence'? (See Stephenson (2015: 490ff.), Grüne ([this volume: §2](#)), McLear ([this volume: §§2-3](#)) – note that there are minor terminological discrepancies.) Second, how do we even make sense of concurrency given the complexity, in the Kantian context, of the idea of intuitions themselves occurring in time? (See Bader ([this volume](#)) for relevant discussion.)

issue is more complicated. For now I just want to make three preliminary cautionary remarks concerning my employment of the term ‘images’ to denote the kind of sensory states that, on the inner intuition proposal, are the objects of the intuitions involved in the relevant kinds of imaginational episode. This label is suitably Kantian,¹² but it could be misleading.

First, we are not talking about anything like retinal images. These and other states of the body are, in the relevant sense, external and physical. Second, sensory state images themselves – unlike, perhaps, pictorial images – need in no way ‘resemble’ what they are images ‘of’ (see Prol. 4:290). For present purposes, an image ‘of a tree’ is just a sensory state the enjoyment of which is subjectively indistinguishable from that of the sensory state one is in when one intuits a real tree. (More on this in §4.) Third, sensory state images need not be visual at all. We can have intuitions and hallucinatory episodes in other sensory modes. Such considerations are likely to be relevant to the debate at hand (and I briefly mention one in §3), but I cannot properly explore them here.

Images, so understood, would certainly seem to qualify as objects in *some* suitably Kantian sense. Kant’s conceptual repertoire includes an extremely permissive notion of an object, easily broad enough to cover this kind of entity. He says ‘one can, to be sure, call everything, and even every representation, insofar as one is conscious of it, an object’ (A189/B234). It might be more controversial whether such images qualify as objects in a sense that makes them suitable candidates for being the objects of inner intuitions, but let us grant this. It is a further question whether they can be the objects of inner intuitions in such a way as to play the role assigned to them by the inner intuition proposal and I return to this central issue in §§3-4.

Existence

SPD concerns what we can call ‘real’ rather than merely ‘logical’ existence.¹³ For present purposes – since we are only concerned with the empirical phenomenal realm and not with the pure or the noumenal realms – we can think of real existence as casually efficacious existence in space and/or time. In the sense relevant for SPD, the external, physical objects of outer intuition exist, if they exist, in space and time, while the internal, mental objects of inner intuition exist, if they exist, in time.

¹² A120f., A140ff./B179ff., A475/B503, A570/B598, A780/B808; Anth. 7:167ff.; R330, 15:130; AF 25:511.

¹³ See Stang (2016) for extensive discussion of Kant’s various conceptions of existence.

We need not worry too much about the vexed issue of what exactly existence in space amounts to in the Kantian context. All we need in order to be able to make sense of the inner intuition proposal is a conception on which external, physical things as well as internal, mental things like images really exist, and yet do so in different ways, independent to some extent. I take it that such a conception is available to Kant on even the most phenomenalist interpretations of his transcendental idealism. Even if existence in space outside us amounts to nothing more than a special kind of existence in the mind, it must indeed be a *special* kind of existence in the mind, distinct in some significant way from whatever kind of existence in the mind might be enjoyed by ‘the mere effect of the imagination’ (B278; cf. A201-2/B247). Some such distinction is required to make sense of Kant’s repeated professions of empirical realism.¹⁴

The logical notion of existence is less committal than that of real existence. We might think of logical existence along the lines of being the subject of predication, or in more anachronistic terms, the value of a bound variable. Details would take us too far afield. I draw attention to the distinction just to allow that there are a variety of ways of ‘being something’ without existing in space and/or time and being causally efficacious – logical existence does not entail real existence. It is therefore possible to hold that intuitions require the logical existence of their objects but not the real existence of their objects.¹⁵ This would *not* be the kind of object-dependence at issue here – it is not what is captured by SPD under its intended interpretation. Again, there are object-independence views that might allow that intuitions require the merely logical existence of their objects. This would depend on issues orthogonal to the current dispute. As before, I will generally leave this implicit. When I talk about existence, I am talking about real existence.

Presence

In ordinary language, the English word ‘present’ and its cognates typically pick out – indexically and with varying degrees of precision – a location in space and/or time. It is this ‘spatiotemporal’ conception of presence that is

¹⁴ Bxxxix-xli, A28/B44, A35/B52, B69, B274-9, A367-80; Prol. 4:292-4, 374-5. See also A45-6/B62-3, B69-71, A183/B227, A293-8/B349-54; Prol. 4:289, 290-1, 375.

¹⁵ See Stang (2016: especially 163n. and also 301, 322). Tolley (2013: 116; forthcoming; ms.) and Schafer (ms.) also fall into this category and it may be that others who on the face of it might seem to express an object-dependence view do as well.

active in SPD.¹⁶ I take it that this coheres with Kant's own terminology in the disputed texts. The word Kant uses when talking about intuition without presence is '*Gegenwart*' (or its adjectival/adverbial form '*gegenwärtig*'), and it is fairly clear he is talking about spatiotemporal presence. This is explicitly how he uses the term(s) elsewhere, and there is no particular reason to think his usage in the imagination texts anomalous.¹⁷

There is also a more specifically philosophical notion of 'mental' presence. Here we talk of an object's presence to consciousness (e.g. Allais 2015) or of an object being present to mind (Watkins and Willaschek forthcoming), as well as, in a closely related verbal phrase, of subjects being presented with objects (e.g. Gomes forthcoming and Allais [this volume](#)). The object-dependence view also requires that the objects of intuition be present in this sense. I return to this issue in detail in §4. In the meantime presence means spatiotemporal presence. For now I just want to observe that object-independence views need not deny that the objects of intuition must be mentally present. The dispute concerns what exactly this amounts to.

Particularity

So far in this section I have been talking about the content of SPD. Before moving on, I want to draw attention to a purely formal feature of the condition. It will be crucial that SPD requires that the object of intuition be *the very same object* that exists and is present to the subject of intuition. The point here is simply that our quantifiers take wide scope over the conditional, forcing the same object to satisfy the condition in both the antecedent and consequent on any uniform assignment of values to variables. Call this the 'particularity' of SPD. It is essential to the kind of condition SPD is – to the specific range of views it picks out and thus to the specific way in which it is significant for our investigation of Kant and the philosophy of mind.

For suppose the condition were simply that intuition requires the existence and presence of some object or other but not necessarily that of the intuited object in particular. We might want to call this an 'object-dependence'

¹⁶ It is notoriously difficult to state precisely what such a requirement amounts to. I ignore such issues here because there are not specific to the inner intuition proposal.

¹⁷ See especially B18, A174/B216, A771/B799; MFNS 4:485f., 497, 513; Anth. 7:154, 186, 193, 222, 255, 264; DS 2:288, 321ff., 336, 347; R343, 15:135, R371, 15:145, R1086, 15:482. And also A82/B108; CPJ 5:484; ID 2:392f. I take this to hold of Kant's discussion of intuition and presence in the *Prolegomena* (4:281f.) as well. For discussion, see Stephenson (2015: 490-91) and especially Grüne ([this volume: §2](#)) and McLear ([this volume: §§2-3](#)).

condition, but it would track something quite different to the kind of object-dependence currently at stake. Some commentators attribute to Kant a version of the thesis that the mind is essentially embodied.¹⁸ This might have the consequence that intuition requires the existence and presence of some object, namely the body. But the question of whether Kant held a version of the embodied mind thesis is orthogonal to that of whether intuition is, for instance, relational or representational.

Or take another example. Based on Kant's account of the imagination in the A-edition Deduction (A100ff.) and in particular his suggestion that 'the imagination is a necessary ingredient of perception itself' (A120n.), we might want to hold that imaginal images are involved in *all* intuition, regardless of whether the intuition is involved in veridical or non-veridical perceptual episodes. On the representational version of the object-independence view, such images might then be understood as vehicles of intuitional representational content, and thereby, in the context of the inner intuition proposal, as in some sense objects that must exist and be present in intuition. But such images would not themselves be the objects of intuition on such a view – they are not themselves the objects of intuitional representation. Thus the representational view could accept a departicularised object-dependence condition without thereby also committing to SPD.

It is SPD with its particularity that is at issue here. This is the object-dependence condition entailed by the relational view and rejected by the representational view, for instance, so it is evidence for or against this condition that is relevant for deciding between these views. It is to such evidence that I now turn, specifically to the question of whether the inner intuition proposal outlined in §1 can help maintain SPD in the face of what Kant says about the imagination.

3. Textual Considerations

Particularity in the Transcendental Deduction

Let us begin with the characterisation of the imagination quoted in §1. It is taken from the B-edition Transcendental Deduction. This is surely an authoritative text, so it will be worth taking some extra care to get clear on what Kant means. The German reads:

¹⁸ See Cassam (1993), Hanna (2006), and Rukgaber (2009).

Einbildungskraft ist das Vermögen, einen Gegenstand auch *ohne dessen Gegenwart* in der Anschauung vorzustellen. (B151)

Guyer and Wood (in Kant 1998a), following Meiklejohn (in Kant 1855), translate the sentence like so:

- (1) *Imagination* is the faculty for representing an object even *without its presence* in intuition.

This translation leaves it open for object-dependence readers of intuition to deny that the imagination is a faculty of intuition and thus maintain SPD. One might even take the sentence to imply that intuition does require presence, that it should be parsed as something like this: ‘even when an object is not present, as it must be in intuition, it can be represented through the imagination’. Call this ‘reading 1’. (I will explain in a moment why I separate out the readings from the translations.) Note, however, that the following translation, closer to those of Kemp Smith (in Kant 1929) and Pluhar (in Kant 1996b), has quite different connotations:

- (2) *Imagination* is the faculty for representing an object in intuition even *without its presence*.

This translation suggests the imagination is indeed a faculty of intuition, specifically a faculty for intuiting an object without its presence, and therefore that intuition as such does not require presence, contrary to SPD and the object-dependence view. Call this ‘reading 2’.

So which reading, if either, is preferable?

Previously I had observed only that both are equally natural takes on the original German (Stephenson 2015: 497-98). I now want to say something much stronger, namely that reading 2 reflects the *only* plausible take on what Kant can mean here. The reason is what he goes on to say in the next sentence:

Now since all of our intuition is sensible, the imagination, because of the subjective condition under which it alone can give a corresponding intuition to the concepts of the understanding, belongs to sensibility... (B151)¹⁹

¹⁹ Kant goes on to say that there is also an aspect of the imagination that is an ‘effect of the understanding on sensibility’ (B152). This is the ‘productive’ imagination with its ‘a priori’

There are two things about this passage that tell strongly in favour of reading 2 and against reading 1. First, that Kant talks about the imagination giving ‘a corresponding intuition to the concepts of the understanding’, thus implying that imagination is indeed a faculty of intuition. Second, that he infers that the imagination ‘belongs to sensibility’ from the fact that ‘all of our intuition is sensible’, an inference that only makes sense if imagination is a faculty of intuition.²⁰

What we have here, then, is an absolutely central text that directly contradicts SPD. This is not a late or peripheral text. Nor does Kant talk about merely *intuitive* representation. This text presents a serious obstacle for the object-dependence view of intuition.

To clarify, the reason I have separated the readings from the translations is that I take it that translation (1) *could* be given reading 2. Consider the following slight modification:

(1*) *Imagination* is the faculty for representing an object,
even *without its presence*, in intuition.

(1*) has the same connotations as (2) and is not a wholly unnatural way to parse (1). If so, (1) is simply ambiguous between reading 1 and reading 2. The same is true of the original German sentence *when taken in isolation* – the sentence is a classic case of structural ambiguity. By better preserving the original word order, (1) better preserves the ambiguity. As a translation of the sentence in isolation, then, (1) might be preferable to (2). Though which is a better translation of the sentence *all things considered* will depend on principles of translation that need not concern us here. What is important here is just that, whichever translation we adopt, what Kant says in the following sentence shows that he must have reading 2 in mind, i.e., that he is thinking of the imagination as a faculty for intuiting objects without their presence.

Our question now is whether the inner intuition proposal can help preserve SPD and the object-dependence view of intuition in the face of such a text. Would it be consistent with this text to maintain that the relevant kinds of imaginal episode involve inner intuitions which have inner images as

synthesis. Here we are concerned solely with the ‘reproductive’ imagination and its ‘empirical’ synthesis (cf. Anth. 7:167ff.).

²⁰ My thanks to Stefanie Grüne for bringing this point to my attention.

their existing and present objects, thereby satisfying SPD? It would not, and this is where the particularity of SPD comes into play.

The pronoun ‘*dessen*’ (‘its’) in ‘*ohne dessen Gegenwart*’ (‘without its presence’) refers to that which is represented in intuition, i.e. that which is intuited – the intuited object or object of intuition. So what Kant says here is that it is *the object of intuition that is not present* in imaginational intuition. This is inconsistent with the inner intuition proposal, which would have it that the object of intuition *is* present in imaginational intuition. The proposal’s qualification that this object is merely an inner object of an inner intuition is irrelevant. The problem can be put as follows. In essence, the inner intuition proposal amounts to the suggestion that the object-dependence view of intuition broaden its conception of the intuitions and objects covered by SPD so as to include inner intuitions and their inner objects. But this has no effect on the particularity of SPD, which is a purely formal, syntactic feature of the condition, not a semantic one. And it is the particularity of SPD which makes it inconsistent with what Kant says at B151. The inner intuition proposal does not affect this.

Particularity in Other Texts

The same appears to be true of the other passages in which the relevant feature of the imagination is stated explicitly and which were written by Kant himself. From the *Anthropology*:

Sensibility in the cognitive faculty (the faculty of representations in intuition) contains two parts: *sense* and *imagination*. – The first is the faculty of intuition in the presence of the object, the second even *without* the presence of the object. (7:153)

Imagination (*facultas imaginandi*), as a faculty of intuitions even without presence of the object, is either *productive*, that is, a faculty of the original presentation of the object (*exhibitio originaria*), which thus precedes experience; or *reproductive*, a faculty of the derivative presentation of the object (*exhibitio derivativa*), which brings back into the mind an empirical intuition had previously. – Pure intuitions of space and time belong to the first presentation... (7:167)²¹

²¹ In the first passage, Robert Louden (in Kant 2007) translates ‘*des Gegenstandes*’ and ‘*desselben*’ with indefinite articles and ‘*Vorstellungen in der Anschauung*’ with ‘intuitive representations’. In the second passage, Louden translates the plural ‘*Anschauungen*’ with

And from a series of handwritten notes connected to the Refutation of Idealism:

Imagination is intuition even without presence of the object, and the object is then called a phantasm, which can be a production (invention) or reproduction (recollection) of an intuition that was had previously. (R6315, 18:618)

We have two sorts of intuition: sensible intuition, for which the object must be represented as present, and imagination as intuition without presence of the object. (6315, 18:619)

In each case, Kant uses definite articles in talking about the absent objects, and I take it that the most natural reading of these passages, especially in light of what we have seen him commit to in the B-edition Deduction, is that he is talking about the objects of imaginal intuitions. That is, he is saying that the imagination is a faculty of intuition without the presence of *the object of intuition*. If so, these passages again contradict the particularity of SPD and thereby the object-dependence view of intuition, regardless of whether or not it is supplemented with the inner intuition proposal.

Now, it should be acknowledged that these cases are not *quite* so clear-cut as the previous one. As a matter of sheer grammar, it *could* be that the absent objects of which Kant speaks are not themselves the objects of imaginal intuition. If so, these passages might be at least consistent with the inner intuition proposal. But what other candidate is there for the absent objects, if not the objects of imaginal intuition? One answer might be that Kant is referring specifically to the particular spatial objects of outer intuitions. On this reading, these, *and only these*, are what are absent in imaginal intuition, thus leaving room for the inner intuition proposal's claim that inner objects are still present in such intuitions.

However, there are at least two considerations that tell against such a reading (in addition to the fact that it is unavailable for the B151 text). The first is what it would mean for the cases of productive imagination that Kant mentions in the middle two passages. Our intuitions of space and time would then not be what Kant is connecting to the productive imagination. Instead this faculty would involve the 'original presentation' of the particular spatial objects of outer intuitions, a presentation that 'precedes experience'.

the singular or abstract 'intuition'. Allais (2015: 157n.) makes a point that appears to turn on these errors.

This seems to get things the wrong way round (see especially A101f., A115-124, B151-4). The second consideration is Kant's use of the term 'phantasm' to name the absent object in the third passage. This sounds like a term for an imaginary object of imaginational intuition rather than for a spatial object of outer intuition that happens not to be present. Of course a subject might mistake a phantasm for a real spatial object.²² And of course the inner intuition proposal might well use 'phantasm' rather than 'image' as a label for its inner objects. But the problem is that the proposal says that such objects are present in imaginational intuition, whereas what Kant says here is that the phantasm is not present. The prospects for exploiting the aforementioned grammatical loophole do not look very good.

Finally, we have various student lecture notes.²³ Again, many (though not all) of these are strictly speaking compatible with the inner intuition proposal. For instance, it does not contravene the particularity of SPD to talk very generally of 'intuitions in the absence of objects' (MD 28:673) – perhaps the objects referred to here are outer rather than inner ones and thus, on the inner intuition proposal, not the objects of imaginational intuition. I have discussed these texts elsewhere and I won't repeat them here (Stephenson 2015: 496-7). A broader methodological point will suffice.

Such texts can be extremely useful, but they should never trump what Kant himself wrote, especially in the B-edition Transcendental Deduction. One problem is that they can be unreliable, especially on matters as fine as these. An example illustrates the point nicely. In student notes to lectures Kant gave around 1780, he is reported as saying the following:

...cognition is a representation, *representatio*. A representation with consciousness is *perceptio*. I have a hallucination [*Wahn*] and think I am conscious of it. Insofar as I also pay attention to the object with such a representation, this is *cognitio*, cognition. The cognition is twofold, intuitus, intuition, conceptus, concept. (VL 24:904)

On the face of it such a statement would seem to support the object-independence view of intuition, since it is much less natural for object-dependence views to allow hallucination as a species of cognition.²⁴ But

²² Cf. R4756, 17:699, to my knowledge the only other place Kant uses the term, talking of 'the phantasm of things existing as if externally'.

²³ DWL 24:701, 705, 753; AF 25:511; AM 25:1301; ML₁ 28:230; MVo 28:449; ML₂ 28:585; MD 28:673; MMr 29:881.

²⁴ See Gomes and Stephenson (2016: §3).

notice: first, the passage bears a striking resemblance to the so-called ‘*Stufenleiter*’ (A320/B376-7), Latinate cognates included; second, relatedly, hallucination pops up rather out of the blue and then disappears again. This suggests that ‘*Wahn*’ ought to read ‘*Wahrnehmung*’ (‘perception’), and it seems likely that a student simply misheard or miswrote.²⁵

The Inner (and particularity again)

So far in this section I have been considering textual problems for the inner intuition proposal that arise from the particularity of SPD. These problems affect the proposal’s claim that images are the present and existing objects in virtue of which imaginational intuitions satisfy SPD. What about the other central part of the proposal, namely the claim that imaginational intuitions are inner intuitions?

Here the texts are less clear and I want to be more concessive. On occasion Kant certainly does connect the imagination to inner *sense* and inner *appearances*:

It is said that inner sense is also subject to *illusions*, which consist in the person taking the appearances of inner sense... for outer appearances, that is, taking imaginings for sensations... it is mental illness: the tendency to accept the play of ideas of inner sense as experiential cognition... (Anth. 7:161; cf. AM 25:1257)

Since imagination and its product is itself only an object of inner sense, the empirical consciousness (*apprehensio*) of this state can only contain succession. (R6313, 18:614)

But most of the time he does not make this connection, and elsewhere what he says seems in tension with it. Sometimes directly:

...the imagination can only create a representation of the outer by affecting outer sense... (R6313, 18:613)

Sometimes indirectly, as when he distinguishes sense in general from imagination in general and only then goes on to distinguish the two types of

²⁵ Or perhaps Kant himself misspoke. In any case it seems unlikely the mistake is in the Academy Edition transcription rather in the manuscript itself – see Michael Young’s Introduction in Kant (1992: xxx-xxxi) and an editor’s note on the word in question at 28:1081.

sense, inner and outer (Anth. 7:153; cf. AM 25:1242). Or, on the assumption that the imagination can represent things ‘as spatial’, when he denies that inner sense can do so:

What I represent to myself as spatial cannot be counted as a representation of inner sense, for the form of this is time, which has only one dimension. (R6315, 18:620-1; cf. Bxl-xli, A34/B50-51, B275-76; R6313, 18:614, quoted above)

Relatedly, it would seem we could undergo hallucinations in different sensory modes, not only visual but also auditory, tactile, olfactory, etc. But Kant thinks of these modes as species of outer sense (Anth. 7:153ff.; cf. AM 25:1242). And bringing the last two points together, it seems the different modes of hallucination should *feel* different to the subject, just as different modes of sensing do. How would this be explained on the inner intuition proposal?²⁶

Consider finally the only passage (that I know of) in which Kant explicitly ties the imagination to inner *intuition*:

The imagination, if one is conscious of it as such, can also be considered as inner sensible intuition. (R6315, 18:619)

There is an alternative reading of this passage on which Kant is not saying that acts of the imagination produce mere inner intuitions but is rather talking about these acts of imagination themselves becoming objects of inner intuition. This happens when we become aware that we are undergoing hallucination, for example – we become ‘conscious of [the imagination] as such [*einer solchen*]’, which is to say, as merely imagination and not veridical perception. It is a kind of self-awareness that helps us avoid forming false beliefs on the basis of hallucination. And it is a kind of self-awareness that fits very well into the role normally assigned to inner intuition. (A similar reading might be given of Kant’s talk of the power of imagination and its product ‘itself’ being ‘an object of the inner sense’ at R6313, 18:614, quoted above.)

²⁶ This is a pertinent question even if one thinks that Kant locates any error that might occur in connection to hallucination at the level of judgment rather than intuition (see McLear [this volume: §4](#)). Macbeth might mistake a dagger proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain for a real dagger, and this might involve an important doxastic element, but surely nothing at the level of judgment could *fully* explain the difference between a visual hallucination of a dagger and a tactile(?) hallucination of being stabbed.

The texts, then, are simply not decisive. Perhaps Kant vacillates. Perhaps he thinks of imaginal intuition as in a class of its own, neither inner nor outer. In any case, it is crucial to be clear on how much the object-independence view can concede. There is *no doubt* that imaginal intuitions are in *some* sense less connected to ‘the outer’ than intuitions involved in veridical perceptual episodes. But this is trivial. The object-independence view of course does not claim that there is *no* difference whatsoever between the two cases. There is, after all, no outer object present in the former case as there is in the latter case, and no causal affection from outside occurs (concurrently and in a way suitably hooked up to the intuition in question). Kant defines outer sense as ‘where the human body is affected by physical things’ (Anth. 7:153), so this undeniable difference takes care of those passages where Kant distinguishes the imagination from outer sense and calls the latter ‘a relation of intuition to something actual outside me’ (Bxl, n.). The object-independence view can even accept that there is some special connection to inner sense in the case of imaginal intuitions, for it can allow that it is in some sense the mind itself rather than an external thing that is the proximal causal origin of such intuitions (Anth. 7:153).

Regardless of what we call imaginal intuitions, the real difference between the views rather comes down to this. Are the objects of imaginal intuitions inner images, sensory states of the intuiting subject that exist and are present at the time of the intuition? The object-dependence view, supplemented with the inner intuition proposal, says ‘Yes’; the object-independence view says ‘No’. But this in turn does *not* mean that the object-independence view need deny that there can be some sensory state that exists and is present in imaginal episodes. This view can well allow that the subject of hallucination is in a sensory state, that she is undergoing perceptual experiences (in the contemporary sense). And sensory states take time and can be causally efficacious, so it might also want to concede that they exist and are present in such episodes. What the object-independence view denies – and what the object-dependence view supplemented with the inner intuition proposal affirms – is that *these sensory states* are what is represented in imaginal intuition, that *these sensory states* are the objects of imaginal intuition, hence are that in virtue of which imaginal intuition satisfies SPD. And here we are back to particularity.

4. Philosophical Considerations

So far I have focused on textual problems with the inner intuition proposal. I now turn to two problems of a more philosophical nature. The first is fairly straightforward. It is philosophical in the sense that the inner intuition proposal would leave Kant with a philosophically bad view. It is also textual insofar as this bad view does not sit well with some of Kant's core claims about cognition and its relation to intuition. The second problem is more complicated and although it may apply to other versions of the object-dependence view, it is sharpest for the relational view. It is philosophical in the sense that the inner intuition proposal would bring into doubt the very nature and purpose of the kind of position the relational view attributes to Kant.

Memory

The focus in the literature, as here, has been on imagination as it functions in hallucination. But there are other relevant kinds of imaginational episode. Specifically, Kant also connects the imagination to memory. The *Anthropology* includes a section 'On memory' under the title 'On the faculty of visualizing the past and the future by means of the imagination' (7:182-5).²⁷ The problem is that the inner intuition proposal would have it that the objects of recollective intuitions are mere inner images, but surely what we remember in such episodes are the outer objects themselves. Suppose a friend calls me up. She has lost her scarf and wants to know whether I remember if she had it when she arrived at my party. I try to remember. We might want to say I do so by bringing back to mind an image of her standing in my hallway with her scarf on. But what I remember when I remember that she did have it on is my friend and her scarf (or a fact about them). This distinction is built into the representational view with its distinction between vehicle and object of representation, but the inner intuition proposal leaves my friend and her scarf out of the picture.

We can press the issue further by considering the connection between memory and higher cognitive states like belief and knowledge. Through an act of memory, I form a belief, perhaps I have knowledge, about my friend and her scarf. In more specifically Kantian terms, memory is a source of 'historical cognition' (JL 9:22; BL 24:47; DWL 24:704; MMr 29:881). Assuming that we identify the object of intuition with the object of

²⁷ See also A53/B77, A649/B677; Anth. 7:167, 197; Ped. 9:475-6; ML₁ 28:237, 262; MMr 29:881, 884; MD 28:673-4; AF 25:512, 521; AM 25:1289. Occasionally it can seem as though Kant thinks imagination and memory distinct, but all things considered I think he means to distinguish two kinds of imaginational activity, its recollective activity being more under a subject's control than, say, its hallucinatory activity.

cognition, the inner intuition proposal would have it that historical cognition through memory is cognition of mere images (and perhaps thereby of the self). Not only does this seem philosophically wrong. It also seems in tension with the characteristic objectivity of cognition (see especially A19/B33, A92-3/B125-6, A197/B242, A320/B376). And it would not be an attractive way out of this problem to query the aforementioned identity assumption. Kant frequently identifies the object of intuition with the object of cognition (e.g. at A19/B33 and A50/B74) and such an identification seems a prerequisite for making sense of intuition's role of giving us objects for cognition. This latter point holds generally, but is especially apt with regard to the object-dependence view of intuition. As mentioned in §1, it is a core motivation for this view that it is supposed to better explain how intuitions give us objects for cognition. This brings us to the second problem.

The Role of Object-Dependence

I will argue that, in effect, the inner intuition proposal and the relational view are incompatible. This is because the inner intuition proposal would leave the relational view with no theoretical role for SPD, bringing into doubt whether the relational view is a kind of object-dependence view at all. In order to see how this problem arises, we need to know more about the relational view and its relation to the representational view.

The relational version of the object-dependence view has a very strong reading of intuitional immediacy. Intuition, on the relational view, relates subjects immediately to objects in the sense that it does not involve there being any *mental* intermediary between subject and object. This is a consequence of the *primitive, non-representational* nature of the conscious acquaintance relations in terms of which the relational view analyses intuition. Such relations do not hold *in virtue of* internal states of the intuiting subject and their representational content.²⁸ That is, they do not hold because (features of) the internal states of the subject somehow resemble or are structurally isomorphic with (features of) the objects of intuition. So intuition is immediate in that it does not involve mental intermediaries and its conscious acquaintance relations are primitive and non-representational. But surely we must also say something positive, something more by way of an explanation (albeit not a reductive one) of what conscious acquaintance *is*.

²⁸ For very helpful discussion, see Gomes (forthcoming: especially §2 and §4).

Another way to put the point. For Allais, the ‘fundamental Kantian notion... is that of the *presence* to consciousness of the object’ (2009: 390). She says: ‘on my view, intuitions present us with particulars immediately because they involve the presence to consciousness of the things they represent. They do not merely represent objects, but present them’ (2015: 147; cf. 106ff., 153ff.; 2010: 57ff.). Here we return to the mental conception of presence mentioned in §2. In these terms the point is that more needs to be said about the particular account of mental presence that is at work here if these claims are to pick out the relational view. Both Allais (2015: 25) and Gomes (forthcoming) observe, quite rightly, that we should not take Kant’s representationalist idiom to prejudge the question of whether intuition is object-independent and representational rather than object-dependent and relational. But nor should we take a presentational idiom to prejudge such matters. For the representational view need not deny that intuition involves the presence to consciousness of its objects.²⁹ The substance of the dispute concerns the correct analysis of this claim.

Now, it seems to me that this is a dispute about something we nowadays call ‘phenomenal character’. This is a contemporary phrase, but the appeal to some such notion is inevitable, not anachronistic. If an object is present to consciousness, then there is a subject who is thereby conscious, and if there is a subject who is conscious, then there is a way things are for her, subjectively – a way things feel or seem for her in being so conscious. Indeed, there being a way things seem for a subject *is just part of what it is for the subject to be conscious*. This is what the notion of phenomenal character picks out. Phenomenal character is the character of consciousness – it (partially) *constitutes* consciousness. More specifically, then, we are considering views about intuition that grant it some central role in distinctively *perceptual* episodes. So intuitional mental presence is supposed to be the kind of presence to consciousness, and thereby the kind of phenomenal character, characteristic of perceptual episodes. In these terms, the dispute is as follows.

On the representational view, the phenomenal character that (partially) constitutes intuitional consciousness is itself (at least partially) constituted

²⁹ On the direct representational view, just as the states themselves are vehicles rather than objects of representation, so too are they vehicles rather than objects of consciousness. The mental intermediaries that this view posits ‘between’ subject and object in no way form a ‘veil of perception’. This view is not so strange. After all, it is an undeniable empirical fact that there are *physical* intermediaries between the subject’s consciousness and the object of which she is conscious – light and retinal images, for example. We can accept this without thinking they form a veil, so why should mental intermediaries be different?

by internal features of the state and its (object-independent) representational content. In the ‘good’ case, where the subject is suitably causally hooked up to the world, how things thereby seem to the subject is in turn suitably matched by how things in fact are in the world. In the ‘bad’ case, where the subject is not suitably causally hooked up to the world but is rather hallucinating, things can nevertheless seem just as they did in the good case, even though how things seem is now not suitably matched by how things are. As Kant puts it:

The difference between truth and dream, however, is not decided through the quality of the representations that are related to objects, for they are the same in both... (Prol. 4:290)

On the representational view, there is identity of phenomenal character across the good and bad cases *because* there is identity of state and content.

On the relational view, things are very different. The phenomenal character that (partially) constitutes intuitional consciousness is itself (at least partially) constituted *by the object of intuition* (and its features). On this view, rather than being merely caused by and representationally related to how things are, how things seem *just is* how things are. As Allais (2015: 107) puts it: ‘the qualitative features of perceptual experience *are* features of the objects perceived’. This is how immediate and direct the connection between the mind and the world is on the relational view of intuition. The redness in how things appear to a subject in intuition, for instance, just is the redness in the object intuited. This is what it means for objects and their features to be ‘manifest’ to us (Allais 2015). It is in this way that the relational view can be expressed as a view on which the objects of intuition are ‘literal constituents’ of intuition.³⁰ And it is this account of intuitional consciousness and its phenomenal character that is the most fundamental reason the relational view entails SPD and is thus a version of the object-dependence view of intuition. The account has several consequences but what concerns us here is what it means for hallucination.

Unlike the representational view, the relational view cannot allow that hallucinatory episodes have the same phenomenal character as their

³⁰ See Allais (2015: 12, 105ff., 134, 197). For further discussion and references, see McLear (forthcoming), Gomes (forthcoming: §2), and Stephenson (2016: §2), where I argue that Allais’s relational view of intuition stands in tension with her account of transcendental idealism.

subjectively indistinguishable veridical counterparts.³¹ For the objects that constitute the phenomenal character of the latter are absent in the former in a way that rules this out – how things seem in cases of hallucination cannot *be* how things are because it is the nature of such cases that how things seem is precisely *not* how things are. Moreover – and this is the rub – if the relational view were to allow an account of the phenomenal character of hallucination, and if this account were given in terms of features of the state that also obtain in their veridical counterparts, then this would call into question the view’s account of the phenomenal character of veridical cases. For if things seem the same in the bad case as in the good case despite the absence of the object, and if this seeming is accounted for by features common to both cases, then what role is the presence of the object really playing in the account of how things seem in the good case? The presence of the object in an account of the phenomenal character of the good case would have become inessential. Any explanation of how things seem in the bad case in terms of features shared between it and the good case would ‘screen off’ an appeal to the object in an explanation of how things seem in the good case – how things seem in such a case would already have been explained without the object, *contra* the relational view.³² To avoid this problem, the relational view must therefore eschew any such account of the bad case.

The objection I want to pose, then, is that the inner intuition proposal provides just such an account. It explains the phenomenal character of hallucinatory episodes in a way that would screen off the relational view’s object-involving account of the phenomenal character of veridical episodes, its object-involving account of intuitional presence to consciousness. The sensory state images present in hallucinatory episodes are just sensations reproduced from genuine cases of outer affection.³³ On the inner intuition proposal, these are what account for the phenomenal character of hallucinatory episodes. As Colin McLear puts it: ‘sensings and imaginings

³¹ In an earlier draft of this material I expressed doubt as to whether we should expect to find in Kant the distinction required here between identity of phenomenal character and subjective indistinguishability, but Patrick Frierson pointed out to me that something along these lines seems to play a role in Kant’s discussions of respect for the moral law (G 4:397ff.; CPrR 5:72ff.) and judgments of taste (CPJ 5:280ff.).

³² This kind of argument is due to Martin (2004: 61-63; cf. 2006: 368-70). In Stephenson (2015: §6) I argued that it presents a problem for the relational view per se, since Kant’s account of the imagination provides for a rich, bottom-up explanation of the phenomenal character of hallucinatory episodes. My claim here is that the inner intuition proposal intensifies this issue.

³³ A100f., A120f., A770-1/B798-9; Anth. 7:167-8; R5653, 18:309-10, R6312, 18:613, R6315, 18:619; VL 24: 904.

are phenomenally indiscriminable *because* they both involve the same type of (merely subjective) sensory occurrences' (this volume: xx, my emphasis). But if such inner sensory states are sufficient to account for the phenomenal character of intuitional consciousness in the bad case, why not also in the good case, *contra* the relational account?

Supplementing the relational view with the inner intuition proposal would leave the presence and existence of the outer object without an essential role to play in the view's account of the intuitional presence to consciousness involved in veridical perceptual episodes. But this account is a core part of the view. It is at the heart of the view's account of intuitional immediacy and what distinguishes it from object-independent, representational views. Without it, it would become altogether unclear just what the view *is*.

5. Conclusion

I have argued against the proposal that the imagination produces merely inner intuitions whose objects are inner images that exist and are present in the way demanded by the object-dependence view of intuition. The main textual problem for the proposal is that it remains inconsistent with what Kant says, namely that imaginational intuition occurs without the presence of the particular object of intuition. Inner image objects may exist and be present in imaginational episodes, but these cannot be the objects of whatever intuition such episodes involve. The main philosophical problem is that the proposal is incompatible with the relational view it is supposed to support, for its account of the character of imaginational consciousness in terms of inner image objects screens off the relational view's account of the character of non-imaginational consciousness in terms of external physical objects. Kant's account of the imagination remains a significant obstacle for any version of the object-dependence view, but it is especially problematic for the relational view, which has very specific consequences for what can be said about imaginational episodes like hallucination.³⁴

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