

Kant on the Progression of Representation

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ABSTRACT

Recent debate in Kant scholarship has focused on a question concerning whether Kant endorses a “conceptualist” theory of sensory experience. According to “conceptualist” interpretations, intuitions cannot play their role of presenting objects to the mind without the discursive activity of the intellect. According to nonconceptualist interpretations, at least some intuitions do not depend for their generation on the discursive activity of the intellect. Although the conceptualist/nonconceptualist debate has done much to clarify various aspects of Kant’s theoretical philosophy, the debate partially rests on a conflation of two importantly distinct representational states, namely “intuition” [*Anschauung*] and “perception” [*Wahrnehmung*]. I argue that once this distinction is noted, many of the passages that would appear to threaten a nonconceptualist interpretation lose their force. In addition, I argue that if we understand the conceptualist claim in terms of the kind of structure a particular representational state possesses, then we have good reason to reject the idea that, for Kant, sensory experience is fundamentally conceptual in character.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Recently, the key point of contention in Kant scholarship has revolved around a question concerning whether, for Kant, intuitions can play their role of presenting objects to the mind without the discursive activity of the intellect. According to “conceptualist” interpretations, intuitions depend for their generation on the activity of the understanding. According to “nonconceptualist” interpretations, at least some intuitions do not depend for their generation on the activity of the understanding. I argue that although the conceptualism/nonconceptualism debate has brought greater clarity to a number of issues within Kant’s critical philosophy, it has partially been the result of the conflating of two importantly distinct types of representational states, namely what Kant calls “intuition” and “perception”. I argue that once we have noted this distinction, many of the passages which would appear to threaten a nonconceptualist interpretation lose their force. Moreover, I argue that if we understand the conceptualist view in terms of the kind of structure had by distinct types of representational states, then we have good reason to reject the idea that, for Kant, sensory experience is conceptual in character.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Kant's Distinction between Intuition and Perception	4
3. Problems with Conceptualism	16
4. Conceptualism and Representational Structure	20
5. Conclusion	24
References	26

1. Introduction

Whether or not there is non-conceptual content, and whether the possession of concepts is required for perception, have been much debated questions in contemporary philosophy of mind.¹ Recently, there has been a related debate amongst interpreters of Kant concerning whether, for Kant, the content of sensory experience can be understood in conceptual terms.² The central issue of this debate, perhaps unlike that of the debate in the philosophy of mind, has recently revolved around a question concerning the conditions under which intuitions are *generated*, rather than a question concerning the type of *content* they possess. This is due to the fact that there is good reason to reject the idea that, for Kant, intuition could have a concept as its content.³

Consequently, a number of Kant commentators have recently argued that the conceptualism/nonconceptualism debate ought to be reframed in terms of whether the occurrence of an intuition depends, at least in part, on the activity of the understanding.⁴ According to “conceptualist” interpretations, intuitions are dependent for their generation on acts of the intellect. In contrast, proponents of a “nonconceptualist” interpretation argue that at least some intuitions do not rely for their generation on any activity of the intellect.⁵ Nonconceptualists do

¹ The notion of non-conceptual content was first introduced into analytic philosophy by Gareth Evans (1982). It has been widely discussed and debated ever since. See, for example, Crane (1988), Peacocke (1992), McDowell (1996), Heck (2000), Gunther (2003), Bryne (2003), Speaks (2005), Heck (2007), and Beck (2012).

² See e.g. McDowell (1996), Hanna (2005, 2008), Ginsborg (2006, 2008), Grüne (2009, forthcoming), Allais (2009, 2015), Tolley (2012, 2013), McLear (2014, 2016, forthcoming a), Gomes (2014, forthcoming), and Land (2014, forthcoming).

³ As Clinton Tolley (2011, 2013) has argued, because Kant takes the content of a representation to consist in a particular kind of relation to an object, and because intuitions and concepts relate to their objects differently (immediate/mediate), this entails a difference in the content of an intuition and concept. The content of intuition therefore cannot plausibly be understood in conceptual terms. Thus, it is doubtful that Kant was a conceptualist in the sense articulated above.

⁴ See e.g. Grüne (2009), Land (2015, forthcoming), and McLear (2015, forthcoming a).

⁵ McLear (2015: 80-1; forthcoming a: 7) uses the terms “Intellectualism” and “Sensibilism” instead of conceptualism and nonconceptualism, respectively, to highlight the fact that the question of whether, for Kant, sensory experience is fundamentally conceptual, and the question of whether objective (i.e., representations that have relation to an object or are ‘about’ something) representations depend on acts of synthesis, come apart. I will

not deny that *some* representational states are conceptual in character. For example, they can agree that Kant is a conceptualist about *cognition* and *experience* (i.e., *empirical* cognition). What the nonconceptualist denies is that the application of concepts or capacities thereof are necessary *at the level of intuition*.

Although the conceptualism/nonconceptualism debate has brought greater clarity to a number of issues within Kant's critical philosophy, it has remained somewhat intractable due to a widespread tendency among commentators to run together representational states that, for Kant, are importantly distinct. In particular, Kant's distinction between 'intuition' [*Anschauung*], and 'perception' [*Wahrnehmung*], has been neglected by a number of commentators, and even when acknowledged, it has oftentimes been assumed that both, more or less, have similar connotations.⁶ That Kant took these terms to refer to different types of mental states is stated clearly in the very structure of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the headings to the first three chapters of the Principles in the first *Critique*, Kant distinguishes between the "Axioms of Intuition", the "Anticipations of Perception", and the "Analogies of Experience". If Kant *weren't* thinking that the terms "intuition", and "perception" designated distinct kinds of mental states, then it would be difficult to understand why he ordered a central part of his architectonic around them.

stick to the more familiar 'conceptualism' for a number of reasons. Prominent among these is that I believe that introducing more terms and distinctions will only complicate the debate further (and there is much need for clarification). Moreover, as I see it, the only plausible conceptualist interpretation of Kant is one that focuses on the conditions under which intuitions are generated. Finally, because, for Kant, all synthesis "stands under the categories" (B162), there is a sense in which the debate really comes down to the question of whether conceptually guided synthesis is necessary for the mind to be furnished with objective sensory representations.

⁶ For example, in a recent paper, Anil Gomes argues for a conceptualist interpretation of intuition largely on the basis of Kant's remarks concerning 'perception' or *Wahrnehmung* (2014: 8-9). Similarly, Griffith (2012) by and large equates empirical intuition with perception (in Kant's sense of the term) which, as we shall see, is a mistake. This slide between intuition and perception is also present in Allais (2009). McDowell (1996) tends to equate intuition and perception with Kant's technical notion of 'experience'. For recent attempts to pry apart importantly distinction notions, see Tolley (2013, forthcoming), Golob (2012), and McLear (2014).

Certain passages, especially in the B-edition of the Transcendental Deduction, *prima facie* support a conceptualist reading (e.g. B139, B161). But once Kant's distinction between the various kinds of increasingly complex representational states is noted, I will argue, many of the passages in the Deduction which would seem to threaten a nonconceptualist interpretation lose their force. One key task in what follows, then, will be to show that these three kinds of representational states are, in fact, importantly distinct. With this in mind, my primary aim in this paper is two-fold: (1) to develop an interpretation of Kant's distinction between intuition and perception, and to clarify their cognitive role in Kant's philosophy of mind, and (2) to show that attending to this distinction has implications for the Kantian conceptualism/nonconceptualism debate.⁷

I argue for two claims. First, that attending to this distinction undermines much of the textual evidence marshalled in support of conceptualist interpretations. Second, that clarifying this distinction does not quite settle the question of whether Kant endorses a conceptualist theory of perceptual experience. To begin answering this question, I will argue that we need to answer the question of what it means for the exercise of a mental capacity to count as "conceptual". I will suggest that a requirement for the exercise of a mental capacity to count as conceptual is that

⁷ Attending to this distinction also has implications for understanding what Kant means by *Erkenntnis* or "cognition". Despite the fact that, arguably, the primary concern of Kant's critical philosophy is to identify the conditions and limits of our cognitive faculties, surprisingly few unified interpretations of cognition are available in the secondary literature (though see Watkins & Willaschek (2017) for a recent attempt to fill this lacuna). There are a number of reasons for this. Prominent among these is that Kant uses the term *Erkenntnis* in various ways that admit of different interpretations. For instance, in the famous *Stufenleiter* passage, Kant defines cognition as "objective perception" that is either "an intuition or concept" (A320/B377). However, in various other passages throughout the first *Critique*, especially in the 'Transcendental Analytic', Kant makes it clear that cognition requires the cooperation of *both* intuitions *and* concepts (A92/B125). This has led to many commentators, in an attempt to preserve consistency, attributing to Kant both a "broad" and "narrow" version of cognition (see, e.g., Gomes & Stephenson forthcoming). For reasons that I hope will become clear, I believe this interpretative tendency is mistaken. Cognition, for Kant, *always* requires that objects be given to us through sensibility so that they can be thought (or determined) through the understanding (cf. B146). This becomes apparent once we unpack the notion of an "objective perception", which we can only do once we have attended to, and kept track of, Kant's distinction between intuition and perception. Thus, though details would take us too far afield, the interpretation I offer below promises to bring greater clarity to issues involving Kant's conception of cognition as well as his theory of perceptual experience.

it obey the so-called ‘Generality Constraint’ and thus yield representations with structure that possesses a *canonical decomposition*.⁸ I will argue that intuitions (in Kant’s sense of the term) are not representations whose structure possess a canonical decomposition and thus cannot be plausibly understood as the product of the exercise of a conceptual capacity. I therefore conclude that conceptualism, as an interpretation of Kant, is unsatisfactory both on textual and philosophical grounds.

In considering these issues, I will proceed as follows. In section two (§2), I discuss Kant’s distinction between ‘intuition’ and ‘perception’. With this distinction ready to hand, in section three (§3), I examine Kant’s notion of ‘experience’. In section four (§4), I outline the conceptualist reading in greater detail and argue that considerations resulting from investigating Kant’s understanding of the progression of our representations undermines the textual support for conceptualism. I then discuss, in section five (§5), the notion of representational structure in greater detail, and argue that intuition cannot plausibly be understood as the product of the exercise of a conceptual capacity. Finally, in section six (§6), I summarize the argument of the paper.

2. Kant’s Distinction between Intuition & Perception

In this section I first (§2.1) briefly discuss Kant’s account of intuition. Thereafter (§2.2), I explore the distinction Kant makes between intuition and acts of *Wahrnehmung*.

2.1 Intuition

For Kant, there are two stems to our (human) discursive cognitive faculties. There is the purely receptive faculty of *sensibility*, through which we are affected by objects, and which alone

⁸ For a similar argument that the Kantian conceptualism debate ought to be reframed in terms of the exercise of cognitive abilities, see McLear (forthcoming a: 182-3). For a view that is sometimes sympathetic along these lines, see Allais (2015).

affords us the capacity to produce sensible representations insofar as we are affected by objects, and there is the spontaneous faculty of the *understanding*, through which we are enabled to determine or have thought about objects (A19/B33).⁹ Sensibility yields *intuitions* and the understanding yields *concepts*. Intuitions are conscious objective representations that relate *immediately* and *singularly* to objects (A320/B377). Concepts, on the other hand, are *general* representations that relate to their objects “by means of a mark which can be common to many things” (A320/B377). Kant repeats this characterization of concepts and intuitions throughout various passages in the first *Critique* (see A68/B93, A713/B741), as well as in other canonical texts (JL 9:91; MM 29:800), thus suggesting that their defining characteristics are their immediacy/mediacy and singularity/generalality.

The *generality* of concepts consists in their relating to objects by means of general features (marks) that can be predicated of a plurality of things. Their *mediacy* consists in their reference to an object being mediated by some other representation of that object (such as an intuition).¹⁰ For instance, <human>¹¹ represents humans by means of the marks of which it is composed, e.g., <mammal>, <featherless>, and <biped>, which are themselves representations. In other words, concepts relate to a potential multitude of objects by means of features that objects can have in common.

Although Kant is fairly clear about the way in which concepts relate to their objects, the exact nature of the immediacy and singularity of *intuition* is a matter of some controversy.¹²

There are a variety of views one might take. For example, Lucy Allais has argued for a relational

⁹ All references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are given parenthetically in the text, following the standard practice of ‘A’ and ‘B’ pagination referring to the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ “Since no representation pertains to the object immediately except intuition alone, a concept is thus never immediately related to an object, but is always related to some other representation of it (whether that be an intuition or itself already a concept) (A68/B93; see also A19/B33). Cf. Smit (2000).

¹¹ I use angled brackets (<,>) to denote concepts.

¹² See e.g. Wilson (1975), Parsons (1992), Smit (2000), Hanna (2008), and Allais (2009, 2015).

interpretation of the immediacy and singularity of intuition according to which the intuition of an object is the “presence to consciousness” of that object (2015: 147). According to this “relational” reading of intuition, subjects stand in non-representational relations of perceptual *acquaintance* to mind-independent objects. Thus, on this view, the immediacy of intuition consists in the non-representational *presentation* of an existing object to a subject’s consciousness without the presence of any mental intermediary. The singularity of intuition consists in it presenting a particular object to our mind rather than a plurality of objects. Moreover, on this view, an empirical intuition “essentially involves the object” as a constituent.¹³ Other commentators emphasize the representational aspects of Kant’s account of intuition. John McDowell, for example, has argued that we ought to understand intuition not as a kind of primitive “openness” to the world, but rather “as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content” (1996: 9). According to this view, intuitions are representations with intentional content, and are therefore assessable for correctness.¹⁴

As I see it, although there are reasons for interpreting Kant as sympathetic towards both representationalist and relationalist views, there are difficulties with ascribing to Kant either view. For example, there is a question concerning whether Kant endorses the view that perceptual experiences (i.e., intuition) are representational because they possess conditions which specify ways the world must be in order for the content of the experience to be true. Call this the ‘Content View’.¹⁵ Against the Content View, a number of commentators have argued that considerations stemming from Kant’s theory of perceptual error, namely Kant’s claim that

¹³ Allais (2011) p. 380. Call this view *naïve realism*. Recent naïve realist interpretations of Kant include, among others, McLear (2016) and Gomes (forthcoming).

¹⁴ For (broadly) representationalist interpretations of Kant, see Pereboom (1988), Grüne (2009), Stephenson (2015), and Watkins and Willaschek (2017). Hanna (2005, 2008) also emphasizes the importance of intentional content for Kant, his nonconceptualist reading notwithstanding.

¹⁵ I borrow this phrase from Schellenberg (2011). Cf. Siegel (2010).

the deliverances of the senses do not themselves admit of truth or falsity (A23-4/B349-50), speak against straightforward representationalist interpretations.¹⁶ In addition, features of representationalism are hard to square with Kant's insistence on the *particularity* and *immediacy* of intuitions (A19/B33).¹⁷

On the other hand, there are also problems with the relational view of intuition. For example, according to the relational view, an intuition involves its object as a constituent and is therefore strongly *object-dependent*. One cannot have the relevant intuition without there being something which is thus intuited, and which is thereby made present to the subject's consciousness. Proponents of the relational view point to a number of passages which seem to support their view (e.g. A19/B33, B72, Pr. 4:281-2).¹⁸ However, there is good reason to reject the idea that, for Kant, intuition is strongly object-dependent in the sense demanded by the relational view. In short, this is because, for Kant, "*Imagination* is the faculty for representing an object in intuition even *without its presence*" (B151; see also An. 7:153, 7:167). Imagination (as well as hallucination and dreams) involves the intuition of objects that are not, in the relevant sense, present.¹⁹ Moreover, in the passage where Kant in the first *Critique* most explicitly

¹⁶ See McLear (2016) for an argument against Kant endorsing the Content View. Cf. Gomes (forthcoming).

¹⁷ There is also a question concerning whether representationalist views can adequately account for Kant's so-called 'modal condition on cognition (and knowledge)':

Modal condition on cognition: Necessarily, *S* knows that *p* only if *S* is in a position to prove the real possibility of the objects referred to in *p*. (Chignell 2011: 146; see also Chignell 2014 and Stang 2016)

According to the modal condition, empirical knowledge requires that we be able to demonstrate the metaphysical possibility of the concept's being instantiated. *Logical* possibility is not sufficient to demonstrate this, and thus appeal must be made to experience rather than mere thought. As McLear (2016) has argued, it is unclear how a representationalist view can provide a satisfactory answer to the modal condition.

¹⁸ "How is it possible to intuit something *a priori*? An intuition is a representation of the sort which would depend immediately on the presence of an object. It therefore seems impossible originally to intuit *a priori*, since then the intuition would have to occur without an object being present, either previously or now, to which it could relate, and so it could not be an intuition" (Pr. 4:281-2).

¹⁹ Cf. Stephenson (2015).

addresses these issues, he argues that intuition of an outer object does not guarantee the object's existence:

From the fact that the existence of outer objects is required for the possibility of a determinate consciousness of our self it does not follow that every intuitive representation of outer things includes at the same time their existence, for that may well be the mere effect of the imagination (in dreams as well as in delusions) ... (B278)

Kant's views on non-veridical intuition would therefore appear to speak directly against strong object-dependent views and the relational view in particular.²⁰

Proponents of the relational view have generally responded to this problem in two ways. One strategy is to argue that there is an important distinction in these passages between intuition and "intuitive representation".²¹ The thought is that it is not clear whether Kant means the same thing by *intuitive representation* as he does by *representation in outer intuition*. However, it's not obvious to me that the proponent of the relational view has a point here. As other commentators have pointed out (e.g. Stephenson 2015: 19-20), in a footnote near the relevant passage, Kant equates "imagining something as external" with "exhibiting it to sense in intuition" (B276; see also Bxli). This suggests we read "intuitive representation" in these passages as being equivalent to "outer intuition". In any case, the onus is on the proponent of the relational view to give some reason to think that intuitive representations are importantly distinct from outer intuition.

Another strategy, and one that I think is more plausible, is to argue that in imagination we do have *genuine* intuition, but they are merely *inner* and not *outer* intuitions. The objects of these

²⁰ Another problem for this view stems from Kant's remarks concerning *a priori* intuition. Kant famously argues that we have *a priori* intuitions of space and time (A25/B40). Kant also claims that space and time are not *existing* objects in their own right, but rather *ens imaginaria*; i.e., imaginary beings (A291/B347). The problem for the relational view is that although *a priori* intuition is a singular and immediate representation of an object, the object so represented does not exist in the relevant sense. Thus, *a priori* intuition on the relational view would be a contradiction in terms. See McLear (forthcoming b) and Grüne (forthcoming) for discussion of this and related issues.

²¹ For an argument along these lines, see Allais (2009, 2015) and Watkins and Willashek (2017).

inner intuitions are not mind-independent physical objects, but rather intentional objects (or ‘images’). Call this the *inner intuition view*. The inner intuition view has been endorsed by a number of commentators.²² There is some evidence that Kant endorsed such a view in a series of notes or *reflexionen*:

We have two sorts of intuition: sensible intuition, for which the object must be represented as present, and an imagining as intuition without the presence of the object. The imagining, if one is conscious of it as such, can also be considered as inner sensible intuition. (18:619)

This passage, and others like it, have been marshalled in support of the inner intuition view, according to which, say, hallucinations are merely inner intuitions and not genuine outer intuitions. One potential problem for this view is that according to Kant, inner representations exist *only in time* and not *in space*; i.e., any representation of things in space cannot count as *inner* representations (Bxli, A34/B50). Merely inner representations cannot represent spatially organized objects. And because Kant argues that the faculty of the imagination is a faculty of *sense* and otherwise represents things in space, it follows that imaginings (as well as hallucinations and the like) will count as genuine outer intuitions. Thus, it is difficult to see how intuitions produced by the imagination could be nothing more than mere inner representations.²³

Given the difficulties associated with interpreting Kant as endorsing either straightforward representationalism or relationalism, I suggest that we ought to understand intuition as involving features of *both* views. For instance, we might understand perceptual experience, for Kant, as a matter of standing in a relation to intentional contents that involve

²² The most sophisticated articulation of this account has been offered by McLear (forthcoming b). Allais (2015) and Leech (2016) approvingly cite the proposal.

²³ There also appear to be passages in which Kant explicitly denies the *constitutive* claim of the relational view: “The representation of a body in intuition, on the contrary, contains *nothing at all that could pertain to an object in itself*” (A44/B61; my emphasis). According to relational accounts of intuition, the object of the intuition is itself a *constituent* of the experience. But this appears to be exactly what Kant denies in the passage quoted above. Cf. Tolley (2013).

external properties as constituents.²⁴ On this view, perceptual experience is fundamentally both representational *and* relational. It is representational in the sense that perceptual experience essentially involves intentional contents. And it is relational in the sense that perceptual experience is fundamentally a matter of standing in an *acquaintance relation* to those contents. Thus, according to my reading, Kant's conception of empirical intuition is one according to which subjects are *acquainted* with the sensory properties of objects.²⁵ These include various spatiotemporal properties such as color, shape, location, and so on. These properties are *of objects* and are constituents of the intentional content of our representations, which may or may not be instantiated in our perceptual environment. This view is attractive because it can account for Kant's remarks concerning veridical and non-veridical intuition. In non-veridical intuition we have genuine outer intuition of the sensible qualities of objects, which in these cases happen to be uninstantiated by any actual objects in our sensory environment.²⁶

One might object that the view I have sketched here falls prey to the problems facing straightforward intentional views, such as the fact that Kant holds a doxastic theory of perceptual error. One response to this line of reasoning that I am generally sympathetic to is that Kant's denial of the content of intuitions being assessable for truth and falsity does not entail that they

²⁴ The general framework for the hybrid view I am sketching here is due to Pautz (2009, 2010).

²⁵ Note that this does not commit Kant to the view that we have *knowledge* of those things of which we are acquainted (cf. Russell 1914). Rather, acquaintance here refers to a direct and immediate cognitive relation between a subject and an object or the properties thereof.

²⁶ One might object that the view I am sketching here cannot account for the 'directedness' of intuition, i.e., intuition's *intentionality*, in a way the relational view can. One potential way of responding to this worry is by arguing that we ought to understand the "object" of intuition as being the collection of sensible qualities arranged in a particular spatiotemporal order. There is some reason to think this is Kant's view. For instance, Kant claims that the "undetermined object of an intuition is called appearance", and intuitions are related to their objects "through sensation", and that "I call that in the appearance which corresponds to sensation its matter" (A20/B34). And because, for Kant, the content of a representation is its relation to an object, it appears that the content of an empirical intuition is the sensations through which the intuition is related to an object. As I see it, this is compatible, and perhaps even suggests, that Kant understood the content of an intuition in a similar way to the hybrid view sketched above. In veridical cases, intuitions are relations to objects, where "objects" are understood as collections of sensible qualities arranged in thus-and-so manner (by the forms of intuition; i.e., space and time). In non-veridical cases, the sensible qualities to which one is related are uninstantiated by objects in our sensory environment.

do not have correctness conditions.²⁷ *Prima facie* evidence (albeit implicit) for this view is found in the passage at B278 (quoted above). Kant there seems to suggest that our intuition does not guarantee the existence of the object intuited, and thus can be either correct or incorrect. This is obviously far from conclusive, as there might a number of other reasons for thinking that Kant either does or does not endorse the Content View (see McLear 2016 for discussion). In any case, one desideratum of any interpretation of Kant's conception of intuition is that it account for his remarks concerning imaginative episodes and hallucinations. The view I have sketched here is able to adequately account for these remarks in ways that other interpretations are unable to.²⁸ This 'hybrid' view of intuition represents a potentially fruitful way of thinking about Kant's views concerning perceptual experience.

2.2 *Intuition and Wahrnehmung*

Now that we have a grasp on Kant's notion of 'intuition', we can turn to his remarks concerning 'perception' or *Wahrnehmung*. Kant characterizes the distinction between intuition and "perception" [*Wahrnehmung*] in terms of *consciousness*. For example, in the *Prolegomena* Kant claims that a "perception" is the "intuition of which I become conscious" (Pr. 4:300; see also A120-1, B162). Kant repeats this characterization in the A-edition of the *Transcendental Deduction*: "the first thing that is given to us is appearance, which, if it is combined with consciousness, is called perception" (*Wahrnehmung*) (A119-20). It seems that what separates an

²⁷ Cf. Grüne (2014).

²⁸ This hybrid view can also account for the particularity and immediacy of intuition. According to this reading, intuitions are *particular* because they give us perceptual access to particular features of objects that other objects do not have in common (i.e., tropes). Intuition is *immediate* in the sense that conscious subjects are directly *acquainted* with the content of their perceptual experience. In this way my reading is preferable to straightforward representationalist interpretations because it can account for the particularity and immediacy of intuition.

act of *Wahrnehmung* from an intuition, for Kant, is that the former is a representation *with consciousness* (in some sense needing further refinement).²⁹

This way of distinguishing ‘intuition’ and ‘perception’, however, seems puzzling once we consider the taxonomy of different forms of representation that Kant provides in the famous *Stufenleiter* passage of the first *Critique*:

The genus is representation in general (*repraesentatio*). Under it stands the representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A perception that refers to the subject as a modification of its state is a sensation (*sensatio*); an objective perception is a cognition (*cognitio*). The latter is either an intuition or a concept (*intuitus vel conceptus*). (A320/B376-7)

In this passage, Kant describes a “perception” as a “representation with consciousness”, of which he includes intuition. If we are to understand the difference between intuition and perception as a difference between representations with and without consciousness, then “perceptions” must be conscious in some sense that intuitions are not.

One possible way of resolving this puzzle is to distinguish between two ways in which a representation is conscious. I want to suggest that we think of the difference in consciousness between intuition and perception in terms of the distinction between a representation’s *clarity* and its *distinctness*.³⁰ Kant makes such a distinction in the *Anthropology*:

Consciousness of one’s representations that suffices for the distinction of one object from another is clarity. But that consciousness by means of which the composition of representations also becomes clear is called distinctness. Distinctness alone makes it possible that an aggregate of representations becomes a cognition, in which order is thought in this manifold, because every conscious combination presupposes unity of consciousness, and consequently a rule for the combination. (An 7:138)

²⁹ Further evidence that the distinction between intuition and perception (in Kant’s sense of the term) hinges on the presence of absence of consciousness is that, for Kant, we have *unconscious* intuitions: “The field of sensuous intuitions and sensations of which we are not conscious, even though we can undoubtedly conclude that we have them; that is, *obscure* representations in the human being (and thus also in animals), is immense” (An 7: 135). Kant, however, seems to deny that we can have *unconsciousness* perceptions; in fact, in several passages he *equates* perception with empirical *consciousness* (e.g. B160).

³⁰ The distinction between clear and distinct representations can be traced back to at least Descartes. Recently, McLear (2014) has argued for a similar position according to which the distinction between intuition and *Wahrnehmung* can be analyzed in terms of a representation’s clarity and distinctness. Although our views are similar, I am sure that he would not agree with everything I say here.

According to this passage, *clear* representations involve consciousness of a *representational whole*, insofar as this enables a subject to differentially discriminate one thing from another (R 2394, MM 29:879-80). In contrast, a *distinct* representation involves consciousness of the different *parts* of the content of the representation (An 7:138).³¹ Intuitions, as conscious and objective representations, are *clear* in the sense that they involve being acquainted with a representational unity which contains a manifold of parts (A99). Yet they are not *distinct*, because in mere intuition we are only conscious of representational wholes and not their parts. Kant is clear that in order to be conscious of the latter, further mental activity is necessary:

Now, in order for unity of intuition to come from this manifold (as, say, in the representation of space), it is necessary first to run through and then take together this manifoldness, which action I call the synthesis of apprehension, since it is aimed directly at the intuition, which to be sure provides a manifold but can never effect this as such, and indeed as contained in one representation, without the occurrence of such a synthesis. (A99).

The idea here appears to be that we are *conscious* of the unity of the manifold contained in intuition insofar as we perform an act of the intellect that Kant calls the “synthesis of apprehension”. This synthesis is aimed *at* the intuition and allows a subject to distinguish the parts that are contained in the manifold of the intuition. It is this act of an intuition being apprehended that *just is* an act of *Wahrnehmung*. We represent distinctly in *Wahrnehmung* by virtue of being conscious of all of the different parts of the content of the representation. This is the notion of consciousness that constitutes acts of *Wahrnehmung* and not intuition.

An example may help to illustrate the point. Consider the following passage from the *Jäsche Logic*:

We glimpse a country house in the distance. If we are conscious that the intuited object is a house, then we must necessarily have a representation of the various parts of this house, the

³¹ That distinctness essentially involves consciousness of a representation’s parts is confirmed by Kant’s argument that simple representations (i.e., representations with no parts) are not (and cannot) be distinct (JL 9:35).

windows, doors, etc. For if we did not see the parts, we would not see the house itself either. But we are not conscious of this representation of the manifold of its parts, and our representation of the object indicated is thus itself an indistinct representation (9:34)³²

According to this passage, our representation of the house is indistinct precisely because we are not conscious of the manifold of its parts (the windows, doors, and so on), even though our intuition of the house is a *conscious* representation. Our intuition in this example is *clear* but not *distinct*. In order for a representation to become distinct, we must be conscious of the unity of the manifold contained in a representation. But this can only be accomplished insofar as intuition is apprehended in an act of *Wahrnehmung*. Hence, intuition and *Wahrnehmung* are conscious in two different respects: insofar as intuition is conscious it is conscious (at best) in the sense of being *clear* and acts of *Wahrnehmung* are conscious in the sense of being *distinct*.³³ This distinction between senses of consciousness promises to resolve the interpretive puzzle mentioned at the outset.

Now one might object that it is not clear how we can be conscious of a representational whole and not be conscious of the *parts* contained in that whole. If in intuition I am conscious of a representational whole, then it follows that I am conscious of the parts of the representation, thus threatening to undermine drawing the distinction between intuition and *Wahrnehmung* in terms of clarity and distinctness. One possible way of responding to this line of reasoning is to

³² Kant makes a similar point involving the Milky Way. In order for us to distinctly represent the Milky Way, Kant thinks, we must be able to represent clearly its constituent stars so as to differentiate them from one another. If we did not represent the individual parts of the Milky Way, then we could not represent it distinctly in the sense involving consciousness of its parts: “Namely, one can become mediately conscious of this cognition by means of reason, and thus a way remains to make an otherwise obscure cognition clear, distinct, and thus to make insight into it easier. E.g., if I see the Milky Way with the naked eye, I see nothing but a white band, but if I make use of a tubus, then I at once become aware of the individual parts as individual stars, and then judge at once by means of reason that these must be the stars that I saw with the naked eye merely as a white band. I am conscious of this representation mediately, then, but not immediately; hence in the beginning it is only obscure, but afterwards it is distinct, mediate, or clear.” (LB 24:119)

³³ Cf. Tolley (2013, forthcoming). Tolley also analyzes the distinction between intuition and perception in terms of consciousness, but does not differentiate the relevant notion of consciousness in terms of a representation’s clarity and distinctness. As I see it, in order to resolve the tension between Kant’s characterization of *Wahrnehmung* and his remarks in the *Stufenleiter* passage, one must appeal to some feature of consciousness that *Wahrnehmung* possesses and intuition lacks.

argue that it does not follow that if one is conscious of a representational whole, then one is conscious of the parts of that whole. For instance, consider my representation of a shadow. I represent the shadow as a unity, and *I may be conscious* of the shadow as a unity, but I need not represent its part (if there is some sense in which I could). In this case, my representation is clear insofar as I am conscious of the *boundaries* of the thing I am representing. This serves to individuate that thing which I am representing from my other representations. In contrast, *distinct* representations necessarily involve representing the parts contained within a representational unity, such that I don't merely represent the boundaries of an object, but also its part and the relations that obtain between them.³⁴

Kant further marks the progression from intuition to *Wahrnehmung* by claiming that it is in *perception (Wahrnehmung)* that “the imagination is to bring the manifold of intuition into an *image*” (A120; my emphasis). This “action exercised immediately upon perceptions” Kant calls “apprehension” (A120). Kant makes a similar point later in the B-deduction with his example of *perceiving* a house: “...if, e.g., I *make* the empirical intuition of a house into a perception through *apprehension of its manifold*...and I as it were *draw its shape* (B162; my emphasis).³⁵ In other words, the imagination combines the disparate manifold of parts contained in an intuition by means of an act of apprehension to produce a multifaceted (i.e., from various sides and vantage points) sensible image of an object.³⁶ Insofar as this synthesis of apprehension is in “thoroughgoing agreement” with the “category of quantity”, the apprehending of an intuition in an act of *Wahrnehmung* to form an image is governed by conceptual abilities (B162). It is at the

³⁴ Thanks to Cruz Davis for suggesting this way of responding to the objection, and for discussing the clarity/distinctness distinction in general.

³⁵ See also ML 28:236.

³⁶ Matherne (2015) pp. 753-5.

level of the perceptual image that the conceptualist interpretation is most plausible.³⁷

Thus, Kant took intuition and *Wahrnehmung* to be importantly distinct in the following sense. First, they involve distinct kinds of representational consciousness. Intuitions are conscious in the sense of being clear, and *Wahrnehmung* are conscious in the sense of being distinct. Second, acts of *Wahrnehmung* essentially involve the deployment of conceptual abilities. This is because, for Kant, (i) the act of representing distinctly necessarily involves the synthesis of apprehension and (ii) the sensible images formed in acts of *Wahrnehmung* involve conceptually guided synthesis.

Now that we have a better sense of the ways in which intuition and *Wahrnehmung* are distinct, in what follows I will argue that noting this distinction has important consequences for the conceptualism/nonconceptualism debate.

4. Problems with Conceptualism

As was emphasized at the outset, the debate between conceptualists and nonconceptualists turns on the question of whether, for Kant, an intellectual synthesis is necessary for the *generation of intuition*. Many proponents of conceptualism point to passages in the B-Deduction of the first *Critique* as evidence for their view that intuitions depend for their generation on acts of the intellect:

The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which expressed generally, is called the pure concept of the understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of

³⁷ This is why in the B-deduction Kant claims that “by *the synthesis of apprehension*, I understand the composition of the manifold in an empirical intuition, through which perception, i.e., empirical consciousness of it (as appearance), becomes possible. (B160).

the understanding that pertain to objects a priori; this can never be accomplished by general logic. (A79/B104-5)

Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another; for as contained in one moment, no representation can ever be anything other than absolute unity. (A99)

by *the synthesis of apprehension*, I understand the composition of the manifold in an empirical intuition, through which perception, i.e., empirical consciousness of it (as appearance), becomes possible. (B160).

What is important in these passages for the conceptualist interpretation is the idea that, in general, a mental state counts as an objective representation, viz. a representation that has “relation to an object”, only if the subject synthesizes the manifold of given sensible data into a unified representation of their environment (cf. A121-2).³⁸ In other words, on the conceptualist reading, the higher discursive cognitive powers of the intellect are necessary for there to be objective representations of mind-independent objects. Without this activity of the intellect representations would not be ‘about’ anything and thus would we would only have, Kant claims, “unruly heaps” of representations (A121) and a “swarm of appearances” that would be “as good as nothing for us” (A111). I will argue that this is mistaken.

With respect to the passages quoted above, it is not at all obvious, for Kant, that the synthesis of apprehension is involved in the *production* of an intuition.³⁹ Rather, Kant says that this synthesis is merely *aimed* at the intuition (A99), which implies that an intuition need not depend for its existence upon synthesis. The synthesis of apprehension, as we have seen, is a necessary ingredient in acts of *Wahrnehmung* rather than intuition (which Kant makes explicit in the passages quoted above), and thus is completely compatible, and indeed suggests, that

³⁸ See also B137, B161-2 and A253/B309.

³⁹ Moreover, it is not at all obvious that the *unity* of an intuition depends upon the discursive activity of the understanding. In various passages Kant seems to suggest that we represent intuition as a representational whole (cf. A99-100). What’s more, synthesis appears to only be necessary to represent the manifold of intuition *as such*. So it is not clear that the conceptualist has a point here. See Longuenesse (1998) and McLear (2015) for discussion.

intuitions are generated *independently of synthesis*. This is not to suggest that *all* representations are produced independently of such a synthesis, for as we have seen, acts of *Wahrnehmung* (as well as cognition) are, for Kant, dependent upon the deployment of conceptual capacities. But this clearly does not entail that *intuitions* are dependent on such activity.

Relatedly, as I have suggested, some proponents of conceptualism have argued for conclusions about the nature of *intuition* on the basis of passages where Kant is discussing *Wahrnehmung*.⁴⁰ They point to passages such as the following as evidence for their argument that *all* objective representational states depend upon the discursive activity of the understanding:

all synthesis, through which even perception itself becomes possible, stands under the categories, and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid a priori of all objects of experience. (§26, B161)

Now since all possible perception depends on the synthesis of apprehension, but the latter itself, this empirical synthesis, depends on the transcendental one, thus on the categories, all possible perception, hence everything that can ever reach empirical consciousness, i.e., all appearances of nature, as far as their combination is concerned, stand under the categories.... (B164-5)⁴¹

The problem with using these passages to draw conclusions about *intuition* is that here Kant is explicitly discussing acts of *Wahrnehmung* which, as we have seen above, are importantly distinct from intuitions. *Wahrnehmung* are acts of conscious apprehension that require the higher-order discursive activity of the understanding. But *Wahrnehmung* are representations of already given intuitions, and thus these passages are no threat to nonconceptualism, but in fact point to a general conflation of intuition and *Wahrnehmung*. Kant takes himself to have shown that *Wahrnehmung* and, moreover, experience, necessarily stand under the categories, but this

⁴⁰ E.g. Griffith (2012) and Gomes (2014).

⁴¹ Aaron Griffith specifically relies on this passage to argue that Kant aims to demonstrate in the Transcendental Deduction that “perception *depends* on the unity of the pure manifold and that unity depends on the categories” and consequently “perception too depends on...the categories” (2012: 36). Cf. Ginsborg (2008).

does not entail that intuitions do as well. In fact, Kant explicitly says, even in the B-deduction, that an intuition is “that representation that can be given prior to all thinking...” (B132).⁴² Kant emphasizes this point elsewhere:

The categories of the understanding, on the contrary, do not represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition at all, hence *objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding, and therefore without the understanding containing their a priori conditions.* (A89/B122 my emphasis; see also JL 9:33)

These passages seem to directly contradict the conceptualist’s claim that intuitions depend for their generation on a synthesis of the understanding.⁴³ The conceptualist response to these passages has generally been to argue that when Kant here claims that we can be presented with objects in intuition independently of the categories, he is making a modal claim about an apparent possibility that he is in fact going to dismiss in the argument of the Transcendental Deduction. For example, Anil Gomes claims that we ought to “take these passages as expressing a mere epistemic possibility which will later be shown not to be a genuine metaphysical possibility at all” (2014: 7). But this simply not what the passages says. Kant clearly says in this passage, and in others like it, that the categories are *not* conditions of objects being given to us in intuition.

Thus far I have undermined some of the textual evidence marshalled in support of the conceptualist reading according to which intuitions depend for their generation on the exercise of

⁴² Colin McLear has also pointed out to me that Kant claims that the dynamical categories are not themselves constitutive of intuition, which would be an odd thing for Kant to hold if the categories make intuition possible (A160-1/B199-200; see also A178-80/B220-3).

⁴³ Another point worth mentioning is that conceptualism is in *prima facie* tension with Kant’s argument in the Transcendental Aesthetic that our a priori representations of space and time are intuitions and not concepts. The general idea there is that space and time are given as infinite wholes, whose parts are merely limitations, and thus they cannot be “built up”, as it were, from their parts by means of conceptual synthesis. Kant concludes on this basis that a priori space and time are intuitions rather than concepts. If the conceptualist wants to claim that *all* intuitions are generated by means of a synthesis, then they must tell some kind of story about how this is compatible with Kant’s arguments in the Transcendental Aesthetic. See McLear (2015) for an argument against the view he dubs “Intellectualism” that focuses on the mereological differences between the a priori intuitions of space and time and conceptual representation. See also Onof & Schulting (2015) for further discussion of (broadly) conceptualist and nonconceptualist interpretations of the unity of space and time.

conceptual capacities by noting that many of the conclusions reached from these passages either (i) presuppose the existence of intuition or (ii) conflate intuition and *Wahrnehmung* which are distinct representational states. However, it seems doubtful that we might settle the question of whether Kant endorses conceptualism about sensory experience by means of textual analysis alone. In this last part of the paper I argue against conceptualism as an interpretation of Kant by exploring the question concerning the requirements for the exercise of a mental capacity to count as “conceptual”. I will suggest that one plausible way of understanding this claim is that the exercise of a conceptual capacity is one that obeys the so-called ‘Generality Constraint’. This exercise of conceptual capacities yields representations with structure that admits of a canonical decomposition. I argue that intuitions lack this feature and that this suggests that intuitions cannot plausibly be thought of as depending for their generation on the discursive activity of the understanding.

5. Conceptualism and Representational Structure

One question that has gone largely unanswered in the conceptualism/nonconceptualism debate is the question of how we are to understand what it means for a representation be (broadly) “conceptual” in character. There are two ways we might understand this claim. First, we might understand it as a claim concerning the type of “content” had by a particular representational state. According to this view, a conceptual representation is characterized by its having conceptual content. As we have seen (§1), however, it is not plausible to understand the content of intuition in this way. Second, we might understand it as a claim concerning the exercise of particular kinds of cognitive *abilities*. According to this view, the idea of a thought being “conceptual” is best understood in terms of its having a structure that is the product of the

exercise of distinct conceptual abilities.⁴⁴ One feature of conceptual abilities is that they are systematically recombinable. This feature is reflected by what Gareth Evans called the ‘Generality Constraint’:

If a subject can be credited with the thought that *a* is *F*, then he must have the conceptual resources for entertaining the thought that *a* is *G*, for every property of being *G* of which he has a conception. This is the condition that I call “The Generality Constraint”. (Evans 1982, p. 104)

The Generality Constraint expresses a requirement for a representation to have distinctly *conceptual* structure.⁴⁵ It analyzes this structure in terms of the exercise of distinct cognitive abilities. As Richard Heck puts it:

The ability to think that *a* is *F* must decompose into the abilities to think of *a* and to think of a thing as *F*, abilities that are sufficiently distinct that one’s being able to think *a* is *F* may be explained by one’s being able to think of *a* and one’s being able to think of a thing as *F*. (Heck 2007: 120)

The idea is that the grasping of a concept, for example, the concept *dog*, is constituted by the ability to think of a thing as a dog. This ability *explains*, at least in part, other cognitive abilities, such as being able to think that *Grover is a dog*, or that dogs are hairy, and so on. In other words, it is the exercise of these distinct abilities that explains why one is able to think conceptually articulated thoughts. In addition, representations that are the product of the exercise of these distinct abilities will possess a structure that has a *canonical decomposition*.⁴⁶ The idea is that thought is relevantly like language in that it can be systematically recombined in certain ways to produce meaningful utterances. So, for instance, if I can entertain the thought that ‘Mary loves John’, then I must be able to entertain the thought that ‘John loves Mary’. The Generality

⁴⁴ Cf. Evans (1982), Heck (2007), Fodor (2007), and Beck (2012).

⁴⁵ The basic idea behind representational structure is that representations have parts, of which the representation is composed. There are at least two reasons for thinking that Kant took representations to have structure in this sense. First, Kant claims that judgments are “composed” of concepts (B146). Second, Kant argues that intuitions are structured in accordance with our spatiotemporal “forms” (A20-1/B34-5).

⁴⁶ Here I am concerned with representational *vehicles* rather than *contents*.

Constraint precludes, however, syntactically ill-formed recombinations. Thus, I cannot recombine ‘Mary loves John’ to form ‘Loves Mary John’ and produce a meaningful utterance.⁴⁷

As I see it, there is textual evidence that Kant endorsed something like this conception of conceptual structure. The primary textual evidence comes from a footnote to B134 in the B-edition of the Transcendental Deduction. There Kant says,

The analytical unity of consciousness pertains to all common concepts as such, e.g., if I think of red in general, I thereby represent to myself a feature that (as a mark) can be encountered in anything, or that can be combined with other representations; therefore, only by means of an antecedently conceived possible synthetic unity can I represent to myself the analytical unity. A representation that is to be thought of as common to several must be regarded as belonging to those that in addition to it also have something different in themselves... (B133-4 note)

Here Kant appears to endorse the general thrust behind the Generality Constraint, namely that conceptual thoughts are systematically recombinable in distinct ways. Thus, my having the ability to think that “x is red” requires that I be able to think that other things are red. It also requires that I be able to think of things as being the bearer of a variety of properties. Moreover, Kant is claiming that the cognitive ability involved in thinking of, say, the predicate <red>, entails that I be able to think of <red> as applying to a range of possible objects. Thus, for example, my ability to think that ‘The ball is red’ partially explains my ability to think that ‘The truck is red’. These thoughts share the feature that they are systematically recombinable. That is, in conceptual thought that “the ball is red” there are “privileged” parts that are constitutive of the meaning of the sentence. Accordingly, not all parts of this thought are themselves representations of the object their related to. In other words, I cannot produce a meaningful sentence by thinking that “red...is”. As I see it, this is *prima facie* evidence that, for Kant, *what it is* to employ

⁴⁷ Fodor (2007: 107-8). The idea behind canonical decomposition is that not every part of an utterance is constitutive of the meaning of the utterance. For example, in the example above, “John”, “Mary”, and “loves Mary” are constituents. However, “John loves” is not, and presumably nor is “Mary...John”. The same idea applies to thought. In deploying the concept <dog>, one has the ability to think that “Grover is a dog” and “Grover is a mammal”. In this example, “Grover” and “mammal” are presumably constitutive of the meaning of the sentence, but “is a” and “Grover...mammal” are not. Thanks to Kelly Trogdon for discussion on this and related issues.

conceptual abilities is to yield representations whose structure possesses a canonical decomposition.⁴⁸

So there is some evidence that Kant's understands conceptual representation in terms of the particular kind of structure that these representations possess; namely a structure that has a canonical decomposition. If the conceptualist claim about intuition being dependent for their generation on acts of conceptually guided synthesis is correct, then we might expect to find Kant understanding the structure of intuition in a similar fashion. In particular, if the conceptualist claim is true, then intuition ought to have a structure that possesses a canonical decomposition. I will argue that intuition lacks this feature.

As we have seen, in conceptual thought, only those "privileged" parts that are constitutive of the meaning of the sentence represent their object. That is to say, conceptual thought possesses a structure that cannot be decomposed arbitrarily. Insofar as intuition has structure, it is not clear that any part of that structure is *privileged* in this way. For example, my intuition of a red ball *could* be decomposed arbitrarily. I can divide up my representation of a red ball in any manner I please (left/right, up/down, etc.) and every part of the intuition will represent a part of the red ball. Thus, as I see it, intuition is, for Kant, relevantly like what Jerry Fodor (2007) has called *iconic representation*:

Iconic Representation: If R is a representation of x , then every part of R is a representation of a part of x .⁴⁹

There is textual evidence that Kant endorsed something like the above principle. Consider, for example, the following passages ranging from a footnote in the B-edition of the Transcendental Deduction, to the Anticipations of Perception chapter in the first *Critique*:

⁴⁸ Cf. McLear (forthcoming a) and Allais (2015).

⁴⁹ This is a modification of Jerry Fodor's so-called "picture principle" (2007), p. 108. Cf. Sober (1976). See Kuvlicki (2015) for discussion.

Space and time *and all their parts are intuitions*, thus individual representations along with the manifold that they contain in themselves... (B136 note; my emphasis)

Space and time are *quanta continua*, because no part of them can be given except as enclosed between boundaries (points and instants), thus only in such a way that this part is again a space or a time...(A169/B211)

Thereafter Kant goes on to claim that “All appearances whatsoever are accordingly continuous magnitudes, either in their intuition, as extensive magnitudes, or in their mere perception...” (A170/B212). What these passages suggest is that intuitions and all their parts (i.e., the manifold), are *themselves* representations, which represent some spatial or temporal extent. Thus, in other words, every part of an intuition represents part of an object. Accordingly, intuition seems to lack the kind of structure that has a canonical decomposition: any way you divide an intuition, each part will represent part of an object. That intuition has this kind of unprivileged structure is implicit in Kant’s discussion of intuition as *quanta continua*.

We can thus see that there is good reason to think of intuition as *iconic*; i.e., they can be arbitrarily decomposed because all their parts are themselves representations of the object to which they are related (cf. the discussion of the house in §2.2). If this is correct, then intuitions cannot plausibly be understood as being generated by acts of the understanding. For as we have seen, representations that are the product of the exercise of distinct cognitive abilities obey the Generality Constraint and thus yield representations whose structure has a canonical decomposition.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that there is an important distinction at the heart of the conceptualist/nonconceptualist debate between the representational states Kant designated as ‘intuition’ and ‘perception’ or *Wahrnehmung*. Specifically, I argued that intuition is distinguished from *Wahrnehmung* in terms of consciousness: intuitions are at best clear

representations, and *Wahrnehmung* are distinct representation. In addition, I argued that once we have noted this distinction between intuition and perception, many of the passages that would seem to threaten a nonconceptualist reading appear to lose their force. However, I suggested that although some of the textual evidence for conceptualist interpretations has been effectively undermined, textual considerations are not sufficient for settling the question concerning whether Kant endorsed conceptualism about sensory experience. I argued that in order to answer this question, we must first better understand what it means for the exercise of mental capacity to count as (broadly) “conceptual”. The exercise of a mental capacity that is distinctly conceptual is one that obeys the Generality Constraint and thus yield representations which possess a structure that has a canonical decomposition. I then argued that there is some evidence that Kant took conceptual thought to be structured in this way, but there is also good reason to reject the idea that, for Kant, intuition possesses a structure that has a canonical decomposition. Accordingly, I argued that intuition is analogous to what we would nowadays call iconic representation, and thus intuitions cannot plausibly be interpreted as being dependent for their generation on acts of the understanding.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Thanks to Lydia Patton, Colin McLear, and Kelly Trogdon for their helpful comments. Thanks also to Cruz Davis and Dominick Cooper for insightful conversation on various aspects of this paper.

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