

### Abstract

This article addresses three questions concerning Kant's views on non-rational animals: do they intuit spatio-temporal particulars, do they perceive objects, and do they have intentional states? My aim is to explore the relationship between these questions and to clarify certain pervasive ambiguities in how they have been understood. I first disambiguate various non-equivalent notions of objecthood and intentionality: I then look closely at several models of objectivity present in Kant's work, and at recent discussions of representational and relational theories of intentionality. I argue ultimately that, given the relevant disambiguations, the answers to all three questions will likely be positive. These results both support what has become known as the nonconceptualist reading of Kant, and make clearer the price the conceptualist must pay to sustain his or her position.

### Keywords

Kant, animals, intentionality, objectivity, nonconceptualism

# What Do Animals See? Intentionality, Objects, and Kantian Nonconceptualism

Sacha Golob

## 3.1 Three Questions about the Status of Animals within Kant's Theoretical Philosophy

If we are to understand Kant's theory of experience, in the broadest sense of that term, we need to understand how he thinks about nonrational animals (henceforth 'animals'). In particular, we need to understand how he sees the differences between animals' engagement with the world and that of rational agents, such as humans. In this paper, I attempt to contribute to that goal by addressing three related questions: as Kant sees it, can animals intuit spatiotemporal particulars, can animals perceive objects, and can animals have intentional states? I argue, ultimately, that the answers support what has become known as the nonconceptualist reading of Kant.<sup>1</sup>

Let me begin by explaining why the case of animals is significant for understanding Kant's theoretical philosophy. There are three reasons.

First, the vast majority of work on Kant's theory of mind and on the transcendental arguments tied to it focuses exclusively on humans—for obvious reasons, given the priorities

---

<sup>1</sup> The seminal contemporary pieces are [Allais \(2009\)](#) and [Hanna \(2005\)](#).

of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. But in testing and refining such analyses, animals provide a vital philosophical control case. On the one hand, Kant is explicit that there are certain basic similarities between us and animals:

---

[A]nimals also act in accordance with representations [*Vorstellungen*] (and are not, as Descartes would have it, machines), and in spite of their specific difference, they are still of the same genus as human beings (as living beings).  
(CPJ 5:464)

---

Elsewhere, he states that ‘animals are acquainted with objects’ [*kennen auch Gegenstände*], and can represent ‘something in comparison with other things [*sich etwas in der Vergleichung mit anderen Dingen vorstellen*]’ (JL 9:64–5): given its source, one should be careful in placing too much weight on this remark, but, as we will see, it chimes with passages from elsewhere (FS 2:59; C 11:310–11]). On the other hand, however, Kant clearly believes that there are fundamental differences: for example, animals lack the ‘I think’, and by extension the concepts for which it is a vehicle (Anth. 7:127; A341/B399). Given this combination of views, how should we think about animal experience? If animals lack understanding, in what sense can they have ‘representations’ or ‘be acquainted’ with objects? What might the answers tell us about the links between the Aesthetic and the Analytic, or about Kant’s connections to contemporary representationalism or nonconceptualism? The question of animals thus provides a distinctive angle of approach on core Kantian topics such as the relationship between understanding and sensibility.

Second, getting clear on the status of animals is necessary if we are to make sense of many passages that are otherwise simply opaque.<sup>2</sup> Some of these obviously deal directly with animals. Take the remark just cited from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*: in what sense precisely do animals ‘act in accordance with representations’? But other such texts concern broader issues. As is often noted, for example, Kant appears to align synthesis directly with the understanding: indeed, B130 states bluntly that ‘all combination is an action of the understanding’. If this is taken at face value, the only scope for unconceptualized intuitions would be that allowed by Tolley, namely in those intuitions which neither depend on nor involve any synthesis.<sup>3</sup> Yet Kant also grants animals associative powers. As he puts it, ‘if I consider myself as an animal’, representations:

---

[C]ould still carry on their play in an orderly fashion, as connected according to empirical laws of association.<sup>4</sup>

---

Perhaps the ‘combination’ of B130 is something more sophisticated than mere association. But then there is no inference from the fact that ‘combination’ is the work of the understanding to Tolley’s conclusion that unconceptualized intuitions must not involve ‘any

---

<sup>2</sup> Another such set of passages are the pre-Critical remarks on inner sense (for example, ML<sub>1</sub> 28:276).

McLear provides an extremely helpful discussion of these texts which I will therefore not address here: I agree that the root of the problem is the pre-Critical failure to distinguish inner sense from apperception [McLear \(2011\)](#):9).

<sup>3</sup> [Tolley \(2013\)](#): 121–2).

<sup>4</sup> C 11:52.

synthesis *at all*.<sup>5</sup> In short, to fully understand synthesis in the human case, we need to get clear on its associative, animal counterpart.

Third, understanding Kant's position on animals is a vital part of locating him within the history of philosophy. There are thinkers, such as Hume, who stress explanatory continuity when analysing *prima facie* similar instances of human and animal behaviour: the *Treatise* proposes this as a 'touchstone' by which one 'may try every system'.<sup>6</sup> Clearly, we need to know where Kant stands on this Humean principle. But there are also thinkers who explicitly reject an appeal to the same explanatory apparatus even when animal behaviour closely mimics its human counterpart. Heidegger is, at least in some of his texts, a good example of this; here he is responding rhetorically to Hume's line of thought:<sup>7</sup>

---

But a skilful monkey or dog can also open a door to come in and out? Certainly.

The question is whether what it does when it touches and pushes something is to touch a handle, whether what it does is something like opening a door. We talk as if the dog does the same as us; but . . . there is not the slightest criterion to say that it comports itself towards the entity.<sup>8</sup>

---

What 'comportment' is doesn't matter here; what I want to highlight is the methodological stance of the passage, the assumption that there is an explanatory 'abyss' [*Abgrund*] between

---

<sup>5</sup> Tolley (2013): 122—original emphasis).

<sup>6</sup> Hume ([1738] 1978:1.3.16.3). Locke is also an important figure here: for an overview of some of the issues, see Jolley (2015): Ch. 3).

<sup>7</sup> I say 'some of his texts' to avoid the debate surrounding notions such as '*weltarm*'.

<sup>8</sup> Heidegger ([1928] 2001): 192).

the human and animal cases.<sup>9</sup> Where should we locate Kant along this continuum that runs between Hume and Heidegger?

I have argued for the systematic importance of Kant's views on animals; this is not simply a niche area of his thought. Over the last decade, many of the questions highlighted have been treated within the debate over Kantian nonconceptualism. I think that framing is sensible, and I will use it to approach the issues here.

'Nonconceptualism' means different things across the various literatures. Within a Kantian context, it refers to a view about the relationship between understanding and sensibility. Specifically, nonconceptualism is the thesis that a subject may possess empirical intuitions of spatiotemporal particulars, even if that subject entirely lacks conceptual capacities and indeed any intellect, as Kant understands that faculty.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that the nonconceptualist must further hold that such subjects are capable of perceiving at least some spatiotemporal relations: otherwise every spatiotemporal particular would be perceived in isolation and unrelated to any other; a view of dubious intelligibility and one which clashes with Kant's emphasis on intuitive relations (A22/B37). I will define 'conceptualism' simply as the denial of nonconceptualism. I can now frame the first of three questions central to interpreting Kant on animals:

---

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger ([1949] 1976: 326).

<sup>10</sup> This definition follows that used in [Allais \(2009\)](#): 384) and subsequently in the later literature (for example, [Gomes \(2014\)](#): 4–5). This reference to 'any intellect' is intended to explicitly exclude accounts such as Longuenesse's in which a significant role is played by some pre-conceptual form of the understanding: the nonconceptualist claim concerns subjects who lack not only conceptual abilities but also transcendental apperception (see, for example, [Longuenesse \(1998\)](#): 223)). I am grateful to Colin McLear for highlighting this issue.

*Intuition*: As Kant understands them, do animals possess empirical intuitions of spatiotemporal particulars and at least primitive spatiotemporal relations among them?<sup>11</sup>

The qualifier ‘as Kant understands them’ implies a combination of exegetical and philosophical considerations: we want to attribute to him a view that is both textually sustainable and intellectually attractive. *Intuition* is simply the basic nonconceptualist thesis applied to animals; they are, after all, the obvious candidates for the intuiting but nonconceptual subjects posited by the nonconceptualist. The truth of *Intuition* would thus suffice to validate nonconceptualism. Of course, other issues in the area would remain open—for example, whether adult humans might ever have unconceptualized intuitions—but, given the current context, I am going to focus directly on the animal case.<sup>12</sup>

The same dispute can also be presented in terms of perception: nonconceptualists hold that ‘the application of concepts is not necessary for our being perceptually presented with outer particulars’ (Allais 2009: 384), whilst conceptualists contend that at least some concepts ‘have an indispensable role’ in even ‘the mere perceptual presentation of particulars’ (Griffith 2012: 199; similarly, Falkenstein 2006: 141). There are, however, complications in Kant’s use of the terms *perceptio*, *Wahrnehmung*, and *Perception*: whilst standard contemporary usage employs ‘perception’ to mark intentionality in contrast with mere sensation (for example, Burge (2010: 7)), Kant often uses these terms to mark conscious states, including sensation, in contrast to those states ‘of which we are not conscious’ (Anth. 7:135; A320/B376; A225/B271). I shall therefore mainly frame matters in terms of intuition, but I will also speak of ‘perception’

---

<sup>11</sup> I follow Allais in borrowing ‘particulars’ from Strawson as a broader alternative to something like ‘material object’: ‘material objects, people and their shadows are all particulars’ (Strawson (1959: 15).

<sup>12</sup> I discuss the status of unconceptualized intuitions in humans in (Golob (2016b)).

understood in the standard modern way, particularly when engaging with contemporary philosophy of mind.

When we reflect on animal behaviour, however, it can be hard to see how the conceptualism debate can get off the ground. It is a well-evidenced thesis of empirical science and everyday experience that such organisms adjust their behaviour in line with changing spatial relations: as the mouse moves, the cat adjusts its leap. It is hard to see how animals could survive if they were unable to track, in at least a primitive sense, the spatiotemporal location of objects in relation to their current position: those which bury food require an ability to relocate sites, whilst grazers need to estimate the distance to the watching predators. There is much fine-grained, species-specific work to be done in explaining *how* this happens: for example, via use of landmarks, different mapping functions, olfactory clues etc.<sup>13</sup> However, translating the evidence to a Kantian framework, it may seem obvious that such animals must have an ability to perceive spatiotemporal particulars and their basic relations (how far away the lion is). As Burge notes, discussing parallel trends in contemporary philosophy of mind, the conceptualist view might seem simply ‘empirically refuted’.<sup>14</sup>

How should the conceptualist respond to this? One move would simply be to dig one’s heels in exegetically—perhaps Kant just did hold a false or outdated view. Yet we should surely try to do better—especially since so much of the relevant evidence comes from simple observation, rather than any technical achievements of post-Kantian science. Looking at the literature, one finds two more sophisticated paths for the conceptualist to take.

---

<sup>13</sup> For a recent survey of the empirical literature, see [Dolins and Mitchell \(2010\)](#).

<sup>14</sup> [Burge \(2010\)](#): 23).



One is to say that what is really at stake is intentionality. The exact nature of intentionality will be discussed in detail below, but we can think of it initially in terms of ‘aboutness’: intentional states are ‘about’ or ‘stand for’ something beyond themselves, just as the word ‘Paris’ is not simply a collection of marks or sounds but refers to some entity, a city. Ginsborg, a leading conceptualist, introduces the dispute like this:

---

The debate, as Allais helpfully puts it, is about the possibility of intentional content without concepts.<sup>15</sup>

---

Likewise, Hanna defines the argument as one about ‘intentional states’.<sup>16</sup> So we have a second question: to keep matters simple, I focus on the visual case, and leave aside smell or sound.

*Intentionality:* As Kant understands them, are the visual experiences of animals intentional states?

I use ‘visual experiences’ here broadly and non-technically; it refers to those experiences, whatever they may be, which animals have when light arrives at the eye, assuming their physiology is functioning normally. The other option is to say that what is really at stake is object perception. So, for example, Gomes:

---

The traditional conceptualist interpretation holds that the application of concepts is necessary for the perceptual presentation of empirical objects in intuition. In contrast, the non-conceptualist interpretation of Allais and Hanna

---

<sup>15</sup> [Ginsborg \(2008\)](#): 68).

<sup>16</sup> [Hanna \(2011\)](#): 324).

holds that intuitions can present us with empirical objects without any application of concepts.<sup>17</sup>

---

We can thus frame a third question:

*Objective*: As Kant understands them, are the visual experiences of animals experiences of, or about, objects?

Whilst I have separated them for analytic purposes, *Intentionality* and *Objective* are closely linked. This is because one standard way to characterize intentionality is precisely in terms of its object-directedness. Thus Ginsborg glosses the question of nonconceptual intentionality as equivalent to the question of:

---

[W]hether we can have nonconceptual representations which are object-directed, or which represent objects to us.<sup>18</sup>

---

Indeed, Kant himself uses ‘object’ terminology precisely to delimit the difference between mere sensations and intentional states:

---

Now one can to be sure call everything, and every representation, insofar as we are conscious of it, an object [*Object*]. But it is a question for deeper enquiry what the word ‘object’ ought to signify with respect to appearances when these are viewed not in so far as they are (as representations) objects [*Objecte*], but only insofar as they stand for an object [*Object*]. (A189–90/B234–5)

---

<sup>17</sup> [Gomes \(2014\)](#): 2).

<sup>18</sup> [Ginsborg \(2008\)](#): 68).

---

The conceptualist contention would then be that animal experience is to be understood along purely sensory lines: such sensations merely ‘refer to the subject as a modification of its state’ (A320/B376), as opposed to being ‘about’ or ‘intending’ some further thing, in the way in which ‘Paris’ refers beyond itself to that very city.

We now have three questions with respect to animal experience; we also have a sharper basis on which to formulate the debate between conceptualism and nonconceptualism. But one can see that there is still a great deal left unclear.

First, the key terms, for example, ‘object’, carry multiple non-equivalent meanings within Kant’s work. I completely agree with Longuenesse that the *Gegenstand/Objekt* distinction is no guide here; Kant simply does not employ it uniformly enough, and I will not track it in what follows.<sup>19</sup> But one can equally see the point by considering a passage such as B160, where Kant discusses ‘space, represented as object (as we in fact require it in geometry)’. What is at stake here is a complex abstractive capacity undoubtedly beyond animals and significantly beyond what is in question in the nonconceptualism debate: a being might *prima facie* have ‘object-directed’ states with respect to material things around it, and lack the ability to reflect on space itself. More generally, there are passages that identify category use as a necessary condition on ‘objects of experience’ (for example, A93/B125). But the relevant notion of objectivity is again unclear: the nonconceptualist can simply argue that ‘objects’ here designates some sophisticated cognitive achievement, outrunning the perception of spatiotemporal particulars.<sup>20</sup> Crucially, this allows the nonconceptualist to return a positive answer to *Intuition*: the fact that animals are unable to represent certain advanced forms of

---

<sup>19</sup> Longuenesse (1998): 70n17).

<sup>20</sup> Allais (2011b): 41).

objectivity is perfectly compatible with their being able to intuit empirical particulars and simple relations among them. Such a move finds support in passages such as the following, which disambiguates ‘object talk’ in a way that fits well with nonconceptualism:

---

To make a concept, by means of an intuition, into a cognition of an object, is indeed the work of judgment; but the reference of an intuition to an object in general [*die Beziehung der Anschauung auf ein Object überhaupt*] is not. (Briefwechsel, 11:310–311).

---

The suggestion is that, while cognition of objects requires concepts, the capacity for objective reference, and thus presumably intentionality, does not.

Second, looking now more broadly, the terms used in our three questions are as contentious as any in philosophy; they do not provide a neutral ground on which to stand. Given the prima facie difference between relational and representational theories of perception, it would be surprising if the choice between them did not affect how we answer *Intentionality*. Similarly, what counts as ‘experiencing objects’ will vary radically depending on one’s other commitments. Recall Frege’s famous complaint:

---

I must also protest against the generality of Kant’s dictum: without sensibility no object would be given to us. Nought and one are objects which cannot be given to us in sensation.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Frege (1884: §89).

Third, the logical relations between the various questions are open to contention. For example, there is the familiar debate over whether a state must be intuitive for it to be objective and intentional (consider A286/B342 or B146). But one might also doubt other inferences across the three terms. Strawson at one point defines ‘objective experience’ as including ‘judgments about what is the case irrespective of the actual occurrence of particular subjective experiences of them’.<sup>22</sup> One might think that first personal pain reports have intentional content, for example due to their possible truth or falsity, and even that the state’s qualia supervenes on such content, without thinking of them as objective in this sense.

I can now spell out the structure of the article. We have three questions regarding animal experience in play:

---

*Intuition:* As Kant understands them, do animals possess empirical intuitions of spatiotemporal particulars and at least primitive spatiotemporal relations among them?

*Intentionality:* As Kant understands them, are the visual experiences of animals intentional states?

*Objective:* As Kant understands them, are the visual experiences of animals experiences of, or about, objects?

---

One tactic would be to proceed directly, focusing on *Intuition*. As I see it, however, the main reason the debate has been so inconclusive is the huge variance in how different commentators understand that claim. As noted, some cash it in terms of objects, others intentionality; those terms are themselves in turn deeply ambiguous, thus introducing another layer of confusion. So, my proposal is to approach *Intuition* via *Intentionality* and *Objective*.

---

<sup>22</sup> [Strawson \(1966: 24\)](#).

Specifically, I want to clarify how the last two theses bear on the first one. In §2 I clear the way to address *Objective* by identifying and setting aside various senses of objecthood, which, whilst central to Kant's work, do not speak to the issues at hand; they refer to highly sophisticated senses of objectivity that no one would attribute to animals. In §3, I turn to *Intentionality*, and discuss the implications of relational and representational views: I argue that framing the question in terms of *Intentionality* will generally support a positive answer to *Intuition*. Both §2 and §3 will, of course, raise further questions in the philosophy of mind that I cannot adequately address here—for example, which of the various theories of perception is most attractive. My aim is not to answer those, but rather to map how those debates relate to *Intuition* and thus to clear away some of the confusions surrounding it. This will allow me in §4 to bring together *Objective*, *Intentionality*, and *Intuition*: I suggest that it is nonconceptualism that offers the best understanding of Kant on animals. Given the importance of that issue, as sketched above, I take this to be a significant point in nonconceptualism's favour.

As a limitation on scope, there are other factors that would need to be discussed to have a full picture of the conceptualism/nonconceptualism issue. One is the assumption that the Transcendental Deduction requires conceptualism if it is to be effective against the sceptic: as Ginsborg and Bowman stress, this is central to their endorsement of conceptualism.<sup>23</sup> I have argued elsewhere that this assumption is mistaken, and I will not address that debate here.<sup>24</sup> Instead, my goal is more restricted: I will claim that neither objects nor intentionality nor the

---

<sup>23</sup> Ginsborg (2008: 70), Bowman (2011: 421).

<sup>24</sup> Golob (2016a; 2016b).

intuition of particulars poses any problem for the nonconceptualist. On the contrary, insofar as the debate is framed in those terms, it is nonconceptualism which is most attractive.

### 3.2 *Objective*: Two Initial Models of Objectivity

The aim of this section is to start to address *Objective*. I distinguish two senses in which experience might be an experience of, or about, objects; as above, I concentrate on visual awareness. I argue that both senses are easily accommodated by the standard nonconceptualist tactic of conceding that such ‘objective’ experience outstrips the resources of animals whilst denying that it is necessary for the perception of spatiotemporal particulars. As a result, the fact that animals lack ‘objective’ experience in this sense poses no threat to *Intuition*. Ginsborg has suggested that this tactic risks trivializing Kant’s arguments by rendering the transcendental conditions he identified necessary only for certain high level activities; I explain briefly why this worry is misplaced.<sup>25</sup>

The first notion of objecthood is best approached via one of Kant’s own discussions of animal perception. He begins by confronting an argument of Meier’s in favour of animals being ascribed concepts:

---

An ox’s representation of its stall includes the clear representation of its characteristic mark of having a door; therefore, the ox has a distinct concept of its stall. It is easy to prevent the confusion here. The distinctness of a concept does not consist in the fact that that which is a characteristic mark of the thing

---

<sup>25</sup> Ginsborg (2006: 62).

is clearly represented, but rather in the fact that it is recognized [*erkannt*] as a characteristic mark of the thing. (FS 2:59)

---

I suggest something like the following story about Kant's position here. The ox has a clear—where that term is understood phenomenologically—visual awareness of some property or 'mark' of the stall, namely having a door. This clear representation is the basis for both differential reaction (the ox would behave differently in a stall with no door), and for association (the ox becomes anxious or excited depending on past experiences with doors). The rational agent, however, is distinguished by the ability to *recognize* this mark, something that can be shared by many stalls and by many non-stalls, as a generic property. One way to express this is to say that we, unlike the ox, see the door 'as' a door. This ability to recognize generic properties or marks is, of course, simply the ability to employ concepts: '[a]ll our concepts are marks and all thought representation through them' (R 16:300). Following Kant, we can further analyse concepts in terms of rules, that is, patterns of inference that order and connect our representations (A126; A106). Specifically, to recognize a mark is to recognize a set of inferences as grounded in it; so, to recognize something as exhibiting the mark *body* is to recognize both a fact about the entity involved *and* certain implications for how we must think of it—for example, any body 'necessitates the representation of extension' (A106). It is in this sense that the *Logic* treats marks as both 'in the thing [*Ding*]' and as a 'partial representation . . . considered as the ground of cognition' (JL 9:58).

Kant's use of 'thing' here is helpful since it avoids a confusing over-repetition of 'object', and I follow him in it. To recognize a thing as exhibiting certain marks is thus:

- (i) To require myself either to attribute further properties to the thing in line with the relevant inferential rules, or to revisit the initial attribution. Mark recognition thus imposes a normative order on experience, preventing it from being 'haphazard' (A104).



(ii) To possess, if only tacitly, an awareness of some inferences as being putatively grounded in the properties of the ‘thing’, in this case the stall. By extension, it is to possess, again if only tacitly, an awareness of the distinction between such inferences and other ways of combining representations that are not so grounded. In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant expresses these points by contrasting the relations posited in judgment with those posited by associative or ‘reproductive’ imagination. It is in this sense that ‘judgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception’: it allows me ‘to say that the two representations are combined in the object’ (B141–2).<sup>26</sup>

(iii) To possess, if only tacitly, an awareness of the fact that insofar as an inference is putatively grounded in properties of the ‘thing’, as opposed to being merely an artefact of my own psychological history, the posited connection should presumptively hold for any other observer, ‘regardless of any difference in the condition of the subject’ (B141–2). Thus: ‘the representation of the manner in which various concepts (as such) belong to a consciousness (in general, not only my own), is judgment’ (R16:633).

---

<sup>26</sup> There is a general question as to how one should understand notions like ‘tacit recognition’ in Kant.

I take some reliance on them to be near omnipresent: for example, transcendental apperception is standardly taken to imply a self-awareness and self-ascription, which nevertheless falls short of the explicit, thematic judgement that a given piece of content is mine (something that only happens very occasionally). On the Kantian picture, such tacit recognition has systematic consequences (for example, I recognize an obligation to try to maintain consistency among all the representations which are ‘mine’) and underpins its explicit counterpart. I cannot address how exactly this should be spelt out here, but my account can simply rely on whatever is the reader’s preferred model for this general Kantian device. My thanks to Colin McLear for discussion here.

(iv) To possess, if only tacitly, an awareness of the ‘thing’ as potentially having other generic properties, and an awareness of the mark as a generic property that may potentially be instantiated by other things: as Kant puts it, ‘concepts, as predicates of possible judgments, are related to some representation of a still undetermined object’ (A69/B94). In Evansian terms, an experience characterized by the recognition of marks meets the ‘generality constraint’.

A few comments before proceeding. First, unlike the body/extension example, most of the inferences involved will be synthetic and indeed *a posteriori* and so contingent (B142). The point of (ii) is that, insofar as one recognizes marks, one is able to represent the fact that such connections, even when contingent, hold in virtue of the thing before you, and not simply because you happen to associate one property with another. Second, whilst my approach does not require any particular reading of the *Prolegomena*’s discussion of judgments of perception and experience, it is worth briefly commenting on that, since it is relevant to the questions of accuracy that come up when discussing *Intentionality*. As I see it, the *Prolegomena* treats two issues. One concerns cases that exhibit the syntactic form of judgments and yet where their particular semantics renders the distinctions discussed undrawable. I have in mind here the ‘sugar is sweet’ case: given the assumption that sensations merely ‘refer to the subject as a modification of its state’ (A320/B376), ‘sweetness’, despite compounding with the copula, cannot be taken to attribute a property to the thing. Judgments involving such ‘pseudo-predicates’ are therefore merely ‘logical connections of perceptions’ because their meaning necessarily concerns only ‘myself and that only in my present state of perception; consequently, they are not intended to be valid of the object’ (Prol. 4:298–9) The other issue concerns the transition from judgments that are *presumptively* objective in the sense defined by (i)–(iv) to judgments that have been found genuinely to have identified such a connection; to reach that level, it must be shown that ‘I and everyone else should always necessarily connect

the same perceptions under the same circumstances' (Prol. 4:299–300). The best illustration of this transitional process, through which a 'judgment of perception can become a judgment of experience' is the sun warming the stone (Prol. 4:301).

These points can now be summarized; as above; I focus on visual awareness for simplicity's sake.

---

#### *Definition of Objective<sup>1</sup>*

A visual experience  $E$  is objective<sup>1</sup> if and only if  $E$  at least tacitly represents a spatiotemporal particular  $P$  as possessing certain generic properties, represents those properties as standing in inferential relations, represents such inferences as presumptively grounded in facts about  $P$  (as opposed, for example, to being merely associative), and thus represents them as presumptively holding for other rational agents encountering  $P$ .

#### *Definition of Object<sup>1</sup>*

A visual experience  $E$  is of an object<sup>1</sup> if and only if  $E$  is objective<sup>1</sup>.

---

It is this notion of objectivity, and a correspondingly defined notion of an object, which Kant has in mind here:

---

If we investigate what new characteristic is given to our representations by *the relation to an object*, and what is the dignity that they thereby receive, we find that it does nothing beyond making the combination of representations necessary in a certain way, and subjecting them to a rule. (A197/B242)

---

If we now return to *Objectivity*, we have an initial disambiguation of it:

*Objectivity*<sup>1</sup>: As Kant understands them, are the visual experiences of animals experiences of, or about, objects<sup>1</sup>?

The answer is surely not: Kant's claim is precisely that such objectivity is a function of judgment and conceptualisation, neither of which any commentator thinks animals possess. This is agreed by both conceptualists and nonconceptualists alike. So we can simply set objective<sup>1</sup> aside.

Here is another way to put the point: the natural nonconceptualist reading of Kant's ox example is one on which the ox's perception of the stall is an intuition of an empirical particular, thus validating *Intuition*. The fact that the ox cannot further represent certain complex connections between the stall's properties is irrelevant. Of course, the conceptualist might insist that objective<sup>1</sup> just is what he or she *means* by 'intuition' or 'particulars'. But, on those definitions, even Allais would be a conceptualist. So objective<sup>1</sup> should be set aside; it does not help in assessing, for better or worse, the nonconceptualist commitment to *Intuition*.

The second sense of objectivity I want to address is linked to the categories. There is, as noted in §1, a widespread belief that the Deduction, as an anti-Humean argument, requires that categorical synthesis be a necessary condition on the representation of spatio-temporal particulars. I have argued in detail that this is a mistake.<sup>27</sup> I will not, however, treat the Deduction here. Instead, I argue for a conditional claim: if the issue of the Deduction is resolved in a manner compatible with nonconceptualism, then the notion of objectivity associated with the categories can be treated in line with the same nonconceptualist strategy just employed, namely accepting that animals' representations lack such objectivity but denying that perception of spatiotemporal particulars requires it.

---

<sup>27</sup> [Golob \(2016a\)](#) and [Golob \(2016b\)](#).

The point is best introduced using the example of the Second Analogy. There Kant asks us to consider how, given the necessarily successive nature of apprehension, we can represent the distinction between successive perceptions and a perception of succession; he claims that this requires us to assume some form of causal order among the events in question (A189/B234; A194/B239). In making this point, he introduces a particular notion of objectivity:

If one were to suppose that nothing preceded an occurrence that it must follow in accordance with a rule, then all sequence of perception would be determined solely in apprehension, i.e. merely subjectively, but it would not thereby be objectively determined which of the perceptions must really be the preceding one and which the succeeding one. In this way we would have only a play of representations that would not be related to any object at all. (A194/B239)

Restricting ourselves to this example, we can formulate the preliminary claim:

*Restricted Definition of Objectivity*<sup>2</sup>

A successively apprehended visual experience  $E$  is objective<sup>2</sup> if and only if  $E$  represents the distinction between successive perception and the perception of succession with respect to a spatiotemporal particular  $P$ .

As Kant puts it himself:

[O]bjective significance is conferred on our representations only insofar as a certain order in their temporal relation is necessary. (A197/B243)

If we lift the restriction and include cases such as the Axioms where the relevant abilities, whilst again threatened by the successive nature of apprehension (A162–3/B203–4), are themselves spatial and compositional rather than temporal we get:

---

*Definition of Objectivity<sup>2</sup>*

A successively apprehended visual experience  $E$  is objective<sup>2</sup> if and only if  $E$  represents a privileged class of spatiotemporal relations with respect to a spatiotemporal particular  $P$  (for example, objective succession and mereological composition).

*Definition of Object<sup>2</sup>*

A visual experience  $E$  is of an object<sup>2</sup> if and only if  $E$  is objective<sup>2</sup>.

---

How should the nonconceptualist think about this second notion of objectivity? Well, given that the Deduction has been set aside, the answer is surely simple: he or she can just grant that animals lack such abilities. The absence of objectivity<sup>2</sup> implies only that there are some comparatively sophisticated spatiotemporal relations that animals cannot represent. But that is perfectly compatible with the claim that they perceive particulars and primitive spatiotemporal relations, such as distance, between them. To adapt Kant's ship example, to see a salmon 'driven downstream' is, minimally, to successively apprehend a particular, the salmon, in relation to various other particulars: the rocks, the banks, the bushes, etc.: this is what must be in place for the problem that object<sup>2</sup> solves to even arise in the first place. Of course, the animal will lack any sophisticated representation of this salmon as a single enduring object, but, as Allais notes, it can represent its identity in a primitive fashion by tracking its path and by responding differentially to it: for example, reacting to the salmon's

movements as it wriggles left and right.<sup>28</sup> In other words, Kant's own example suggests that the absence of objectivity<sup>2</sup> is entirely compatible with the ability to perceive particulars and relations such as spatial juxtaposition between them.<sup>29</sup> Objectivity<sup>2</sup> can thus be set aside: like, objectivity<sup>1</sup>, it is logically independent of *Intuition*.<sup>30</sup> Of course, we need to know much more about what the nonconceptual perception of the salmon amounts to and why exactly it deserves to be called an 'intuition of a particular'. But objectivity<sup>2</sup> is not going to help address those questions.

We can now return to Ginsborg's worry about trivialisation. There are two fears one might have. On the one hand, nonconceptualism might *trivialize* the Deduction by making the categories a necessary condition only on something too sophisticated, something which the sceptic would also reject. This worry is misplaced because the categories make possible precisely the abilities that someone like Hume takes for granted, abilities such as event perception.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, nonconceptualism might trivialize the transcendental claims made about the *categories* themselves. But this is surely not the case; the idea that we need the

---

<sup>28</sup> [Allais \(2009\)](#): 405–6).

<sup>29</sup> One way to resist this would be to atomize the individual apprehensions to the point where what is perceived at T1 is not 'salmon in front of rocks', but simply 'salmon'. But there would then be no reason to locate the various images in any spatial relation rather than any other: if all I see is salmon then rocks, why assume that the former is in front of the later, not beside it to the left or right? This would apply to the human case too: whatever contribution understanding makes, it does not explain why we perceive something to the left rather than the right.

<sup>30</sup> In line with the discussion of objectivity<sup>1</sup> the animal will also be unable to see the salmon 'as' a salmon, where this means something like 'recognize the mark salmon in the particular'.

<sup>31</sup> For further discussion, see [Golob \(2016b\)](#).

concept of causality if we are to represent objective succession is a deeply contentious one and remains so independent of whatever one says about animals.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.3 *Intentionality*: Relationalism, Representationalism, and Animal Experience

I have so far identified two notions of objectivity on which the answer to *Objective* is straightforwardly ‘no’: animals cannot perceive objects in those senses. This is, however, entirely compatible with their perceiving spatiotemporal particulars and relations in some weaker sense: for example, seeing the salmon against various backdrops (we’ll return to what exactly this would amount to in §4). I now want to turn to *Intentionality*; again, I’ll use a visual case.

*Intentionality*: As Kant understands them, are the visual experiences of animals intentional states?

To answer this, I need to say a little about the two approaches that dominate the debate on perceptual intentionality: relationalism and representationalism.<sup>33</sup> We can begin with the following rough characterisation:

---

<sup>32</sup> Allais makes the same point with respect to her model on which the categories are necessary conditions on empirical concept use (Allais (2011b): 47–8). See Golob (2016a) for where I disagree with Allais on categorical necessity.

<sup>33</sup> One could equally make these points using alternative taxonomies—for example, ‘Fregean or Russellian’. I have gone for the option above in order to provide broader coverage: many ‘Russellian’ views are really representationalist positions with object-dependent senses.



### *Representationalism*

The explanatorily fundamental characterisation of perceptual experience is given in terms of representational contents that determine accuracy conditions for that experience.

### *Relationalism*

The explanatorily fundamental characterisation of perceptual experience is given in terms of a non-representational relation between the subject and the perceived objects.

---

In a full discussion, one would need to treat positions that use elements of both: McDowell's or Schellenberg's for example.<sup>34</sup> But my focus here is on the links between the larger debate and Kant. Allais, in defending nonconceptualism, has argued that Kant's own sympathies lay with relationalism.<sup>35</sup> In response, Gomes suggests that there need be no tension between conceptualism and at least moderate versions of relationalism. I remain neutral on both those points. My claim instead will be that, whichever of relationalism or representationalism one favours, the answer to *Intentionality* is likely to be either straightforwardly positive or at least 'non-prejudicial'. I introduce the notion of a 'non-prejudicial' answer because many relationalists are reluctant to talk in terms of 'intentionality' themselves: this means they cannot give a positive or negative answer to *Intentionality*. However, a relationalism on which the explanatorily fundamental characterisation of animals' perception is the same as that of humans will be said to be 'non-prejudicial' to nonconceptualism. This is because, whilst it does not return a direct answer to *Intentionality*, it supports the broader

---

<sup>34</sup> [McDowell (2013)]; [Schellenberg (2015)].

<sup>35</sup> [Allais (2011a): 380].

nonconceptualist case by aligning humans and animals: insofar as the former have empirical intuitions of spatiotemporal particulars, so should the latter.

Suppose one endorses representationalism. What distinguishes, say, sensations from intentional or object-directed experiences is then the fact that the latter represent the world; as Kant puts it, such states ‘stand for an object’, they point to something beyond themselves (A189–90/B234–5). The representationalist cashes this in terms of contents with accuracy conditions: the content of the relevant experiences represents some state of affairs and is said to be accurate or inaccurate depending on whether that state of affairs obtains.<sup>36</sup> Within this framework, I want to make two points regarding animals.

First, it is standardly assumed that one of the chief advantages of representationalism is that it allows easy treatment of hallucinations and illusions.<sup>37</sup> This is because the representationalist can simply treat these as *misrepresentations*; the relationalist has a harder time accommodating states where, although I experience X as F, there is no X that is F and thus no obvious candidate for the relata. What I want to stress is that it is hard to conceive of an attractive representationalism that did not emphasize its privileged ability to handle, say, optical illusions in terms of inaccurate contents.

There is well-documented empirical evidence that animals too are susceptible to such illusions. The Müller-Lyre, for example, has been shown to affect the grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*); other species, for example, bamboo sharks (*Chiloscyllium griseum*), are affected by

---

<sup>36</sup> As Tye puts it, ‘any state with accuracy conditions has representational content’ (Tye 2009: 253).

<sup>37</sup> I sympathize with Brewer when he describes this as the ‘primary motivation’ for representationalism (Brewer (2011): 59). Similarly, Smith divides his *The Problem of Perception* into two sections entitled simply ‘The Argument from Illusion’ and ‘The Argument from Hallucination’ (Smith (2002)).

Kanisza squares.<sup>38</sup> It is hard to see how a representationalist could maintain that one needs to posit representational content to deal with such cases at the human level, and yet not do the same in the animal case. But if that is true, then the Kantian representationalist must concede, assuming the principle of charity, that animals have intentional states. While animals as Kant sees them certainly lack the ability to make judgments, this need not present a problem for the representationalist. The most direct strategy is simply to argue that a state's being a judgment is sufficient but not necessary for its having accuracy conditions; as Crane has emphasized, for example, a picture might be accurate or inaccurate even while there are good reasons for thinking that the way it represents the world is not propositional.<sup>39</sup> In a Kantian context, one might, therefore, naturally construe animals as forming three dimensional egocentrically orientated images of the world, images which can then be associated either with each other or with non-intentional contents such as sensations. The images' full representational structure could be given by appeal to something like Peacocke's scenario content.<sup>40</sup> In short, (i) there are plausible candidates for the contents of Kantian animals' representational states, and (ii) the distinctive dialectic with respect to illusion and hallucination that is one of the core motivations for representationalism actively requires that the theory be applied to both human and animal cases.

Of course, there is a great deal of textual work to be done to cash this: for example, in defending the proposed non-judgemental content bearers given Kant's claim that 'error is a burden only to the understanding' (A293–4/B350, Anth. 7:146). My own preferred candidate would be to link them to the imagination: this is the faculty of intuition precisely when the

---

<sup>38</sup> [Fuss, Bleckmann, and Schluessel \(2014\)](#); [Pepperberg, Vicinay, and Cavanagh \(2008\)](#).

<sup>39</sup> [Crane \(2009\)](#).

<sup>40</sup> [Peacocke \(1992\)](#).

object does not exist (Anth. 7:153), as is the case in misrepresentation. Imagination's notoriously ambiguous place within Kant's architectonic could also explain his apparent confinement of content to the understanding (compare the standard strategies for dealing with the apparent disappearance of the imagination from the B Deduction). This is not the place to undertake that exegetical work, however; what I want to do is rather map the basic dialectical lines available.<sup>41</sup> What we have established is a conditional claim: if one were to adopt a representationalist approach, there is a strong philosophical motivation for returning a positive response to *Intentionality*. Insofar as *Intentionality* provides a natural way of cashing *Intuition*, this supports a positive answer to *Intuition*—and that supports nonconceptualism.

Suppose next that one endorses relationalism. The issue of truth value immediately becomes otiose since, as Brewer puts it:

---

The intuitive idea is that, in perceptual experience, a person is simply presented with the actual constituents of the physical world themselves. Error, strictly speaking, given how the world actually is, is never an essential feature of experience itself.<sup>42</sup>

---

Illusion and hallucination, meanwhile, become more complex. I agree with Siegel, for example, that negative naïve realist characterisations of hallucination face problems when transferred to the animal case.<sup>43</sup> But this is ultimately an artefact of the general difficulty

---

<sup>41</sup> For highly sophisticated treatments of some of the textual issues in play here, see [Stephenson \(2015\)](#) and McLear (2016).

<sup>42</sup> [Brewer \(2006\)](#): 5).

<sup>43</sup> [Siegel \(2008\)](#).

relationalism faces over hallucination, and something that any relationalist must come to terms with. When one looks beyond hallucination, relationalism dovetails with *Intuition* because of the comparatively thin conditions typically imposed on the relation or ‘openness to the world’ that grounds the story. As Smith puts it, commenting on the dominant form of relationalism:

---

Naïve realism draws its strength from the apparent simplicity of perceptual consciousness. You open your eyes and objects are simply present to you visually. The shutters go up, as it were, and the world is simply there.<sup>44</sup>

---

If one feels the pull of this rationale, it would surely equally apply to animals. The relationalist story is typically developed by introducing notions like the ‘perspective from which something is seen’ and salient similarities between that entity and other objects, but these notions, usually cashed in causal or evolutionary terms, need present no problems for the animal case.<sup>45</sup> In sum, if one endorses relationalism and is prepared to bite the bullet on hallucination generally, the pressure will be towards a parity between the human and animal cases at the explanatorily fundamental level; this is precisely the spirit of the account as captured by Smith.

There is one move that would run counter to this dynamic: a form of relationalism on which conceptual capacities are necessary for the relation to be established.<sup>46</sup> How exactly this should be dealt with depends in part on the details—in particular whether it is a

---

<sup>44</sup> [Smith \(2002\)](#):43).

<sup>45</sup> [Brewer \(2011\)](#):118–19).

<sup>46</sup> One natural candidate would be McDowell’s recent work ([McDowell, 2013](#)).

representationalism with object-dependent contents, or whether it is a genuine relationalism eschewing any accuracy conditions at the perceptual level. This is not the place to assess the philosophical potential for such a theory. Rather, as with *Objectivity*, my aim is to try to clarify the overall topography of the debate: we can now see that glossing *Intuition* in terms of *Intentionality* will support the former, unless one defends a very specific sub-form of relationalism. Relationalism is thus likely to support what I called a ‘non-prejudicial’ verdict on *Intentionality*, one that supports *Intuition* and thus, nonconceptualism.

### 3.4 *Intuition*: Spatial Awareness and Intuitive Particulars

With the preceding material in place, I can now look more clearly at *Intuition* itself. McLear has suggested that the conceptualist’s best option is to construe animal consciousness as follows:

[B]eings lacking concepts nevertheless possess a form of experiential consciousness. However, this form of consciousness is extremely primitive, lacking any object-directed nature. All such conscious states are thus purely subjective forms of awareness. They cannot be instances of an awareness of physical particulars or their properties . . . on this view, all sensory presentation is limited to the subject’s own states.<sup>47</sup>

This proposal—a good one—cashes ‘object-directed’ in something like the following terms:

*Definition of Objectivity*<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> [McLear (2011): 3]—McLear himself argues for a nonconceptualist view.

A visual experience  $E$  is objective<sup>3</sup> if and only if  $E$  represents a distinction between spatiotemporal particulars and the mental states of the subject of that experience.

*Definition of Object*<sup>3</sup>

A visual experience  $E$  is of an object<sup>3</sup> if and only if  $E$  is objective<sup>3</sup>.

In the absence of objectivity<sup>3</sup>, as Husserl observes:

[S]ensations mean nothing, they do not count as indications of the properties of objects, their complexity does not point to the objects themselves. They are simply lived through.<sup>48</sup>

Objective<sup>3</sup> is in many respects a more attractive notion than objective<sup>1</sup> or objective<sup>2</sup> in terms of which to frame the debate. Whilst the latter two are naturally identified with capacities going beyond an ability to intuit particulars, objective<sup>3</sup> is a more plausible gloss on the line between sensations and genuine intuitions. Hence the remark from Kant cited above:

Now one can to be sure call everything, and every representation, insofar as we are conscious of it, an object [*Object*]. But it is a question for deeper enquiry what the word ‘object’ ought to signify with respect to appearances when these are viewed not in so far as they are (as representations) objects [*Objecte*], but only insofar as they stand for an object [*Object*]. (A189–90/B234–5)

---

<sup>48</sup> [Husserl \(1984\)](#): 80).

I will now argue that when *Intuition* is glossed via objectivity<sup>3</sup>, Kant's animals *do* indeed perceive objects. By extension, they *do* indeed intuit spatiotemporal particulars, insofar as that is glossed in terms of such objectivity.

One familiar Kantian question is whether spatial content is necessary for objectivity: that will depend, for example, on how one reads Kant's claim that thought alone would be 'without any object' (B146). But what is important here is that it seems very plausible that spatiality is sufficient for objectivity in the sense of objectivity<sup>3</sup>.<sup>49</sup> More specifically, the claim is that a three dimensional egocentrically orientated awareness of space within which something is seen as more or less distant is sufficient to sustain a distinction between spatiotemporal particulars and the subject's own states, such as sensations. Smith provides a neat formulation of the idea:

---

Perception concerns the 'external world'. The suggestion is that this is, in essential part, because perceptual experience presents 'external' objects as *literally* external—to our bodies. A bodily sensation such as a headache is experienced as *in* your head; it is not perceived as an object *with* your head. When, by contrast, you look at your hand, although the object seen is not spatially separated from you (since it is a part of you), it is, nevertheless, spatially separate from the eye with which (and from where) you see it.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Allais, drawing on Campbell and Smith, makes a similar point [Allais (2009): 413]. I want to press it further by using some of the resources of phenomenology.

<sup>50</sup> [Smith (2002): 134].



Kant believes that self-consciousness and consciousness of objects<sup>1</sup> or objects<sup>2</sup> stand in a biconditional relation. But the present question is whether there might also be a weaker version of this biconditional, applicable to animals and based on objectivity<sup>3</sup>. On the side of the self, the claim is not that the animals have the representation (Anth. 7:127). Rather, it is that animals experience space in egocentric terms. O'Brien offers a helpful syntactic formulation of the contrast:

---

Egocentric contents are . . . given by monadic notions such as 'to the right' and 'up ahead' in contrast to first-personal contents that are given by relational notions such 'to the right of me', 'in front of me'.<sup>51</sup>

---

Likewise, on the side of the object, the claim is not that animals have concepts such as *external world* or *sensation*. Rather, the proposal is that the way in which entities are given to them as spatially arrayed is sufficiently distinct from the way in which sensations are given to them that it constitutes a distinctly *perceptual* or *intuitive*, as opposed to sensory, mode of experience, one which is well described as 'object-directed'.

For example, insofar as the animal encounters something as arrayed within such a space, it is given only from a single perspective, a perspective which changes as the object gradually unfolds in line with the animal's movements and motor dispositions. In contrast, sensation is non-perspectival—whilst the dog experiences the pain in its foot, as opposed to its leg, there is no angle from which it does so. In short, to borrow a formulation from Husserl, there is a distinctive and phenomenologically articulable *mode of givenness* that allows one to legitimately ascribe the object<sup>3</sup> distinction to animals, even though, of course, they cannot

---

<sup>51</sup> O'Brien (2007): 106).

articulate it. By extension, animals will intuit particulars, and not mere sensations, insofar as *Intuition* is glossed not in terms of objecivity<sup>1</sup> or objectivity<sup>2</sup>, but objectivity<sup>3</sup>.

One way to develop this proposal is by comparison with Strawson, who employs several non-equivalent concepts of objectivity. Some have been dealt with above. For example, he identifies objectivity with an ability to recognize a distinct temporal order within which objects, as opposed to our perceptions of them, stand.<sup>52</sup> This is not plausibly attributed by animals: there is no temporal parallel to egocentric space that would allow for a corresponding mode of givenness. Yet that is because, as Strawson is well aware, this is simply the Analogies' version of objectivity<sup>2</sup>, something that no nonconceptualist would attribute to animals in any case. What is more important is rather a second definition Strawson offers: objective experience is 'experience of objects that are distinct from the experience of them'.<sup>53</sup> It is trivially true—operating throughout as within an empirical realism—that the experience of animals is usually of such objects. But Strawson's point concerns rather the subjects' ability to represent that fact, and so to avoid the solipsism where a creature 'simply has no use for the distinction between himself and what is not himself'.<sup>54</sup> As the conceptualist sees it there are only two options here: either one lacks this distinction, or one has a conceptual awareness of it that one can at least potentially articulate. My appeal to a 'mode of givenness' is intended to offer a third alternative, and one which thus secures objectivity<sup>3</sup>.

At this point, the conceptualist will likely protest: 'All this shows', he or she might retort, 'is that if the animals have experience with spatial phenomenology then they experience them as objective<sup>3</sup>—but it is precisely the antecedent that I deny'. This might be because the

---

<sup>52</sup> Strawson (1966): 98).

<sup>53</sup> Strawson (1966): 24).

<sup>54</sup> Strawson (1959): 65).

conceptualist denies that animals have any phenomenological consciousness or, less severely, because he or she allows them some phenomenological consciousness but denies that it is spatial.<sup>55</sup> But what we can now see is the very high price one must pay for this view.

First, I have shown that neither objectivity<sup>1</sup> nor objectivity<sup>2</sup>, nor a general representationalism nor most relationalisms, present any problem for the nonconceptualist. This radically reduces the possible independent reasons for denying that animals perceive spatiotemporal particulars and their relations. Of course, as we saw, one might contest the word ‘particulars’—perhaps for some speakers that simply *means* objects<sup>1</sup> or objects<sup>2</sup>. But to make this move is to concede the key nonconceptualist claim that animals have intentional experiences of parts of the world, given as external to them and as standing in distance and other relations. Whether one wishes to call such parts ‘particulars’ is a purely terminological matter.

Second, the conceptualist can offer only an improbably baroque alternative. To see this, consider even the less severe version of the view, on which animals are allowed some form of consciousness but denied a spatial phenomenology. The conceptualist must surely concede that the behaviour of animals does in fact track spatial relations such as depth and distance, and even primitive temporal relations: a dog can be trained to react to two flags only when they are raised simultaneously. If the conceptualist nevertheless wishes to deny that animals experience entities as arrayed in a three dimensional egocentric space, he or she must posit some set of sensations in which things are not given as at a certain distance, and yet which systematically

---

<sup>55</sup> I take [McLear \(2011\)](#) to have provided compelling textual arguments against the former view and in what follows I will focus on the latter.

change as distance relations change. In effect, the animal would not directly experience spatiality, only some kind of systematically correlated sensational proxy.

How could this be cashed? Suppose a predator sees a fish under the surface of the water to the left and grabs it. On my account, the explanation is simple: a physical object, the fish, is phenomenologically manifest to the predator as lying a certain distance from it. Of course, the predator lacks the ability to articulate this, just as it lacks the concept *fish*. But it nevertheless intuits that very object and intuits it as external to itself, a certain distance away. The conceptualist cannot grant this, since it implies both objectivity<sup>3</sup> and the basic nonconceptualist contention that intuitions are independent of the understanding. So instead she must claim that the predator is aware of some non-spatial, presumably qualitative, sensational correlates. But what could these be? Perhaps when there is something to the left, the animal experiences a sensation of a particular colour? Yet we have good reason to think, from the structure of the eye and empirical testing, that at least some of the predators involved lack colour vision. Perhaps then they experience some kind of light/dark or hot/cold sensations as they get closer to their prey? But that seems too crude: many of the predators can distinguish minute differences in range and angle—are we to believe that they have a similarly fine-grained awareness of degrees of brightness or heat, even though they have no evolutionary need for such, and no correspondingly specialized sense organs? We should surely refrain from committing Kant to such an unpromising programme if we can possibly avoid it. What, from a biological perspective, could explain the reliance on such a convoluted and roundabout method—would it not be far simpler to posit that, sharing as they do much of our perceptual apparatus, animals also directly experience the world in spatial, and thus objective<sup>3</sup>, terms?

I am not claiming that Kant himself had a fully worked out story as to how we should understand ideas like a ‘mode of givenness’; he has little to say about the role of embodied motor dispositions in encountering objects. I am rather claiming that such a view would chime

with his overall project—the Aesthetic elucidates various further conditions on encountering spatial relations—and, I think, be an attractive supplement to it.

Bringing this all together, we can now gloss the sense in which animals do indeed intuit spatio-temporal particulars: these are intuitions of particulars, as opposed to mere sensations, because they are objective<sup>5</sup>. How exactly should we construe the phenomenology? Well, here I think we must be guided by the animal's behaviour. If, for example, it is capable of differential reactions to minutely different species of fish, we should assume that its intuition includes all the relevant visual details for distinguishing those species. In short, animal visual experience is neither a 'blooming, buzzing confusion' nor is it indistinct or crude: it is of intuitive particulars presented at a level of visual detail which often far outstrips our own capacities.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> I would like to thank all participants at the Witwatersrand 'Kant and Animals' conference where this material was first presented for their extremely helpful comments and suggestions. I am particularly indebted to Colin McLear and to an anonymous referee for their detailed and insightful comments on an earlier draft.