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Introduction

How should we read Kant's remark "intuitions without concepts are blind"¹? For him, intuition is the sensory consciousness in which an object is immediately presented to the subject. Given that, it seems that there can be two interpretations of the remark. One is that, if intuition lacked concept, it would also lack the immediacy: more precisely, we would no longer call it "intuition" legitimately. The other is that, even if intuition lacked concept, it would still have a immediate relation to the object and be blind in a relative sense, that is, in comparison with conceptual episodes, such as judgment. This opposition coincides with that between conceptualism and nonconceptualism in contemporary philosophy of perception. As is well known, it is John McDowell's exploitation of Kant in his *Mind and World* that illuminated this coincidence. McDowell thought highly of part of Kant's thought, which recommends the first reading, and regarded Kant's conception of intuition as a precursor of his own conceptualism.

My concern in this essay is to ask to what extent do Kant's own texts sustain such a McDowellian reading, which finds the duality of sensibility

¹. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A52/B76.

and understanding (the power of concept) in intuition itself. But I will not examine any nonconceptualist interpretation. Instead, I will begin by arguing that the conceptualist interpretation of Kant must jump over a very high hurdle. In other words, I will drive the interpretation into a corner where it *appears* impossible. My aim is to show that we can, nevertheless, find a sort of conceptualism in Kant.

I. Two Forms of Conceptualist interpretation of Intuition

McDowell often cites, as a key text for conceptualist interpretation of intuition, Kant's remark "the same function which gives unity to the various representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations in a intuition"(A79/B104-5), which is from the Metaphysical Deduction. This remark seems to mean that intuition is formed by the capacity to judge, although intuition is distinguished from judgment. Given that just before the citation (A78/B103) Kant characterizes synthesis as an act of imagination, one may say that he denies this; he insists that imagination belongs to sensibility². However, in the second-edition version of the Transcendental Deduction (the "B-Deduction"), Kant says that imagination—at least, what he describes as "productive"—is the same as the faculty of understanding. So we can think that the synthesis needed to bring about intuition is the work of understanding.

Now, what conception of intuition should such an interpretation lead to? We can find the two candidates in McDowell's reading of Kant. One is propositionalist conceptualism, which McDowell originally proposed in *Mind and World*. The other is a different form of conceptualism, which he adopted recently. As we shall see, we can call it objectualist.

According to propositionalist conceptualism, the conceptual content of intuition is propositional: intuition has the same sort of content as that of judgment. But this does not distance intuition from reality, because McDowell's identity conception of truth ensures that a true propositional content of intuition is a fact. Thus, even if intuition is conceptual, it does not lose im-

² B152.

mediate relation to reality. According to objectualist conceptualism, on the other hand, what is intuited is not any fact, but an object in a narrow sense, that is, a particular. The contribution of concept to intuition makes it possible that intuition is the sensory consciousness in which particulars are presented to the subject. Therefore, the content of intuition is not the same sort as that of judgment, although “the same function” gives unity to intuition and judgment³.

I think that the propositionalist interpretation is more understandable, because it sticks to the natural thought that any concept can figure only in the context of judgemental content. However, this interpretation undermines the particularity of intuition, on the pain of incorporating the generality of concept into intuition. In order to get out of this standoff, we have to find an intelligible form of objectualist conceptualism about intuition, however impossible such a position might *appear*.

II. The Contribution of Category to Intuition

In the preceding section, I did not mention categories, that is, pure concepts of understanding. Since “[t]he same function,” which Kant suggests brings about unities of judgment and intuition, is the category, intuition is internally structured by it. And insofar as in the Transcendental Deduction, Kant characterizes understanding as the ability of self-consciousness that is called “apperception,” categories are “conditions of the original synthetic unity of apperception” (B136). Thus, he is entitled to say that “[t]he supreme principle of the possibility of all intuition in relation to understanding is that all the manifold of intuition stand under” such conditions (B136). In other words, both unities of intuition and judgment are cases of the apperceptive unity whose modes are specified by categories.

On the other hand, however, in the same passage Kant says “[t]he supreme principle of the possibility of all intuition in relation to sensibility was, according to the Transcendental Aesthetic, that all the manifold of intuition stands under the formal conditions of space and time”(B136). This

³. See McDowell (2009b).

seems to suggest that sensible conditions of intuition are intelligible independently of the apperceptive unity. And if intuition does not realize the unity, insofar as it is sensible, then at least basic intuition will not fit with any conceptualist interpretation.

But given the structure of the B-Deduction, it turns out that Kant never means to leave sensible conditions of intuition independent of the apperceptive unity. In the end (§21) of the first part, he says the concluding section (§26) will show that “the unity of empirical intuition is no other than that which the category ... prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general,” by rethinking space and time, which are the modes “in which empirical intuition is given in [our] sensibility”(B144-5). And in the section Kant argues, exploiting the fact that space and time are intuitions—“formal intuition”(B160n.) —, that unities of them are cases of apperceptive unity. As a result, the fact that objects of empirical intuitions stand under our sensible conditions, space and time, ensures that these objects conform to categories. Thus, in the final stage of the B-Deduction the notion of intuition that is not structured by the category makes no sense.

This reading coincides with the gist of McDowell’s reading of the B-Deduction in his “Hegel’s Idealism as Radicalization of Kant,” although I diverge from him in how to read the details⁴. What I want to focus on here is that McDowell implicitly assumed that such a reading vindicates propositionalist conceptualism. Of course, he will no longer make this assumption, since he has already given up this form of conceptualism independently of any close reading of the B-Deduction. But it is important to see that the above reading directly leads to objectualist conceptualism.

The B-Deduction, in effect, shows that while judgmental content consists of concepts structured by categories, intuitional content consists of *spatio-temporal* particulars structured by them: judgment and intuition share categorical forms, but sorts of their content are different. It is true that propositionalist conceptualism can allow the judgmental content of intuition to concern spatio-temporal objects. But the content itself cannot be spatio-temporal. Therefore, we must conclude that the B-Deduction recommends objectualist conceptualism, which can take the spatiality and temporality of

⁴. See McDowell (2009a), p. 74, n. 10.

intuition seriously. In Kant's picture, intuition is the sensory consciousness in which the subject is presented with the manifold of particulars—including instantiated properties—united into an object by categories, that is, “concepts of an object in general” (B128).

III. The Contribution of Non-categorical Concept to Intuition

In the essay in which he adopts objectualist conceptualism, McDowell writes of “the categorially unified but as yet unarticulated content of the intuition.”⁵ This means that intuition is conceptual in form, not in content. Though he does not draw the conception of intuition from the B-Deduction, it is similar to that which I drew from the text. But exaggerating the similarity will mask another way in which concept contributes to intuition. Although in the essay McDowell seems to be inclined to discuss the conceptuality of intuition only in terms of the aspect of form, Kant himself tries to explicate it in terms of the aspect of content as well. In other words, Kant wants to clarify the way in which non-categorical concepts, such as the concept *dog* or *triangular*, contribute to intuitions.

In §26 of the B-Deduction Kant characterizes empirical intuition as the result of the synthesis of apprehension. According to the A-Deduction, apprehension is the work of productive imagination, that is, the capacity to “bring the manifold of intuition into an *image*”(A120). Although such a characterization itself fits the imagination that generates formal intuitions—*a priori* intuition—of space and time, which is a main topic of the B-Deduction (§24, 26), Kant also has in mind the *empirical* play of productive imagination when he discusses the synthesis of apprehension in §26. This interpretation is supported by the fact that he conceives an image of a dog as “a product of the empirical faculty of productive imagination” (A141/B181). Even though we cannot find this sort of description in the B-Deduction, it is clear that Kant talks about the empirical aspect of productive imagination in the same spirit, when in B162 he says, of the case in which the

⁵. McDowell (2009b), p. 263.

synthesis of apprehension generates an intuition of a house, “I as it were draw its shape in agreement with ... synthetic unity of the manifold in space”. And Kant’s parenthetical “as it were” suggests, I think, that the conceptual content of intuition can be understood on the model of that content of image, such as a picture of a house.

This conception of the conceptual content of intuition opens the way to allow that the content is nevertheless completely particular, for concepts that figure in intuitional content function as rules for “drawing” a unified complex of particulars, such as a dog or a house, not as rules for subsuming objects under some general kinds in judgments. Thus, we can argue that Kant attempts to elaborate his objectualist conceptualism with regard to the content of intuition, appealing to the model of drawing.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I proposed a view in which intuition is formed by the operation of understanding within sensibility, mainly through interpreting the B-Deduction. Such a duality of intuition itself can be found in two aspects of intuition, that is, form and content. The structure of the B-Deduction indicates that categories, *qua* formal concepts, make the forms of intuition possible. And Kant’s words “as it were” in B 162 suggest that the content is conceptual in a unique way that can be understood in terms of drawing a picture. We can read Kant as an objectualist conceptualist only by seeing that intuition is conceptual in these two aspects.

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