

Introspection as Inner Sense

Kant Seminar

Oxford | May 31, 2017

1 Inner Sense

- Self-consciousness is conceived on analogy to conscious awareness, in perception, of objects distinct from the self
 - Just as consciousness of (ideas/representations of) objects distinct from the subject is the means by which knowledge of objects is acquired, consciousness of (ideas/representations of) the subject is the means by which self-knowledge is acquired
- Q1: How does inner sense provide the basis for self-knowledge?
- Q2: What makes inner sense a kind of *sense*?

1.1 The Lockean Model

Sensation: ideas gained from the impressions objects or their effects make on our external senses

Reflection: ideas gained from attending to our own mental faculties in the course of their operation^{1,2}

- What makes these two sources of ideas belong to a single faculty of sense?
 - Ideas are received passively
 - Ideas do not reveal their object as it is in itself
 - Ideas have a (distinctive?) phenomenology
 - Ideas rely on attention to something (e.g. an (impression caused by an) external object or an operation of the mind)

1.2 Two Contemporary Models of Inner Sense

THE OBJECT PERCEPTION MODEL:

1. Organ of perception
2. Occurrence of sense experiences/impressions that are distinct from the object of perception & belief formed on the basis of that perception
3. Immediate awareness of objects (particulars) not facts
4. Affords “identification information” concerning object of perception
5. Perception is normally of intrinsic, nonrelational properties
6. Objects of perception are potential objects of attention
7. Perceptual beliefs are causally produced by the objects or states of affairs perceived, via a causal mechanism that normally produces true beliefs
8. the objects and states of affairs which the perception is of, and which it provides knowledge about, exist independently of the perceiving of them, and independently of the capacity to so perceive them

¹ the other fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas is,—the perception of the operations of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got;—which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which could not be had from things without. And such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds—which we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense. [Locke (1970), 88; II.i.4]

² By reflection then, in the following part of this discourse, I would be understood to mean, that notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them, by reason whereof there come to be ideas of these operations in the understanding. [Locke (1970), 88; II.i.4]

THE BROAD PERCEPTUAL MODEL:^{3,4}

1. The causal condition: our beliefs about our mental states are caused by those mental states, via a reliable belief-producing mechanism, thereby qualifying as knowledge of those states and events
 2. The independence condition: the existence of these states and events is independent of their being known in this way, and even of there existing the mechanisms that make such knowledge possible.
- The inner sense model may seem most appealing with respect to sensory phenomenology, but what about thought? Is the inner sense model applicable to awareness of one's own thoughts as such? Or to the fact that one believes or knows that *P*, etc.?

2 *Kant's Evolving View of Inner Sense*

- The pre-critical Kant conceives of inner sense as the sole mode of self-consciousness & thus self-knowledge
- The critical Kant conceives of inner sense as just one kind of self-consciousness, and as derivative or non-fundamental
- The pre-critical Kant, but not the critical Kant, endorses the "Difference Thesis" regarding inner sense

The Difference Thesis: Introspection provides a relation to ourselves as subjects that is epistemically distinctive from our relation to any other part of nature.

3 *The Pre-Critical Kant on Inner Sense*

- Inner sense as necessary for conceptualization and judgment
- Inner sense as a special kind of intuition
- Non-rational animals lack inner sense⁵

3.1 *Endorsing the Difference Thesis for Inner Sense*

- Sensory representation presents only relational properties of objects, never the underlying subject of those properties.⁶
 - Nevertheless, we have a quasi-perceptual awareness of the self as subject, which is the source of metaphysical concepts like <substance>.⁷

4 *The Critical Kant on Inner Sense*

CLAIM: For the 'critical' Kant, inner and outer sense are, in certain central respects, epistemically and psychologically on par.

³ Somebody might try saying that the reason why we have no use for the term "emotion-blindness" is that our 'inner sense' is not liable to such defects as our eyesight is; our inner sense represents our emotions just as they occur, even if we are unable to describe them correctly. Now a sense that was in fact not affected by any illusions, any failure to discriminate, etc., is indeed conceivable; but plainly what our present objection is really after is a sense that not merely does not but cannot mislead us. But this "cannot" would be a logical "cannot"; and the inclination to use "cannot" here points to a logical difference between our knowledge of the outer world by our senses and our knowledge of the mind by 'inner sense'. Of bona fide sense-faculties, it is impossible to say that they cannot be defective or inaccurate. (Geach 1957, 110)

⁴ I think that the fundamental difference between perception and introspection is the failure of the latter to satisfy the "independence condition." Perception and introspection are of course alike in being modes of non-inferential knowledge acquisition. But in the case of perception, the mechanisms involved are ones whose function it is to give us knowledge of an independent reality, one that was not made to be accessible to us and our faculties. In the case of introspection, on the other hand, the reality known and the faculty for knowing it are, as it were, made for each other—neither could be what it is without the other. (Shoemaker 1994, 289)

⁵ Animals are accordingly different from human souls not in degree but rather in species; for however much animal souls increase in their sensible faculties, consciousness of their self, inner sense, still cannot be attained thereby...The consciousness of one's self, the concept of the I, does not occur with such beings that have no inner sense; accordingly no non-rational animal can think: I am...(*Metaphysik Pölitz*, late 1770s, LM 28:276; cf. FS 2:60; *Metaphysik Dohna* (1792/3) LM 28:689-90).

⁶ by means of our senses only the relations of things can be revealed, and we can represent the absolute or the subject only from our selves. The idea of substance actually comes from the *repraesentatione sui ipsius*, insofar as we represent that something is separate from us, and predicates cannot be thought without a subject and without an ultimate subject; the constant predicates together are then called the subject. (R392I, 17:346 (c. 1769); see also R5290, 18:144; R5297, 18:146; R4493, 17:571-2; AC 25:14)

⁷ [An] object can only be represented in accordance with its relations and is nothing other than the subjective representation of the subject itself, but made general, for I am the original of all objects. (R4674, *Duisburg Nachlass* 17:646 (1773-5))

4.1 Denying the Difference Thesis

- In the 1780s Kant rejects the position that we have any (quasi-)perceptual awareness of the self as an object.^{8,9}
 - Sensory introspection provides only awareness of states of thinking, feeling, sensation, etc., not the subject of those states.
- Sensory introspection (inner sense) is just like sensory extrospection (outer sense) in important ways
- The sensorily introspected subject is no more (or less) 'elusive' than any extrospected object

4.2 The Parity of Inner & Outer Sense

- Introspection & extrospection are in central respects psychologically & epistemically on par
 - i. The treatment of intuition in the Aesthetic & Analytic of Concepts is exactly parallel – the account of intuition as (e.g.) singular & immediate seems to be wholly general
 - ii. The 4th Paralogism argument for immediate consciousness of physical objects depends on the parity of intuition.
 1. Transcendental idealism entails that we are aware of both subjective and objective states, as they appear, *in the same way* – viz. via *sensible intuition*.¹⁰
 2. So either both kinds of awareness are immediate or they are both mediate.
 3. Since awareness of subjective states is obviously immediate then awareness of objective states must also be immediate.
 4. ∴ We are immediately aware of the states or properties of physical objects.
 - iii. The senses cannot combine anything; predication is a form of combination; so the senses cannot represent any subject as possessing a property (i.e. they cannot represent inherence).¹¹
 1. Representation of an object requires representation of sensed qualities as standing in specific kinds of relation.¹²
 2. We can only represent these relations via the activity of the understanding.^{13,14,15}
- The introspected self of inner intuition is no more elusive than the objects of outer *sense*
 - Neither the self nor outer objects are presented by intuition *as* objects (i.e. no predication).

4.3 Intellectual Self-Consciousness

- Awareness of some mental states may be (quasi-)perceptual, but not all self-awareness is like this

⁸ Inner sense, by means of which the mind intuits itself, or its inner state, gives, to be sure, no intuition of the soul itself, as object [Object]. (Transcendental Aesthetic §1, A22/B37)

⁹ The consciousness of ourself in accordance with the determinations of our state in inner perception is merely empirical, forever variable; it can give no standing or abiding self in this stream of inner appearances, and is customarily called **inner sense** or **empirical apperception**. (On the Synthesis of Recognition in a Concept, A107)

¹⁰ external things exist as well as my self, and indeed both exist on the immediate testimony of my self-consciousness, only with this difference: the representation of my Self, as the thinking subject, is related merely to inner sense, but the representations that designate extended beings are also related to outer sense. I am no more necessitated to draw inferences in respect of the reality of external objects than I am in regard to the reality of the objects of my inner sense (my thoughts), for in both cases they are nothing but representations, the immediate perception (consciousness) of which is at the same time a sufficient proof of their reality. (Fourth Paralogism, A370-I)

¹¹ a manifold's combination (*Verbindung*) as such can never come to us through the senses (Transcendental Deduction §15, B129)

¹² What is an object? That whose representation is a sum [*Inbegriff*] of several predicates belonging to it. The plate is round, warm, made of tin, etc. Warm, round, being made of tin, etc., are not objects, although the warmth, the tin, etc., [are]. An object is that in the representation of which various others can be thought as synthetically combined. (R6350. 1796–98 (July–August 1797); 18:676)

¹³ [O]uter sense can also contain [enthalten] in its representation only the relation [Verhältniß] of an object to the subject, and not that which is internal to the object in itself. It is exactly the same in the case of inner sense. (Transcendental Aesthetic, B67)

¹⁴ All our representations are in fact related to some object through the understanding... (Phenomena & Noumena, A250)

¹⁵ Thinking is the action of relating given intuitions to an object. (Phenomena & Noumena, B304)

- Kant rejects “Uniformity Assumption” concerning self-knowledge
- We have a purely intellectual and non-sensory awareness of ourselves as subjects.^{16,17}

5 Objections

1. Parity violates Kant’s “dictum” that intuition gives us an object.
2. Parity violates Kant’s claim in the Refutation of Idealism that inner sense depends on outer sense.
3. Parity violates Kant’s position that inner sense has no manifold of its own.

5.1 Parity & Kant’s Dictum

Kant’s Dictum: Objects are given by means of sensibility and they are thought via the understanding.¹⁸

- i. Kant’s Dictum is compatible with an object’s being given *by means of* its sensible qualities.
- ii. There is a difference between representing a feature of an object and representing a feature as a feature of an object.
 - Representing the redness of the rose vs. the rose’s redness.

5.2 Parity & the Refutation of Idealism

Priority of the Outer: Inner experience & the determination of an objective time ordering depend on (what is given in) outer sense.¹⁹

- i. It makes no sense to construe inner intuition as singular and *mediate*, as opposed to outer intuition (and intuition more generally defined) as singular and *immediate*.
- ii. Kant’s discussion concerns *experience* [*Erfahrung*] not intuition.
- iii. Dependence of inner on outer must be qualified in some way so as to avoid conflicting with Kant’s claims.²⁰

VOGEL’S OBJECTION: There must be some disparity between the content of inner and outer sense, else objective time-determination would be completely impossible.²¹

1. Nothing is intuited as persisting/enduring in either inner or outer sense
2. Nothing is experienced as persisting/enduring in either inner or outer sense
 - Kant can consistently hold (1) without holding (2). The difference turns on the mathematizability of space vs. time.
 - a. The representation of persistence is necessary for the experience of substance.

¹⁶ In the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of representations in general, on the contrary, hence in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This representation is a thinking, not an intuiting. (Transcendental Deduction §25, B157; see also §16, B132)

¹⁷ The consciousness of myself in the representation I is no intuition at all, but a merely intellectual representation of the self-activity of a thinking subject. (Refutation of Idealism, B278; see also the Refutation of Mendelssohn’s proof of the persistence of the soul, B423)

¹⁸ Objects are given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone yields us intuitions; they are thought through the understanding, and from the understanding arise concepts (Transcendental Aesthetic, A19/B33).

¹⁹ inner experience itself is consequently only mediate and possible only through outer experience. (Refutation of Idealism, B277)

²⁰ [t]ime is a necessary representation that grounds all intuitions. In regard to appearances in general one cannot remove time. (Transcendental Aesthetic, A31/B46) [t]ime is the a priori formal condition of all appearances in general. (Transcendental Aesthetic, A34/B50)

²¹ to complete the Refutation, Kant needs to establish some disparity between inner and outer sense, such that outer sense gives us direct knowledge of enduring objects, while inner sense does not. (Vogel 1993, 878)

- b. The representation of discrete quantity/magnitude is necessary for the representation of persistence.²²
- c. The assignment of discrete quantity/magnitude (duration) to temporal expanses must be *indirect*.²³

5.3 Parity & the Inner Manifold

No Proprietary Manifold: The representations of outer sense are the “proper material” of the mind.^{24,25}

- i. Talk about “proper material” may well be limited to the issue of cognition and knowledge.
- ii. Kant might also be using “proper” in a normative sense.^{26,27}
- iii. Kant’s conception of illusion depends on inner appearances being taken for outer appearances, which makes no sense if there is no “inner manifold” at all.²⁸
- iv. Kant conceives of inner sense as providing the content for Anthropology, which would again be absurd if inner sense had no manifold.²⁹

References

- Allison, Henry E. 2004. “Inner Sense and the Refutation of Idealism.” In *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: Revised and Enlarged*, 275–303. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Boyle, Matthew. 2009. “Two Kinds of Self-Knowledge.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 78 (1): 133–64.
- Geach, Peter Thomas. 1957. “The Notion of ‘Inner Sense.’” In *Mental Acts: Their Content and Their Objects*, 107–11. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1997. *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2005. *Notes and Fragments*. Edited by Paul Guyer. Cambridge University Press.
- . 2007. *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2012. *Lectures on Anthropology*. Edited by Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Loudon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitcher, Patricia. 2011. *Kant’s Thinker*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm Freiherr. 1969. “The Monadology.” In *Philosophical Papers and Letters: A Selection*, edited by Leroy E Loemker, 633–53.

²² [substance is something that] is neither increased nor diminished in nature (First Analogy, B224)

²³ Only through that which persists does existence in different parts of the temporal series acquire a magnitude, which one calls duration. (First Analogy, A183/B226)

²⁴ the representations of outer sense make up the proper material with which we occupy our mind (B67); cf. Kant’s claim that [it is the things outside of us] from which we after all get the whole matter for our cognitions, even for our inner sense (Bxxxix, ann.)

²⁵ what the mind is aware of through inner sense or, equivalently, introspection, are just its own representations, all of which pertain to outer sense. In other words, inner sense has no manifold of its own, which is why Kant insists that the representation of time requires an appeal to space. (Allison 2004, 277)

²⁶ inner observation can “easily lead to enthusiasm and madness (7:132)

²⁷ [inner observation] is the most direct path to illuminism or even terrorism, by way of a confusion in the mind of supposed higher inspirations and powers flowing into us, without our help, who knows from where. (7:133)

²⁸ It is said that inner sense is subject to illusions, which consist either in taking the appearances of inner sense for external appearances, that is, taking imaginings for sensations, or in regarding them as inspirations caused by another being that is not an object of external sense. So the illusion here is either enthusiasm or spiritualism, and both are deceptions of inner sense. In both cases it is mental illness... (Anthropology 7:161)

²⁹ So it is advisable and even necessary to begin with observed appearances in oneself, and then to progress above all to the assertion of certain propositions that concern human nature; that is, to inner experience. (Anthropology 7:143; cf. *Nachlass* 7:398; *Lectures on Anthropology* 25:473)

Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

———. 1996. *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Edited by Jonathan Bennett and Peter Remnant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Locke, John. 1970. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Peter H Nidditch. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shoemaker, Sydney. 1994. "Self-Knowledge and 'Inner Sense': Lecture II: The Broad Perceptual Model." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54 (2): 271–90.

Smithies, Declan, and Daniel Stoljar. 2012. "Introspection and Consciousness: An Overview." In *Introspection and Consciousness*, edited by Declan Smithies and Daniel Stoljar, 3–28. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vogel, Jonathan. 1993. "The Problem of Self-Knowledge in Kant's 'Refutation of Idealism.'" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53 (4): 875–87.