"I am the original of all objects" – Apperception & the Substantial Subject

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Draft – May 31, 2017

> [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.
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> R4674, *Duisburg Nachlaß* 17:646 (1773-5)
> IMMANUEL KANT

THE DELPHIC ORACLE ADVISES, "know thyself." This injunction takes on special urgency in the Modern period. Several notable figures, including Descartes, Locke, and Leibniz, construe self-knowledge as central to knowledge generally, including knowledge of the natural world. Hume then levies a variety of criticisms against the epistemological and metaphysical presuppositions of these views, and Kant attempts to reconcile much of Hume's critique with a non-skeptical position regarding our knowledge of nature. Though this dialectic is no doubt familiar, Kant's evolving views throughout his career on the significance of self-knowledge bear closer scrutiny.

Kant, of course, is famous for proclaiming a "Copernican revolution" according to which "we can cognize of things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them" (Bxviii). Emphasizing the centrality of the cognizing subject, Kant claims that "the standing and lasting I (of pure apperception) constitutes the correlate of all of our representations" (A123; see also B138), and as such is necessary for any explanation of our knowledge of nature. As Kant puts it,

> we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we call nature, and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there. (A125; see also B165)

Critical reflection on the "I" of apperception is thus a condition of knowledge of the most general laws of nature, where "[t]he synthetic unity of consciousness is…an objective condition of all cognition" (B138) and

> all appearances of nature, as far as their combination is concerned, stand under the categories, on which nature (considered merely as nature in general) depends, as the original ground of its necessary lawfulness (as *natura formaliter spectata*). (B165)

Kant's startling emphasis on the role of the subject in the constitution of the laws of nature, and thus in the constitution of scientific knowledge of nature, is relatively well-known. But Kant's claim that the subject plays such a role in organizing nature does not tell us how or why it plays this role. In particular, it is not clear why Kant would think that *self-consciousness*, as modeled by his theory of pure apperception, would be central to an account of how knowledge of nature is possible.

In what follows, I explicate one way in which pure apperception plays a crucial role for Kant in explaining the possibility of a science of nature. I argue that Kant must appeal to pure apperception as the only possible source of the content of the categorial concept `<substance>`, in so far as this concept is understood to have anything more than purely logical or grammatical significance.[1] Kant of course distinguishes between the logical/grammatical notion of a concept's always taking the subject place in a categorical judgment (e.g. B149, B186, B288)—what I shall call a `<substance>`$_L$, from the "schematized" or temporal conception of a substance as a permanent being (A144/B183)—what I shall call a `<substance>`$_E$. However, between these two notions lies the conception of a substance purely as a metaphysical subject, as that in which a property (specifically, an "accident") inheres—a `<substance>`$_M$.[2] For example, in his discussion of substance in the First Analogy Kant says,

> The determinations of a substance that are nothing other than particular ways for it to exist are called **accidents**. They are always real, since they concern the existence of the substance (negations are merely determinations that express the non-being of something in the substance). Now if one ascribes a particular existence to this real in substance (e.g., motion, as an accident of matter), then this existence is called "inherence," in contrast to the existence of the substance, which is called "subsistence." (A186-7/B229-30)

This notion of a substance as that in which accidents inhere is necessary for Kant to carry out his account of the possibility of a science of nature, but it cannot be analytically derived from the purely logical conception of a term that is always in the subject position and never in the predicate. I argue that pure apperception is the only possible source for the content of `<substance>`$_M$.[3]

In section one, I clarify this intermediary sense of a substance understood purely as the subject of inherent properties. I also indicate its role in Kant's conception of a science of na-

[1] I shall use "categorial" in discussion of the categories and "categorical" for discussion of judgments which take strict subject-predicate logical form.

[2] For related distinctions between different conceptions of substance in Kant's work see (Bennett 1966, 182ff); (Van Cleve 1999, 105–6); (Langton 1998); (Proops 2010, 461).

[3] Note that the issue is one concerning the *source* of the representational content, not the justification of applying the concept. I take it that the issue of justification is the "quid juris" question with which the Transcendental Deduction is concerned. The question I pursue here is more along the lines of the "quid facti" presupposed by much of the argument of the Deduction.

ture. Section two briefly discusses why Kant cannot appeal to the content of intuition in order to resolve the question of the source of the content of the concept, before turning to pure apperception. I then provide a positive account of the nature of apperception and its role in provisioning the content of our concept `<substance>`, after which I discuss a variety of objections that arise concerning the way in which the interpretation integrates with other aspects of Kant's mature critical theory of cognition. I thus argue that, despite important differences, Kant's strategy is one whose outline is broadly similar to that pursued by (among others) Descartes, Leibniz, and the pre-critical Kant, according to which the "I" is the original basis for all scientific knowledge of nature.

1 The Problem of the Subject

We can better understand Kant's position on self-consciousness, self-knowledge, and their significance for knowledge of nature by situating them with respect to a problem I call "the problem of the subject." The problem stems from holding both that our senses are our primary access to reality and that the senses provide no access to the ultimate subjects of properties.[4] Instead, the senses present only (particularized) properties. This problem seems to have been widely recognized.[5] For example, in the General Scholium to the *Principia* Isaac Newton writes,

> we certainly do not know what is the substance of any thing. We see only the shapes and colors of bodies, we hear only their sounds, we touch only their external surfaces, we smell only their odors, and we taste their flavors. But there is no direct sense and there are no indirect reflected actions by which we know innermost substances (Newton 2004, 91)

For Newton, neither the senses nor reflection on the material provided by the senses leads to knowledge concerning the metaphysical subject of presented sensory qualities.[6] This raises the question as to how, if the senses provide no access to the metaphysical subjects of properties, we can think about, much less have knowledge concerning, such subjects, including ourselves.

[4] Of course, this is only a problem if the senses are our only means of access to reality. As we will see, Descartes, Leibniz, and the pre-critical Kant all deny this. For discussion of this problem, referred to as the "objection from perception", see (Broackes 2006, 158).

[5] See also (Locke 1970, 546 (EHU IV.iii.14)); (Boyle 1991, 13); (Kant 1992b, 385 (ID 2:393)); (Herz 1771, 123).

[6] Newton was in fact rather skeptical that we could have any knowledge of substance at all. In his unpublished *De Gravitatione* Newton claims that "God, by the sole action of thinking and willing, can prevent a body from penetrating any space defined by certain limits" (Newton 2004, 27). He goes on to argue that a space which reflects light and is impenetrable is indistinguishable from a space occupied by a material substance (a body). He then claims that "for the existence of these beings it is not necessary that we suppose some unintelligible substance to exist in which as subject there may be an inherent substantial form; extension and an act of the divine will are enough" (Newton 2004, 29). What isn't clear is whether Newton regards the notion of *substance* as unintelligible, or merely whether it is the notion of substance as *substantial form* that he rejects. Even if only the latter, it is clear that Newton here denies that we have any further epistemic access to substance beyond the grasp of properties of extension, impenetrability, etc.

The problem of the subject thus is the problem that arises because the senses do not provide access to the metaphysical subjects of the manifest qualities we perceive in the world around us. Let me briefly expand on what I mean by "metaphysical subject" and "access" before going on to look at the issue as it is addressed by Kant.

The basic notion of a metaphysical subject is a substance, understood as that in which properties inhere. Substances thus *substand*, and they also *subsist*, or exist independently of other things. As is well known, at least some prominent early modern figures denied a univocal conception of the subsistence of substance. As Descartes puts it,

> By substance we can understand nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence. And there is only one substance which can be understood to depend on no other thing whatsoever, namely God. In the case of all other substances, we perceive that they can exist only with the help of God's concurrence. Hence the term "substance" does not apply univocally, as they say in the Schools, to God and to other things; that is, there is no distinctly intelligible meaning of the term which is common to God and his creatures.[7]

The notion of "dependence" here is articulated in terms of what is needed for the *existence* of a thing, and a substance is that which needs nothing else for its existence [*ut nullâ aliâ re indigeat ad existendum*]. Descartes notes that only God can exist in such a fashion. But we might connect the subsistence of a thing to its substanding in the sense that subsisting things do not exist by virtue of their inherence in anything else.[8]

Hence, if a substanding thing subsists, in the sense that it does not itself inhere in anything else, then substances are loci of explanation in the sense that they are the terminii of questions concerning the instantiation of properties. Non-substantial beings, such as properties or events, might stand in as loci of explanation in limited cases. For example, one might say of a fight that it is vicious, or of a rainbow that it is beautiful. Similarly, one might hope of justice that it is blind. But the fight and the rainbow are adjectival on the beings which constitute them (respectively, the fighters and the raindrops), while talk of the blindness of justice, if we are to avoid reifying the property, is purely metaphorical. Hence, substance plays its explanatory role because the inherence relation that a property has to the substance which has it is a dependence relation that the substance does not stand in to anything else.[9]

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[7] (Descartes 1985, 210); AT VIII-A:24.

[8] Ultimately this may be what Descartes himself has in mind in discussing the independence of substance. In the French edition of the *Principles* he notes that "In the case of created things, some are of such a nature that they cannot exist without other things, while some need only the ordinary concurrence of God in order to exist. We make this distinction by calling the latter 'substances' and the former 'qualities' or 'attributes' of those substances" (Descartes 1985, 210). See also (Rozemond 1998, 7–8).

[9] For discussion of several of these points see (Langton 1998). Note also that, as discussed above, it is nevertheless

Proper or scientific knowledge of nature requires, in the broadly Aristotelian tradition within which Kant is enmeshed, knowledge of why things are the way that they are.[10] Because properties depend asymmetrically on the substances that have them, the study of substance is what is supposed to tell us why some property or pattern of properties is or may be instantiated. Hence, the object of proper scientific study is substance. Such knowledge, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was typically regarded as a priori, not (or not just) because (as in our contemporary usage of "a priori") it is supposedly knowable independently of experience, but rather because experience can at best provide knowledge of what is the case. For example, experience only tells one that some determinate quality is instantiated. It cannot tell one *why* that is the case.[11]

Leibniz provides one well-known account of the apriori source of our concept of a substance.[12] Leibniz argues that it is via introspection or "reflection" that one first grasps the concept of a substance in virtue of reflecting on one's self as a substance with causal powers. Leibniz develops this view in his reply to Locke's objections concerning innate ideas, arguing that reflection is a form of non-sensory awareness of our mind and its states.

> It is very true that our perceptions of ideas come either from the external senses or from the internal sense, which one may call reflection; but this reflection does not

compatible with the concept of a substance, so understood, that it *does* depend on something else. Descartes and Leibniz, for example, both consider finite substance to depend on the activity of God. What they deny is the claim that this dependence relation be understood in the same terms as the inherence relation. For discussion of this issue with respect to Kant in particular see notes 24 and 41, as well as the discussion in §2 below.

[10] This is true even of philosophers, such as Descartes, Locke, and Newton, who were otherwise seen to reject "scholastic" ways. For discussion see (De Jong and Betti 2010; 2010); (Pasnau 2014).

[11] A priori knowability in this sense of knowledge of that in virtue of which something is the case, and not merely that it is the case, was widely held in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to be the epistemic ideal towards which all doxastic states aim; see (Pasnau 2014) for discussion. The influential *Port Royal Logic* of Arnauld and Nicole includes a definition of the apriori in terms of the "demonstration of effects by their causes" (Arnauld and Nicole 1683, 233; see also Adams 1994, 109; Smit 2009; Hogan 2009b, 53–54). Leibniz argued that there is "no true or existent fact, no true assertion, without there being a sufficient reason why it is thus and not otherwise" (1969, 646 (§32)), and took the investigation of such grounds to be one of the central tasks of the intellect. Closer to Kant, Wolff provides a general definition of ground in terms of "that through which one can understand why something [i.e. what is grounded] is the case" (Wolff 1720, sec. 29). Kant's pre-critical conception of an antecedently determining ground seems to straightforwardly connect with these older notions. For discussion see (Longuenesse 2001, 69–70; Hogan 2009a, 53).

[12] Descartes is another obvious proponent of the importance of self-knowledge for knowledge of nature. For Descartes, all knowledge of substance is purely intellectual, as is indicated by his famous "wax argument" in the *Second Meditation*. As he puts it, "when I distinguish the wax from its outward forms - take the clothes off, as it were, and consider it naked" (CSM II:22; AT VII:32) then what is grasped purely intellectually is the nature of the wax as an enduring thing with determinable features (consisting of being extended, flexible, and changeable (CSM II:20; AT VII:31)), and possessing a particular modal profile (of taking on "countless" possible forms (CSM II:21; AT VII:31)). Descartes argues that "the perception I have of it [the wax] is a case not of vision or touch or imagination - nor has it ever been, despite previous appearances - but of purely mental scrutiny" (CSMII:21; AT VII:31). He also says in the *Third Meditation* that, "[m]y understanding of what a thing is, what truth is, and what thought is, seems to derive simply from my own nature" (CSMII:26; AT VII:38). For further discussion along these lines see (Pasnau 2013, 139). For objections to this reading see (Williams 1978, 220–1); (Carriero 2009, 440, note 32); cf. (Morris 2014).

> limit itself solely to the operations of the mind [*esprit*], as is said [in Locke's ECHU II.1.4]; it extends to the mind itself, and it is in apperceiving [*s'appercevant*] it that we apperceive [*appercevons*] substance (Leibniz 1978, 5:23–24).

This conception of reflection's role in the generation of the concept `<substance>` is repeated in other work, and expanded to include other central metaphysical concepts. Commenting on Locke's theory concerning the origin of all of our ideas in his *New Essays on Human Understanding* (1704), Leibniz says:

> Perhaps our able author will not entirely disagree with my opinion. For…he admits…that the ideas which do not originate in sensation come from reflection. Now, reflection is nothing other than attention to what is within us, and the senses do not give us what we already bring with us. Given this, can anyone deny that there is a great deal innate in our mind, since we are innate to ourselves, so to speak, and since we have within ourselves being, unity, substance, duration, change, action, perception, pleasure, and a thousand other objects of our intellectual ideas? And since these objects are immediate and always present to our understanding (though they may not always be perceived consciously on account of our distractions and our needs), why should it be surprising that we say that these ideas, and everything that depends upon them, are innate in us? (Leibniz 1996, 294)

Since reflection is simply "attention to what is within us", all relevant ideas (concepts) of a substantial subject are gained by reflection on ourselves. If we could not so reflect on our own nature, we would never even be able to *conceive* of the substance-accident relation. We might not always attend to the fact that we are simple, active, (etc.) substances, but this fact is available to us on reflection. In the *Monadology* Leibniz further emphasizes this position, arguing that

> it is the knowledge of necessary and eternal truths which distinguishes us from simple animals and gives us reason and the sciences, lifting us to the knowledge of ourselves and of God…it is thus, as we think of ourselves, that we think of being, of substance, of the simple and the compound, of the immaterial, and of God himself, conceiving of that which is limited in us as being without limits in him. These reflective acts provide us with the principal objects of our reasonings (Leibniz 1969, 645–6, §§29-30).

In these passages I take Leibniz to make two claims. First, the metaphysical knowledge that we have of nature depends on, and is posterior to, our epistemic grasp of ourselves as substantial beings. Second, the priority of self-knowledge in our understanding of nature comes from the role the self plays as a *source* of the content of our ideas (or concepts).

In arguing that the self is a privileged source of representational content, Leibniz endorses what I call the "Difference Thesis" regarding introspection.[13] Introspection provides a relation to ourselves as subjects that is epistemically distinctive with respect to that which we enjoy relative to any other part of nature. The privileged and peculiar epistemic access we have to ourselves, coupled with claims concerning what the self is—viz. a simple unitary substance—thus provides a basis for a Leibnizian resolution to the problem of the subject. It is this access that we each have to ourselves that is thus the basis of our capacity to represent anything external to (i.e. distinct from) us as a substantial thing. Given that representation of substance is a condition of knowledge of substance, rejecting the Difference Thesis would thus, according to Leibniz, be tantamount to rejecting the possibility of knowledge of nature *tout court*.

Kant explicitly indicates his endorsement of such a position in a 1769 note on Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*.[14]

> 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. (R3921, 17:346; see also R4493, 17:571-2; R5290, 18:144; R5297, 18:146)

Here Kant argues that the senses present only (in the outer case) determinate instances of determinables such as extension, solidity, rest, and motion. The senses by themselves do not present us with a subject of such qualities. The only presentation of such a subject comes in the representation of the self—the "idea of substance actually comes from the *repraesentatione sui ipsius*." We then move to a thought of external substances by treating the "constant predicates together" as a stand-in for the metaphysical subject. Kant says something similar in the 1770 *Inaugural Dissertation*.[15]

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[13] For discussion of the Difference Thesis in contemporary philosophizing about self-knowledge see (Gertler 2011, 10–12) and (Smithies and Stoljar 2012, 4–6).

[14] See also the discussion of this note in (Laywine 2005, 8–9).

[15] Kant's view of the role of an intuition or representation of self in the *Dissertation* is less clear. He presents the intellect as a faculty, the exercise of which allows the cognizing subject to come to know about an underlying noumenal reality. Such knowledge is accomplished by means of reflection upon metaphysical concepts such as "possibility, existence, necessity, substance, cause etc.", which are "abstracted from the laws inherent in the mind (by attending to its actions on the occasion of an experience)" (ID §8, 2:395). Here we have reference to the self's activity, but not explicit reference to an awareness of the self proper. Kant does say that the concepts of time and space are "cognized intuitively" via "the very action of the mind" (2:406), which perhaps suggests that some intuition of the mind's activity is possible. But in fact Kant actually makes few explicit claims in the Dissertation regarding the self as subject. For further discussion of Kant's views in the Dissertation and their relation to Kant's subsequently evolving views in the 1770's see (Dyck 2016). For speculation that Kant is influenced in his view here by his reading of Leibniz see (Allison 2015, 59).

> objects do not strike the senses in virtue of their form or aspect. Accordingly, if the various factors in an object which affect the sense are to coalesce into some representational whole there is needed an internal principle in the mind, in virtue of which those various factors may be clothed with a certain aspect, in accordance with stable and innate laws. ((Kant 1992a, 385); 2:393)

Kant continues to endorse the idea that the self is the source of our conception of a substantial thing well into the 1770's. In the quote that forms the epigraph to the present paper, Kant writes that an object may be represented only "according to its relations", i.e., only according to the qualities, and relations between those qualities, that are presented in sense experience.[16] However, in contrast to his position concerning external objects, Kant claims that we possess special access to a self whose qualities are not presented in this manner.[17] The self is thus the "original of all objects" in the sense that, as Allison Laywine puts it, "we somehow transfer our representations of the one true subject and apply it derivatively or by analogy to our thought of anything else."[18] For the pre-critical Kant, introspection provides a form of non-sensory intuitive acquaintance with the self as a metaphysical subject, and it is via this acquaintance that we can then form by analogy the representations of objects (construed as metaphysical subjects of properties) distinct from us.

Hence, despite Kant's somewhat radical departure from German rationalism in 1769, with the recognition of two distinct stems of cognition—viz. sensibility and intellect, Kant nevertheless continues to pursue a strategy for resolving the problem of the subject that is deeply sympathetic to the rationalist tradition as exemplified especially by Leibniz. By means of the Difference Thesis Kant, like Leibniz, argues for the legitimacy of central metaphysical concepts including, but not limited to, the concept of a metaphysical subject or substance.

Hume famously challenges the Difference Thesis, and with it the priority and source claims. He undermines the priority claim by arguing against the source claim. There is no substantial self that is disclosed by virtue of any possible act of introspection. Hence there is no way in which self-knowledge has any peculiar epistemic priority over knowledge of the rest of nature.

> Philosophers begin to be reconcil'd to the principle, that we have no idea of external substance, distinct from the ideas of particular qualities. This must pave

[16] For discussion of Kant's view that the objects of sense consist entirely of relations, or relational properties, see (McLear 2017).

[17] In a reflexion also from the mid-1770's, part of the *Duißburg Nachlaß*, Kant says that "The I is the intuition of a substance" (R4493, 17:571 (1772-5)). In the *Metaphysics* L_1 lectures, from roughly the same period, Kant contrasts consciousness of external objects with consciousness of the self. One intuits oneself immediately, but the same is not true of external objects (28:224). The self (as intelligence) so intuited is substantial, simple, and immaterial (28:225-6). For discussion of the various texts in the *Duisburg Nachlaß* and Kant's endorsement of the rational psychology he would come to criticize see (Guyer 1987; Carl 1989b; Carl 1989a; Serck-Hanssen 2001; Laywine 2005; Laywine 2006; Kitcher 2011).

[18] (Laywine 2005, 9); see also (Carl 1989a, 182:91–92, 97; Kitcher 2011, 73–74; Wuerth 2014, 104). For criticism of Carl's, and to a lesser degree Laywine's, position see (Allison 2015, 121–30).

> the way for a like principle with regard to the mind, that we have no notion of it, distinct from the particular perceptions. (Hume 1888, 635)

According to Hume, our concept of a self, just like our concept of any other member of the natural world, is ultimately of nothing more than a bundle of perceived properties. Anything else is just an invented fiction.

Similarly to Hume, for the critical Kant, there is no deep psychological or epistemological sense in which intuition of one's states differs from intuition of the states of other objects. We see evidence of this position by considering that, for Kant, "a manifold's combination (*Verbindung*) as such can never come to us through the senses" (B129). Predication is a form of combination. It's categorial counterpart is *inherence*. The senses cannot present anything as predicated of anything, and correspondingly, of any quality as inhering in anything.[19]

Kant also makes various statements concerning the fact that there is no intuition of the self as object. For example,

> 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*]. (A22/B37)

> The consciousness of ourself in accordance with the determinations of our state in internal perception is merely empirical, forever variable; it can give no standing or abiding self in this stream of inner appearances [*es kann kein stehendes oder bleibendes Selbst in diesem Flusse innerer Erscheinungen geben*], and is customarily called **inner sense** or **empirical apperception**. (A107)

Passages like these have led various interpreters to the conclusion that Kant, much like Hume, endorses an "elusiveness thesis" regarding the appearance (or, more accurately, lack thereof) of the self in inner sense. However, I take Kant's endorsement of the elusiveness of the subject in sensory introspection to be required by his view concerning the nature of the structure or content of intuition, not by the special subject matter—viz. the self—of inner sense. Intuition cannot provision a cognitive subject with representations whose content involves predication or the presentation of one thing's inhering in something else. There is nothing special, in this regard, concerning inner sense. As we saw above, the point about predication and inherence being absent in intuition is a wholly general claim, and holds of outer sense just as of inner. In general, intuition does not say anything "of" anything. It simply presents, and Kant takes sensory intuition to present qualities or states, not subjects thereof.[20] These include such things

[19] Kant's position on this matter is also clear from his statement that the dynamical categories (relation and modality) apply necessarily only to *experience* and not unconditionally to *intuition*. The mathematical categories (of extensive and intensive magnitude) are the only categories that apply "apodictically" to intuition (A160-1/B199-200; see also A178-80/B220-3).

[20] For further discussion of the content of intuition see (McLear 2015, sec. 3; 2016b; 2016c).

as shape, hardness, location, color, and so forth. These are features of objects, and being aware of them allows a subject to be cognitively connected to the objects in which the features inhere. However, such a cognitive connection does not amount to a representation that presents an object as having the relevant feature.

Consider the sensory grasp of the particular redness of a particular rose, in contrast with the grasp of a particular rose as being red. One can apprehend the redness of the particular rose without thereby apprehending that the rose is red. In apprehending this bit of the rose's redness, one is representing a particular portion of space and a particular quality as filling or bounding that space. In this way, intuition offers only the awareness of spatially and temporally grouped sensory qualities without any further representation of their underlying "unity" (as Kant would say) in a particular object.[21]

Thus, in contrast to Kant's views in the 1770's, where he explicitly contrasts the nature of what is given in introspection with that of extrospection, the critical Kant rejects any perceptual or intutive explication of the Difference Thesis. There is no intuition of the self as subject that provides the basis for our awareness of other substances distinct from ourselves. Empirical introspection and extrospection are, in this central respect, psychologically and epistemically on par.[22]

2 Apperception & the Substantial Self

As we've seen, at least by the publication of the first *Critique* Kant no longer understands the Difference Thesis in terms of any sort of perceptual or quasi-perceptual access to the self. He now denies that we can have anything like a privileged *intuition* of the self, and so no longer thinks that we obtain a representation of a substantial being by virtue of an intuition of the self.

However, the centrality of the transcendental unity of apperception, especially in the B-Deduction, indicates that there is *some* sense to be made of the centrality of self-awareness to resolving the problem of the subject. Pure apperception is like intuition in that the way in which the subject is represented in pure apperception involves its existence. However, the awareness in pure apperception of oneself as subject is wholly intellectual. For example, Kant says,

[21] One might object here that these considerations show at best that there is no *de dicto* awareness of a subject. But perhaps there is *de re* awareness. Insofar as intuition allows for the tracking and responsive differential discrimination of objects then this might count as a form of *de re* awareness; cf. (McLear 2015, 104–5 and note 60). But there is no further sense in which the awareness of sensory qualities in intuition extends to a sensory awareness of the metaphysical subject of those qualities, else the objections considered above would hold. For additional discussion of this issue see (McLear 2015, 97–106; 2016a, sec. 3.2).

[22] Note that here and throughout, unless otherwise indicated, I am referring specifically to *intuition* and the intuitive awareness of what is presented in inner and outer sense. Such intuitions do not straightforwardly count as "perceptions" (*Wahrnehmungen*) in Kant's sense, nor as "experiences" (*Erfahrungen*). For discussion of these distinctions see (McLear 2014, 770–2). For further discussion of Kant's rejection of a sensory or intuive explication of the Difference Thesis in the 1780's and of the parity of inner and outer sense see (McLear 2016c). Below, I also discuss the fact that the critical Kant allows for non-empirical access of the subject in pure apperception.

> this representation [viz. the "I think"] is an act [*Actus*] of spontaneity, i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. (B-Deduction §16, B132)

> 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. (B-Deduction §25, B157)

> 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)

> if I have called the proposition "I think" an empirical proposition, I would not say by this that the I in this proposition is an empirical representation; for it is rather purely intellectual, because it belongs to thinking in general. (Refutation of Mendelssohn's proof of the persistence of the soul, B423)

Kant's position in these passages is that sensory introspection provides only an awareness of states of feeling, sensation, etc. It provides no awareness of a subject of such states. In contrast, the awareness of one's self as *subject*, as an existing being on which mental states depend or inhere, is not sensory at all, but is itself an act of thought—viz. apperception.[23] It is here, in pure apperception, that the critical Kant reaches for the source of our representation of a substance. Kant says that "in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious…that I am" (B157). Similarly, Kant says in the Paralogisms that "in the consciousness of myself in mere thinking I am the **being itself**" (Paralogisms, General Remarks, B429; original emphasis). Texts such as these suggest the following argument. If, as Kant says, I am conscious in apperception of my own existence, then I am conscious of myself as the subject of the thought "I exist". In being conscious of myself as the subject of the thought "I exist" I am conscious of that thought as possessed by and thus dependent upon myself. Moreover, if what I have argued so far in this paper is correct, in Kant's view there is no other form of representation (i.e. either purely intellectually, or in inner or outer sense) in which such a relation between subject and property or state could be presented. Apperception, as the vehicle through which a subject becomes aware of their mental states as states of a particular subject—viz. oneself—is thus also the only possible means by which a cognizer could grasp this relation of dependence (as opposed to the

[23] Kant, in the *Anthropology* also contrasts the "feeling of self" [*Selbstgefühl*] possessed by the infant with the use of the first-person pronoun. "When [the child] starts to speak by means of 'I' a light seems to dawn on him, as it were…Before he merely felt himself, now he thinks himself" (An 7:127). Thus Kant rejects what, in contemporary discussion of this issue, has been called the "Uniformity Thesis" regarding self-knowledge. See, e.g., (Boyle 2009, 141); cf. (Shoemaker 1988); (Burge 1996; 2013); (Moran 2001). Boyle (2009), however, attributes to Kant the view that it is in inner sense that we are aware of ourselves as subjects (see p. 142, note 12), whereas I distinguish inner sense, as a form of intuiting, from pure apperception. On my reading, only pure apperception provides an awareness of oneself as subject.

merely grammatical relation between subject and predicate) between a metaphysical subject and a property.[24]

My suggestion then is that the subject remains a cognitive model for the conception of a substance as an underlying subject of properties even in the Deduction, as well as in the critical period more generally. Since the critical Kant no longer thinks we have any legitimate epistemic access to such a subject, in either sensory extro or introspection, the only source left that could present such a relation is via the "mineness" of thought itself. In having a first-person thought, one must be able to self-ascribe that thought, and so must be able to grasp the fact that the thought belongs to or depends on the subject having it.[25] Given that we in fact do plausibly represent properties as inhering in subjects (whether ourselves or external objects), Kant's view is that to do so each of us must in fact have actualized this capacity for self-ascription in introspection in our history as thinkers. More explicitly, my reconstruction of Kant's position is as follows.

1. The capacity for thought requires the capacity for representation of oneself as the subject/thinker of thought.
2. The representation of oneself as the thinker of a thought requires representation of oneself as a $\texttt{<substance>}_M$.
3. Sense experience cannot provide a subject with the representational content of a $\texttt{<substance>}_M$.
4. Other than the subject of thought, there are no relevant a priori sources of a priori content.
    a. There are no innate ideas/concepts, only innate capacities.
    b. Awareness of mental activity alone cannot be sufficient for acquiring the concept $\texttt{<substance>}_M$.

[24] That Kant believed we could be so conscious of the self as subject in this sense is also on display in his criticism of spinozism. In the Pölitz lectures on religion from 1783/84, Kant goes so far as to say that "the concept of a substance arises when I perceive in myself that I am not the predicate of any other thing" (28:1042; Kant (1978), 75). Kant then argues that the spinozist is faced with a dilemma. Since there is only one substance in which everything inheres either I, as subject, am this substance, and therefore God—which contradicts my dependence, or I am an accident—which contradicts my awareness of myself as subject, as "I" (28:1052; cf. 28:1042). See (Allison 1980, 207) for relevant discussion.

[25] It is in this sense that the "I" is the "substratum of all empirical judgments" (R5453 18:186; cf. (Allison 2004, 279)). My interpretation contrasts sharply with that of (Valaris 2008, 3), who argues that it is inner sense, and not apperception per se, that is responsible for the awareness of a mental state as one's own. It also contrasts with Allison's position that "Since inner sense has no manifold of its own, there are no sensible representations through which the self can represent itself to itself as object" (Allison 2004, 279). I deny the first part of this claim—inner sense *does* have its own "manifold"—so there are representations in inner sense that are the basis for representation of the self as object. However, these representations, just like those of outer sense, do not provide a subject of properties (in this case, mental states). That only happens in inner experience, which is the result of synthesis by the categories. Hence, just as with the outer objects of extrospection, introspection reveals an empirical subject only because of synthesis, which in turn depends on the grasp of a subject of properties in the act of self-ascribing one's representations in the "I think".

5. All representational content is based either on a priori or a posteriori (experiential) sources.
6. ∴ The only possible source of the representation of a <substance>$_M$ is the purely intellectual representation of oneself in the act of thinking—i.e. Awareness of oneself as the subject of thought is awareness of oneself as a <substance>$_M$.

Let me take the evidence for each of these premises in turn. Concerning premise (1), I take this to be entailed by Kant's famous claim that the "**I think** must be able to accompany all my representations (Transcendental Deduction §17, B131)".

Premise (2) is perhaps the the crux of the argument. There is textual support for this position in Kant's discussion of Spinoza in the *Pölitz Religion* lectures. There Kant says that,

> my own self-consciousness testifies that I do not relate all my actions to God as the final subject which is not the predicate of any other thing, and thus the concept of a substance arises when I perceive in myself that I am not the predicate of any further thing. For example, when I think, I am conscious that my I, and not some other thing, thinks in me. Thus I infer that this thinking in me does not inhere in another thing external to me but in myself, and consequently also that I am a substance, i.e. that I exist for myself, without being the predicate of another thing. (*Pölitz Religion*, 28:1042 (1783/84))[26]

In this passage Kant argues that the content of self-consciousness is the basis for the conception of a substance, and specifically, in virtue of the awareness of oneself as the ground of one's thoughts ("when I think, I am conscious that my I, and not some other thing, thinks in me"). Now, Kant does say that "I *infer* that this thinking in me does not inhere in another thing external to me" (my emphasis), but the ground from which this inference is made is the content of self-consciousness, which discloses oneself as the subject or thinker of one's thoughts. In Kant's published work he takes a similar line. For example, in the First Paralogism of first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant says that,

> in all our thinking the **I** is the subject, in which thoughts inhere only as determinations, and this I cannot be used as the determination of another thing. Thus everyone must necessarily regard Himself as a substance, but regard his thinking only as accidents of his existence and determinations of his state. (A349)

While Kant does not go so far here as to explicitly argue for the acquisition of the concept of a <substance>$_M$ via reflection on the content of self-consciousness, he does endorse the anti-spinozistic point he makes in the lectures concerning the necessity of construing oneself as a

[26] Further on in the same set of lectures, Kant also states that [The conception of myself as accident] contradicts my concept of my I, in which I think myself as the ultimate subject which is not the predicate of any other thing. ((*Pölitz Religion*, 28:1052-3 (1783/84))

substance in light of the content of self-consciousness. Moreover, Kant's use of "inhere" and reference to acts of thought as "accidents" indicates that he has something other than a merely grammatical conception of substance in mind, viz. a <substance>$_M$.[27]

Concerning premise (3), Kant clearly denies that our senses provide the content for a <substance>$_M$. This much is plain from the discussion, above, that the senses do not combine anything and that the relational categories are constitutive of experience but not intuition. With respect to (4a), Kant is quite explicit in his reply to Eberhard that neither the categories nor the forms of intuition are innately possessed by the subject upon its creation (OD 8:222-3).[28] Concerning the categories themselves, Kant also speaks of their "givenness" (A728-9/B756-7), as well as the "occasional causes of their generation" (A86/B118).[29] None of these statements make sense if Kant regarded the content of the categories as innate.

Kant's position regarding (4b) is less clear.[30] He certainly places a great deal of emphasis, in §15 of the B-Deduction, on the awareness of the act of synthesis, and not merely the products of such synthesis (B130; see also A108).[31] This might suggest that he holds something akin to Locke's view regarding our sensory awareness of the mind's operation (ECHU 2.1.4). Locke argues that we *infer* the existence of a substance whose operations we are aware of via reflection. This point is especially clear in Locke's first letter to Stillingfleet. There he says,

> We find that we can have no true Conception of any Modes or Accidents, but we must conceive a Substratum or Subject, wherein they are; i.e., That they cannot exist or subsist of themselves. Hence the mind perceives their necessary Connexion with Inherence or being Supported; which being a relative Idea superadded to the red Colour in a Chery, or to Thinking in a Man, the Mind frames the correlative Idea of a Support. (Locke 1697a, 39–40)

Though the mind perceives a necessary connection between a mode or accident and the subject of that accident, the mind does not perceive the subject itself. Rather, the subject is simply a "correlative Idea" inferentially connected to the notion of a mode or accident.

However, Locke does say that

> Experience then convinces us, that we have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence, and an internal infallible perception that we are. In every act of sensation,

[27] Why not also (or instead) the conception of a <substance>$_E$? As we will see below, in §2.1.1, Kant's discussion in the First Paralogism is targeted precisely *against* the legitimacy of any inference from the concept of a <substance>$_M$ to that of a <substance>$_E$.

[28] For discussion see (Allison 1973); see also (Vanzo 2016).

[29] See also Refl. 4172 (1769–1770), 17:443; ML$_1$, 28:190, 233–234 (1777-80); Metaphysik Mrongovius, 29:762–763 (1782/3); Metaphysik Volckmann, 28:373–374 (1784/85).

[30] Thanks to Karolina Hübner for encouraging clarity on this point.

[31] For criticism of Kant's position here see, e.g., Kitcher's disparagement of "synthesis watching" in (Kitcher 1990, 126–7; cf. Kitcher 2011, 243).

> reasoning, or thinking, we are conscious to ourselves of our own being; and, in this matter, come not short of the highest degree of certainty. (ECHU 4.9.3)

The awareness of one's own existence is "intuitive" (not in Kant's sense) and therefore certain, and is something we possess in the occurrence of any mental act whatsoever. For Locke, reflection on one's mental operations and ideas provides certainty of one's existence, as well as the idea of oneself as substance. But there is no necessary connection between the two. Further, Locke has no account of the "mineness" of mental activity—i.e. of the awareness of one's thoughts (or "ideas" more broadly) as one's own. On Locke's account, the awareness of ideas, or mental operations generally, is sensory and provides the basis for inferring the existence of a subject of those states. But it doesn't provide a basis for inferring that this subject is *oneself*. Similarly, the intuitive awareness of oneself as existing in any act of thinking is not thereby the awareness of oneself as the subject of that thought (or at least, Locke gives us no account of how this could be). Locke's position is merely that the perception of one's existence is just as certain, if not more so, as the perception of some idea.

This is in contrast to Kant, who appeals to pure apperception to explain *both* one's awareness of oneself as existing, and one's awareness of one's thoughts as dependent on and generated by one's intellectual activity. Moreover, since Kant denies that pure apperception can occur absent one form of sensory experience or another, including the mere temporal relations between one's thoughts or representations (B157-8), one's awareness of one's existence entails one's awareness of an act of thinking or representing and vice versa. If this is correct then Kant not only does not think that an awareness of mental activity is sufficient for explaining one's awareness of oneself as subject of such activity, he actually assumes the existence of the latter sort of self-awareness as a primitive notion, which he then uses to explain our awareness of our own mental activity and our representations more broadly.

This view of the fundamental role of self-consciousness has some support from the fact that, immediately after introducing the need for an account of the "unity" of representation, which must be sought "someplace higher" (B131), Kant goes on to argue, in §16, that the source of this awareness of unity is in the "I think" (B131-2). It is precisely the potentially explicit awareness of ownership inherent in the act of self-ascribing a thought that allows one to move from the mere having, in inner sense, of a sensory awareness of (what are in fact) one's states to being aware of oneself as being in some state or other, and thus as the subject of those states.

> The thought that these representations given in intuition all together belong to me means, accordingly, the same as that I unite them in a self-consciousness, or at least can unite them therein, and although it is itself not yet the consciousness of the synthesis of the representations, it still presupposes the possibility of the latter, i.e., only because I can comprehend their manifold in a consciousness do I call them all together my representations; for otherwise I would have as multicolored, diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious. (B134)

Kant need not be construed here as arguing that we grasp the underlying metaphysical identity of the subject in the having of I-thoughts. He thus need not be read as conflating the metaphysical issue of what it is that constitutes the connection between distinct properties or representations in a single subject with the epistemological question of the sameness of the subject of (self-)ascription.[32] Instead, Kant argues here that we are only in a position to even be able to think about the metaphysical question of the connection between properties or representations and the subject which has them because we already grasp one such instance of such a connection in the having of an "I-thought".

If the above is correct, and assuming the truth of premise (5)—that all representational content is derived either from a priori or a posteriori sources—then the conclusion would seem to follow. The only possible source for the concept $\texttt{<substance>}_M$ is the purely intellectual representation of oneself in the act of thinking. We can also see further support for this conclusion in two related issues.

First, Kant emphasizes that pure apperception is "original" because "it is that self-consciousness which, because it produces the representation I think…cannot be accompanied by any further representation" (B132). This "intellectual consciousness" (Bxl) of oneself as the subject and owner of one's mental states cannot itself be derived from any other kind of representation. Kant goes so far to say that the principles of "the objective determination of all representations, insofar as cognition can come from them….are all derived from the principle of the transcendental unity of apperception" (B142). Thus, Kant is not trying to give an account or theory of how we can answer the epistemic question of the basis of the "mineness" of a thought. Instead, he is using the fact that thinking presupposes the grasp (or capacity thereto) of one's thoughts as one's own as a way of supplying a potential answer to the question of how we can think of a metaphysical subject that is the unity of any given set of appearances at all.[33]

Second, Kant's entire strategy in the critical period involves elucidating the cognitive powers of the *cognizing subject*. Kant repeatedly, and throughout his career, characterizes a power as a relation of a substance to its accidents and explicitly denies that the soul, as cognizing subject, could itself be regarded as a power, as e.g., Wolff did (ML_1, 28:261; see also MH, 28:25, 145; R 4762, 17:720 [1775–78]).[34] Moreover, accidents, as Kant clearly states in the

[32] Kitcher (1990, 128) makes such an accusation.

[33] Kant was not the first to argue that self-consciousness is fundamental in this way. For discussion of the intellectual context of Kant's claims concerning apperception see (Thiel 1997; 2001). Of particular note is Thiel's discussion of Johann Berhard Merian in (Thiel 1996). As he notes there, Merian is the first to utilize the phrase "original apperception" and also construes "apperception" in a way which bears at least some similarity to Kant's usage. I disagree with Thiel, however, in his statement that Kant, like Merian, does not utilize a notion of the self as a mental substance in the account of pure apperception. See (Thiel 2001, 476). As we will see below, rather than denying the awareness of the self as a metaphysical subject, Kant rather carefully tries to thread his way between the excesses of rational psychology and the rather austere position typically attributed to him.

[34] Kant comments extensively on the relation between a substance and its accidents in the Herder lectures. For discussion see (Watkins 2005, ch. 2). And as Watkins (2005, ch. 6) makes clear, Kant's conception of substances as possessing powers continues into the critical period and is integral to the argument of the Analogies.

first *Critique*, are "determinations of a substance that are nothing other than particular ways for it to exist" (A186/B229), the existence of which is called "inherence, in contrast to the existence of the substance, which is called 'subsistence'" (A187-7/B230).[35] While Kant's conception of the cognizing subject as a subject whose powers explain the existence of its accidents (as mental states), doesn't entail anything in particular about his view concerning pure apperception, his theory of cognition does require some explanation of the source of the representation of such a metaphysical subject.

Given these points, and the obvious endorsement by Kant of (5), that all representational content is either a priori or a posteriori, Kant is thus in a position to conclude that pure apperception seems to be the best (and in fact only remaining) explanation of the source for the representational content of the concept of a $\texttt{<substance>}_M$.

2.1 Objections & Replies

Nevertheless, there are several important objections to this account that deserve discussion. In brief, we need to consider whether this position is consistent with Kant's argument in the first Paralogism, whether it is consistent with his strategy in the Metaphysical Deduction, and whether the proposed account ultimately can make sense even as a qualified solution to the problem of the subject. I take these in turn.

2.1.1 The First Paralogism

First, one might object that the position I attribute to Kant violates his commitment to epistemic humility, particularly concerning the nature of the subject as a substance. Essentially, one worries that I attribute to Kant a position similar or identical to the position in rational psychology against which he argues in the First Paralogism.

In the A-edition version of the Paralogism, Kant agrees that "in all our thinking the **I** is subject" but asks what sort of use we are to make of this knowledge (A349). Here he is primarily concerned with the issue of the supposed *permanence* of the soul, and the extent to which we might be able to infer from the necessity of conceiving of oneself as (in my terms) a $\texttt{<substance>}_M$ to the conclusion that one is (again in my terms) a $\texttt{<substance>}_E$.

> That I, as a thinking being, **endure** for myself, that naturally I **neither arise** nor **perish** - this I can by no means infer, and yet it is for that alone that the concept of

[35] See also R5861 18:371 (1783-4). For discussion see (Longuenesse 1998, 331–2 and note 17); (Rosefeldt 2000, 38 and note 59)). One means of downplaying Kant's appeals to a cognizing subject of such accidents is to argue that the existence of cognitive powers does not, for Kant, imply the existence of a metaphysical subject. (Kitcher 1990) presents one such argument by attempting to contextualize Kant's view as accepting several Humean premises, including a "bundle view" of the self. For criticism of the plausibility of Kitcher's position see (Allison 1990, ch. 4; Wuerth 2006; Wuerth 2014, ch. 1).

> the substantiality of my thinking subject can be useful to me; without that I could very well dispense with it altogether. (A349)

Kant's primary aim here is not to argue against the position that the soul is substance, but rather to argue against the epistemic fecundity of an argument from the first-person-derived concept of a $\texttt{<substance>}_M$ to a conclusion about the permanence of such a subject or substance.[36] This is especially clear given Kant's insistence, immediately prior to the quote given just above, that

> everyone must necessarily regard Himself as a substance, but regard his thinking only as accidents of his existence and determinations of his state. (A349)

Now, it might be objected that such an interpretation attributes to Kant a position he would have deemed "unacceptably dogmatic", insofar as it would seem to allow that the paralogistic argument Kant articulates is in fact successful in establishing that we are metaphysical substances.[37] However, this objection confuses the issue of how we must regard or represent ourself as being, and the issue of whether such strictures on our self-conception yield knowledge. Kant can hold the former position without risk of dogmatism, without thereby endorsing the latter position. And this is exacty what he in fact does in the A-edition version of the First Paralogism.

In any case, even if the above defense works for the first edition of the Paralogisms, one might object that, looking at the B-edition, this defense is not cogent. For, in the second edition of the Paralogisms, Kant appears to explicitly deny that pure apperception reveals anything about the subject.

> Thinking, taken in itself [*für sich*], is merely the logical function and hence the sheer spontaneity of combining the manifold of a merely possible intuition; and in no way does it present the subject of consciousness as appearance…In this way I represent myself to myself neither as I am nor as I appear to myself, but rather I think myself only as I do every object in general from whose kind of intuition I abstract. If here I represent myself as **subject** of a thought or even as **ground** of thinking, then these ways of representing do not signify the categories of substance or cause, for these categories are those functions of thinking (of judging) applied to our sensible intuition, which would obviously be demanded if I wanted to **cognize** myself. (B428-9)

[36] For a similar reading see (Van Cleve 1999, 173). Karl Ameriks (2000, 67) argues that the A-edition first Paralogism fails to provide any non-spurious argument against the status of soul as a noumenal substance. I agree with Ameriks that Kant does not argue against the status of the soul as a substance, but deny that he ever intends to do so. His main aim concerns the claim that we could have knowledge of the *permanence* of the soul, which he consistently denies. For a similar position see (Wuerth 2014, 166–7).

[37] For such an objection see (Proops 2010, 462ff).

Kant here denies that pure apperception ("I think") presents any sort of sensory or intellectual appearance, but he also might seem to deny that pure apperception presents anything as subject or ground, in the metaphysical sense with which the categories are concerned. However, there are three points of note that mitigate these concerns.

First, Kant is, as in the first edition, focused on the issue of cognition, as the last clause of the passage indicates, so his rhetoric is directed at the position that we have cognition of the subject as permanent (using the category of substance). That one falls short of cognition given what is presented in self-consciousness is compatible with there being something of which one is aware in the having of such self-consciousness. In this way Kant's position is exactly the same as was stated in the A-edition of the First Paralogism.

Second, and reinforcing the concern with cognition, Kant goes on to say that "in the consciousness of myself in mere thinking I am the **being itself**" (B429; emphasis in original), which indicates that though I have no cognition of myself (that would require intuition, of which there are none in pure apperception), I nevertheless am conscious of myself as the subject of my thoughts.[38]

Finally, the fact that, in pure apperception, I am aware of my thoughts as *mine*, goes beyond any merely logical or grammatical claim, as might be granted merely to the form of categorical judgment or the unschematized category of substance. The awareness of a thought as mine is not simply the awareness of a grammatical subject of predication. It is an awareness of *me*, and specifically, of myself as think*er*—the "being itself" as Kant says.[39] Kant allows that we have such awareness of ourselves as thinkers (indeed he argues for this) in the B-Deduction. He does not renounce this position in either edition of the first Paralogism (or in the Paralogisms more generally), and nothing he argues there goes against it. If this is correct, it does mean that Kant's argument in the Paralogisms is perhaps more limited than some have taken it to be. But it doesn't mean ascribing to him either the kind of position in rational psychology that he criticizes or in limiting him to a wholly austere position regarding the self as subject.

A further objection, raised by Karl Ameriks, is that the admission that the "I" is "absolute" in the metaphysical sense here at issue does not actually prove what is needed.

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[38] For a similar point see (Wuerth 2014, 167–8).

[39] Here Stephen Engstrom (2013, 52–53) disagrees, arguing that "I cannot identify the I of original apperception with myself as an individual person or as one subject distinguished from other possible subjects" (52). He justifies this claim by the fact that apperception in §16 of the B-Deduction is "pure, not empirical" (52) and thus contains the formal ground for any particular "I" but not a particular "I" (viz. *me*, as thinker) itself. If the argument of the present paper is correct then this position is mistaken. There could be no empirical presentation of a subject in intuition, because intuition provides only particularized properties. Therefore, there is only one way to be aware of oneself as subject – i.e. as think*er* – and that is via (non-empirical) pure apperception. Engstrom thus saddles Kant with a problem he does not in fact have—viz. concerning how one moves from such a "formal 'I'" to the particular "I" that is oneself. It is not obvious to me how this problem is answered on Engstrom's interpretation. It seems we can avoid the problem altogether by noting that while pure apperception involves an awareness of the self absent any predicate, this is compatible with one's awareness being of *oneself*, since, as has been much discussed in the philosophy of mind, self-ascription need not involve any appeal to identifying information, on pain of regress. For discussion see, e.g. (Shoemaker 1988; 1994, 257–8).

> The representation "I" is absolute here in that there is no proper way of representing these thoughts which leaves no room for the phrase "I think". Yet this does not mean that I am truly the absolute subject of my thoughts as a substantial mental being…as long as it is metaphysically possible…that what I take to be a substantial soul is ultimately a set of (individually) non-mental beings…In such a case I (as the thinking personality that I take myself to be) would really be an accident or resultant of those beings, and so but a prima-facie or relative and not absolute subject, and yet the representation "I" would retain its ultimacy [in the sense at issue].[40]

Ameriks (2000, 70) takes this possibility to be simply ignored in the A-edition Paralogisms, but then taken up in the B-edition, where Kant provides an argument against the "mere assertion" of the substantiality of the soul at B410-12. Ameriks puts his challenge in terms of realization by multiple substances, but the issue could just as well be pressed by appeal to a single substance (such as God) of which we are all accidents. This is also suggested by the fact that Kant goes on to claim that "it is not determined whether I could exist and be thought of only as subject and not as predicate of another thing" (B419).[41]

However, all that these passages show is that Kant denies that we can cognize or otherwise come to *know* ourselves as ultimate subjects. Kant's arguments do not show that it is unwarranted to *believe* that the self is substantial.[42] The arguments are also perfectly compatible with the central interpretive claim that I advance—viz. that it is in pure apperception, and nowhere else, that we come to be able to represent a metaphysical subject. Perhaps pure apperception is provisioning us with a misrepresentation. Sufficient theoretical grounds could never be given to warrant knowledge of the truth of it or its opposite.[43]

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[40] (Ameriks 2000, 69–70).

[41] (Wuerth 2014, 169) attempts to address this problem by means of an appeal to Kant's "Virgil argument", asserting that *multiple* substances could *not* together have unified thoughts characteristic of a single subject employing the first-person concept. Even if we allow that this is true (though Kant's criticism of the "Virgil" or related "Achilles" argument at A352-3 tells against this), it does not resolve the real problem at issue, which is how we can know that we are substances rather than accidents. Wuerth does, however, point out the compatibility of Kant's view with our being *dependent* substances; see (Wuerth 2014, 170–1, cf. 85). Wuerth also argues, concerning a passage from ML_2 discussing Spinoza and addressed above in note 24, that Kant denies the coherence of considering the self as an accident of another substance. This seems correct. Unfortunately, the dating of the lecture notes is to 1783/4, and the issue that Ameriks raises are prompted by statements Kant makes in the B-edition of 1787. This doesn't show that Kant changes his mind (and his later notes suggest that he does not). But it may suggest that Kant denies that we could, on the basis of the testimony of consciousness, *cognize* or *know* that we are not accidents of the single world-substance.

[42] Kant may in fact think that we are *required* to take ourselves as substances insofar as we take our mental states to be accidents inhering in us as metaphysical subjects.

[43] For one sketch of how a kantian metaphysics of the self could be fleshed out in terms of something other than a single substance see (Marshall 2010, sec. 4). However, there may well be practical grounds on which Kant thinks we could have cognition of the self as substance, particularly in terms of its freedom, activity, and moral status. For discussion see, e.g. (Schafer 2014; forthcoming).

2.1.2 The Metaphysical Deduction

The second objection to my proposed interpretation is that in maintaining that the "I" remains the original of all objects by providing us with a model of a metaphysical subject, the interpretation goes against Kant's strategy in the so-called "Metaphysical Deduction" (MD) to derive the categories from the structure of judgment. Why would Kant need to appeal to self-knowledge in the provisioning of the concept of a substance if he took his argument in the MD, an argument that appears *before* the discussion of apperception, as broadly cogent?

In reply, it is important to note that the MD provides only a "clue" to the categories. Moreover, the clue to these categories is merely logical in nature. For example, the form of judgment from which Kant derives the category of substance is the categorical judgment – i.e. judgment with subject-predicate structure. Kant notes that as far as logic is concerned any concept may be used either as subject or as predicate. But the category of substance is used to specify that which "in experience must always be considered as subject, never as mere predicate" (B129). Note that Kant continues to speak here of substance in logico-grammatical terms. He also says of the unschematized category that it has "purely logical significance" (e.g. B186), that it [merely?] "contains the logical function" (B298), and that it is a "logical representation of the subject" (B300). When Kant then discusses the "schematized" version of the category of substance he says that it "is the persistence of the real in time" (A144/B183). But what falls between these two conceptions of substance is precisely that which Kant requires in resolving the problem of the subject—viz. a metaphysical subject of accidents or properties broadly construed—and is available neither from any experience of phenomenal substance as the permanent (which presupposes this conception) nor from the merely logico-grammatical conception of a subject of predicates. So, whence comes the conception of this metaphysical subject?[44] If my discussion above is correct, it comes from the only source it *could* come from—viz. the subject's grasp of itself and its states as its own.[45]

At best, however, this just shows that Kant *needs* to appeal to apperception to fill a gap in his view concerning the sources of representational content and the content of our a priori concepts. It doesn't tell us that he was aware of such a gap, or that he intended to appeal to apperception to

[44] One might object here that similar worries could be raised concerning the other categories, and particularly the relational categories. While this may be true, it does not seem to be an objection, but perhaps rather evidence as to why Kant would hold that the categories are derived from the principle of apperception (B142), and would further cement my claim that pure apperception is playing an analogous role in the critical period (albeit suitably pared of much of its metaphysical excess) as intuition of the subject played in the 1770's. For an extended defense of this role of apperception in the derivation of *all* of the categories see (Schulting 2012).

[45] Note that I make no claim here concerning how the cognizing subject determines, for any given quality or cluster of qualities presented in sense, which are the accidents and which the substance. It may well depend on the cognizer's ability to distinguish one or more predicates as more stable with respect to others (e.g. impenetrability vs. color), and of some concepts as reciprocially interchangeable (e.g. `<body>` and `<divisible>`). For discussion of these issues see (Longuenesse 1998, 327–30; Rosefeldt 2000, 33–35). However, I disagree with Longuenesse's claim that "the concept of substance has no other meaning than that of being the referent of the term x to which all concepts of real determinations are attributed in judgment" (1998, 331). This makes the concept of substance too much the thin grammatical version of the Metaphysical Deduction.

fill it. The existence of the Metaphysical Deduction might then be seen as evidence against both of these latter points. Connected to this, we can also articulate an additional concern that, if I am correct, Kant's reliance on apperception in the way I claim might undermine his argumentative strategy for *all* the categories, insofar as they are supposed to be derived or derivable from the forms of judgment.[46] Does apperception therefore make the Metaphysical Deduction otiose?

I want to make three points in response to such worries. First, as I have already noted in introducing my positive proposal, Kant actually says in the B-Deduction that the principles of "the objective determination of all representations, insofar as cognition can come from them…are all derived from the principle of the transcendental unity of apperception" (B142). Moreover, the structure of his argument in the B-Deduction also strongly suggests, and possibly even requires, construing the categories as depending on apperception. For example, Kant is clear in §15 that all unity of concepts, including the categories, depends on a unity "someplace higher" (B131). Given the content of §16, this is clearly apperception that Kant has in mind.

Second, it is not at all clear that *all* of the categories might be derivable (much less derived) from apperception.[47] For example, perhaps only the categories of relation are so connected to apperception that they gain at least part of their content from it.[48]

Finally, even if the categories all owe at least some of their structure or content to apperception, this does not render otiose the strategy Kant pursues in the argument of the Metaphysical Deduction, for there Kant is primarily concerned to provide some unitary and a priori basis for determining exactly which of our concepts are cognitively fundamental and a priori.

> Transcendental philosophy has the advantage but also the obligation to seek its concepts in accordance with a principle, since they spring pure and unmixed from the understanding, as absolute unity, and must therefore be connected among themselves in accordance with a concept or idea. Such a connection, however, provides a rule by means of which the place of each pure concept of the understanding and the completeness of all of them together can be determined *a priori*, which would otherwise depend upon whim or chance. (A67/B92)

This then is the central role for the argument of the Metaphysical Deduction, in providing a principled and a priori basis for *exhaustively* determining which are the fundamental concepts. Kant wants an argument which,

> has not arisen rhapsodically from a haphazard search for pure concepts, of the completeness of which one could never be certain, since one would only infer it

[46] Thanks to Colin Marshall, Eric Watkins, and Tobias Rosefeldt for discussion of this point.

[47] For an attempt to show that Kant not only intends to derive the categories from apperception, but does so successfully, if not fully explicitly, in the first *Critique*, see (Schulting 2012). I make no such strong claims here.

[48] It is also interesting to note here that in Kant's notes for a deduction in the 1770s, of the three "titles of the understanding" with which he is concerned, two are relational categories (i.e. cause-effect, and substance). See (Guyer 1987); (Carl 1989b, 82–103); (Laywine 2005; 2006) for relevant discussion.

> through induction, without reflecting that in this way one would never see why just these and not other concepts should inhabit the pure understanding. (A81/B106-7)

Hence, even if I am right concerning the connection between apperception and the content of the concept <substance>, and it is true that there is a similar connection for all the other categories, there would still remain, for Kant, a need for a derivation like the kind he sketches in the Metaphysical Deduction.

2.1.3 Indeterminacy

One further objection concerns the status of such indeterminate "consciousness" of oneself as subject. As I've argued above, this consciousness is not something that is or could ever rise to the level of cognition or knowledge. How then could a mental state that counts as neither cognition nor knowledge provide anything of sufficiently determinate content that it could resolve the problem of the subject I've outlined here? Even worse, if the consciousness of the "I" as subject is bereft of all qualities, as it must be if the apperception is "pure" in the sense with which Kant is concerned, how is it that one is aware of any feature of the self at all?

In reply to the first point, all that is being claimed concerning Kant's argument in the first *Critique* is that consciousness of the self in pure apperception remains the sole basis for the possession of representational states presenting a metaphysical subject—a <substance>$_M$. This is compatible with that representation being had in a context where cognition or knowledge is nevertheless impossible.

Concerning the second point, as Kant says, "I am the being itself" that is thinking, but whatever I am aware of with respect to myself beyond this fact in any act of thought (or any self-ascription of a mental state more broadly), that awareness is dependent on (or "determined" by) some empirical intuition. This means that one is not aware of any feature of the *noumenal* self other than that the appearance of such and such ways (e.g. as upset, hungry, believing that it will rain, etc.) of existing. With respect to how one appears to oneself, it is via an empirical grasp of some quality in introspection (via inner sense—e.g. pain) and then the self-ascription of that quality to oneself via the intellectual act of pure apperception—e.g. that *I* am in pain—which apprehends only the "mineness" of whatever was given in inner sense.

3 Conclusion

We have seen that Kant must provide an account of how we come to have the representation of a subject of accidents or properties broadly construed—viz. a substance. While the Kant of the 1770s attempts to provide a broadly Leibnizian account, according to which we have special intuitive access to the self as a substantial subject, this route is no longer an option in the critical period. We thus see that the mature critical Kant confronts the problem of explaining

our representation of substance in its most acute form. Given Kant's prohibition in intuition of the self, and his broader epistemic humility regarding the possibility of cognition of any robust feature of the self (such as its immortality or simplicity), he would seem to be entirely without the cognitive resources necessary for explaining the experience and knowledge that we seemingly do possess concerning a world of substantial bodies in physical interaction, and the empirical subjects who cognize them.

Kant's ingenious move is to argue that, even amongst such limited resources as allowed by the epistemic humility characteristic of the critical period, the "I" still remains the original of all objects. It does so in the sense that the act of self-ascription itself is sufficient for grasping the dependence of the thought on its "owner", and thus grasping the basic relationship between a subject and its properties necessary for understanding anything as a substance, and thus as the potential object of properly scientific knowledge. Such self-ascription doesn't tell us anything about what the subject is. Indeed, we cannot even know whether this representation accurately describes the reality of our own existence as ultimate subjects. Thus nothing about the position I've ascribed to Kant on this matter violates his overarching epistemic humility. Further, while the I-as-subject-model grasped in the act of having a first-person thought is a necessary condition of achieving scientific knowledge of objects, it may well be that there are other conditions that are also necessary for properly scientific knowledge of some domain to be had, and that these conditions might differ with respect to the objects of inner vs. outer sense.[49]

I conclude by noting two attractive features of the manner in which this interpretation fits into the arc of Early Modern debate concerning the significance of self-consciousness and self-knowledge. First, looking backward, this interpretation clarifies at least one line of response that Kant provides to Hume. Hume is notoriously critical of the position that we have any knowledge of the nature of the self (as a substance), or any knowledge derived from our knowledge of the nature of the self (e.g. as being a *simple* substance).

> THERE are some philosophers, who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity. … Unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience, which is pleaded for them, nor have we any idea of *self*,

[49] For example, Kant claims in several places that knowledge of outer objects as substances requires that we have *touched* things and felt the filling of space that comes along with this. Kant states in the MFNS, for example, in the Remark to Proposition 5 of the Dynamics, that the awareness of repulsive force is acquired via the sense of touch (4:510). He also seems to endorse this position in the *Anthropology*, which is one of the reasons touch is the "most important" of the senses (7:155) and, in the anthropology lectures, explicitly says that touch is necessary for acquiring the concept of a substance (*Anthropology Friedländer* (1775/6), 25:494; cf. *Anthropology Mrongovius* (1784/5), 25:1242). Kant's position thus seems to be that we cannot even *think* of matter as filling (as opposed to merely occupying) space, unless we have had sensations of resistance, and that it is the space-filling property of matter that renders it *substantial*.

> after the manner it is here explain'd. For from what impression cou'd this idea be deriv'd ? (Hume 1888, THN I.iv.6, p. 251)

Kant agrees with much of what Hume says here, insofar as Kant denies that it is an awareness of simplicity or permanence that is the basis of our awareness of ourselves. However, Kant simply presents a reversal of Hume's argument. Crudely put, Hume's argument is something like the following:

1. If we have a (non-fictitious) concept of the self then it must come from some experience of the self
2. We have no experience of the self
3. ∴ We have no (non-fictitious) concept of the self

Kant simply presents a modus tollens of Hume's modus ponens.

1. We have a concept of the self (specifically of the self as subject)
2. We cannot acquire this concept via the senses/intuition
3. ∴ Our concept of the self (as subject) is a priori

Hume's argument seems particularly cutting to anyone who accepts, as Kant does, that sense provides no original subject, and that there are no innate ideas to which one could appeal in order to remedy this fact. However, Kant is able to agree with much of Hume's critique while nevertheless avoiding the position at which Hume ultimately arrives—viz. that the (non-fictitious) concept of the self, as well as other "external" objects, is nothing but that of a "bundle" of properties (representations).[50] According to Kant, there is a source for the idea of a subject of properties that is inherent in the structure of self-ascriptive thought, and which cannot be, as Hume thinks, a "fiction", since mere relations amongst the "bundle" could never explain the "mineness" of self-ascribed thought—of the thinker as *subject*. There is no basis in association for making this so that does not already presuppose what is meant to be explained.

This point may in fact help to explain Hume's famous skeptical apostasy in the Appendix to the *Treatise*.[51] He says,

> having thus loosen'd all our particular perceptions, when I proceed to explain the principle of connexion, which binds them together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity; I am sensible, that my account is very defective, and

[50] See, e.g., (Hume 1888, I.iv.6, p. 253).

[51] Jonathan Bennett (2001, vol. II, sec. 309) argues that Hume's aporia is based on his inability to provide a "continuing substance account of persons" given the meagre resources of his theory. However, if I am correct, Hume's position is worse than this, for it isn't just that he cannot provide an account of a "continuing" or persistent substance. It is that he can provide no account, even at a time (i.e. synchronic unity) of the sense in which a subject is aware (at least potentially so) of themself as the owner of the representations which they self-ascribe, and thus of themself as *subject*. See also the discussion of ways in which Hume might later modify his position in (Cottrell 2015, 566).

> that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasonings cou'd have induc'd me to receive it…For my part, I must plead the privilege of a sceptic, and confess, that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding. I pretend not, however, to pronounce it absolutely insuperable. Others, perhaps, or myself, upon more mature reflexions, may discover some hypothesis, that will reconcile those contradictions. (Hume 1888, 635–6)

If I am right, Kant has the "hypothesis" which might help to effect the desired reconciliation.

Second, and now looking forward, it is uncontroversial that post-Kantian German Idealism, especially Fichte and the early Schelling, pursue and extend Kant's conception of the centrality of self-consciousness for all knowledge.[52] Fichte said of his system that it "is none other than the Kantian. That is, it contains the same view of things, even though its method is completely independent of Kant's presentation."[53] But, notoriously, Fichte's conception of self-consciousness in terms of "intellectual intuition" would seem to a radically *different* philosophical view than that put forward by Kant. However, if the interpretation of Kant put forward in this paper is correct, then Fichte is merely using different terminology to express a specifically Kantian insight—viz. that the "I think" provides more than the mere thought of a subject; it also provisions the subject with an awareness of their own existence.[54] An intellectual form of awareness that also provides information about the existence of its object is, plausibly, a form of intellectual intuition.[55] Fichte is thus, rightly in my view, picking up on the unique status of pure apperception as a *sui generis* form of awareness, falling outside Kant's dichotomy of (sensible) intuitions and (intellectual) concepts.[56]

Hence, according to the position I take Kant to hold, we need neither the sensory apprehension of some simple substance, nor the sensory grasp of necessary connections in order to explain the grasp we have of the self as subject. The act of self-ascription presents the subject with the opportunity to reflect on its mental states as belonging to it—whatever else "it" is—and thus present it with the exemplar of a metaphysical subject. In this very limited sense then the "I" remains the original of all objects.[57]

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[52] I have in mind here particularly Fichte's *Wissenshaftslehre* as he presented it between 1794 and 1797 (see (Fichte 1982)) and Schelling's idealism in its early Fichtean phase (see the papers collected and translated in (Schelling 1980)).

[53] SW I:420.

[54] For a similar point regarding the relation between Kant and Fichte's views on self-consciousness see (Neuhouser 1990, 78).

[55] Fichte, alluding to Kant, says that there are no "classical authors in philosophy" and argues for his right to use the term "intellectual intuition" in whatever manner he likes (SW I:225). I take this to be indicative that he intends it not to be tracking all of the ways in which Kant used the phrase.

[56] This is not to deny that Fichte departs from Kant's view in other ways. I claim only that Kant's conception of pure apperception puts him closer to Fichte than might have seemed initially plausible.

[57] This paper has received useful input from a variety of sources. Thanks to audiences at McGill, the University of

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Toronto, and the University of North Carolina for helpful questions and discussion. Special thanks to G. Anthony Bruno, Dai Heide, Colin Marshall, James Messina, and Yoon Choi for their extensive comments on, and discussion of, the paper.

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