

Apperception and Dark Representations

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Apperception

In this paper, I will explore two puzzles, fairly closely related to one another. The first is a puzzle about how Kant describes apperception. The second is about the relationship of apperception, however described, to what students of Kant writing in English usually call *obscure representations* [*Dunkeler Vorstellungen*]. How Kant described ‘apperception’ is a central issue of the paper so I will not attempt to define the term as he used it here. *Dunkeler Vorstellungen* are representations “of which one is not conscious” (25:480). (‘Dark’, the literal meaning of ‘Dunkel’, would be a better translation than ‘obscure’ The representations in question are not obscure, we are not conscious of them at all. From now on, I will use the term ‘dark’.)

Apperception is one of the central concepts in Kant’s model of the experiencing, concept-using mind. Unfortunately, it is not easy to see exactly what the term meant for him. Not only is the prose in which the term is first discussed in *CPR* difficult but he seems to have used the term to name two different aspects of the mind – closely related aspects of the mind for him, to be sure, but still different.

‘Apperceive’ is a term of art derived from the French verb ‘s’apercevoir’ (Caygill 1995, 81). This word simply means ‘to see’. However ‘apperceive’ as a term of art in philosophy and psychology has always had a much more specific meaning than that. Leibniz, who coined the term, used it as a name for consciousness of oneself and one’s psychological states. As Leibniz put it, we should,

make a distinction between the *perception*, which is the internal state of the monad [roughly, the mind] representing external things, and *apperception*, which is *consciousness* ... of this inner state; the latter not being given to all souls ... (emphases his; 1714a:525, see also 1714b:535)

Wolff used of the term as a name for consciousness of self, too, though unlike Leibniz, he also used the term in other ways.

Yet when Kant first introduces the term in the first edition version of *CPR* (nearly 100 pages in), he does not give it anything like this meaning. As Kant describes it, apperception, far from being a form of consciousness of self, is a faculty, specifically the faculty of unifying a number of objects of experience in a single experience: “the unity of [synthesized objects is] through original apperception” (A94; the word ‘original’ is odd – maybe he meant *a priori* – but so is the whole passage.). He next mentions it, and first puts it to work, on A105, where he ties unity of apperception to concept- or rule-application. He has been discussing forming a representation of a triangle by applying a rule, three straight lines (all joined at the ends, presumably, though he does not say so), and goes on:

Such *unity of rule* determines all the manifold [the raw material of experience], and limits it to conditions which make unity of apperception possible. (A105)

Shortly thereafter he introduces *transcendental* apperception specifically. And says this:

This transcendental unity of apperception forms out of all possible appearances, which can stand alongside one another in one experience, a connection of all these representations according to laws. (A108)

Transcendental apperception (hereafter TA) is unified (presumably the unity is the unity that consciousness has) and is the ability to tie ‘all appearances’ together under laws so that they become ‘one experience’.¹ It is the final term in a series that goes from perception, to

¹ What ‘transcendental’ means here has been the subject of a lot of discussion. As Kant tells us in the Introduction, the transcendental elements in experience are those that are not and could not be derived from experience (so *a priori* in at least one of the senses of this protean term), in part because having them available is necessary to have experience at all. They are elements of which universality and necessity are the hallmarks (B4), universality and necessity not being knowable via experience either.

So what do we add when we preface ‘apperception’ with ‘transcendental’? The contrast is with empirical apperception. By A108 at least, both are a unifying function, a function of synthesizing represented objects into a single unified experience of them. Kant held that we can do this in many different ways – this is empirical apperception. However, he also held that to have experience, our kind of

association, to apperception (A115). It is part of or identical to the unifying function of the Understanding as a whole and it is absolutely central to his overall epistemic project because, as Kant argues, unifying multiple objects of representation into single unified experience requires acts of recognition in which concepts are applied to (spatio-temporally ordered) raw materials of experience. Representation requires recognition.²

All three of the passages just quoted are from early in the first-edition *CPR* chapter on the Transcendental Deduction. Three instances are not a lot but the first two are the first occurrences of the term in *CPR*. The way in which Kant uses the term ‘apperception’ in these places is not Leibniz’ way of using the term and it is not clear from where he got the usage. More problematically, immediately after the first two passages, he did start to use it in Leibniz’ way. Starting as early as A105 (so just before the passage introducing unity of apperception but after the first two passages just quoted), Kant links apperception to consciousness, at first in a way that is ambiguous. He may have consciousness in general (experience) in mind, which would be in line with using the term ‘apperception’ as the name of a faculty as above – or he may have consciousness of self in mind, which would be a departure. Here are the relevant passages:

To say that we know an object, ... the formal unity of consciousness [note: consciousness, not apperception], in the synthesis of the manifold of representations [is required] (A105; order of the passage changed}.

Similarly,

There can be in us no ... knowledge without ... unity of consciousness. This pure original unchanging consciousness I shall call *transcendental apperception* (A107).

experience at any rate, we must do it – and we must use *a priori* forms and concepts (forms and concepts not acquired from experience) to do so. His name for these elements of necessity is ‘transcendental’.

² Moreover, all objects of representation share a general conceptual structure. They have all been individuated as single objects, they all have qualities, and they all have an existence-status. Indeed, put this way, Kant’s claim that the categories are required for knowledge is plausible. Note, however, that so far no relational concepts have entered the picture – yet a relational concept, causality, was the concept that interested Kant most. (For one take on how Kant gets relationality in, see Brook 1994, Ch. 6.)

These passages could be referring just to consciousness in general. Then in A107 Kant links apperception to what is unmistakably consciousness of self:

Unity of consciousness would be impossible if the mind ... could not become conscious of the identity of function [i.e., its function] whereby it synthetically combines ... (A108)

Actually, once one sees the link to consciousness of self here in A108, one sees that it was breaking to the surface already in A107. Saying that the apperception in question is transcendental, not empirical, Kant says:

What has *necessarily* to be represented as numerically identical cannot be thought as such through empirical data (A107, his emphasis).

The giveaway is the word ‘represented’. Kant is talking about representation to oneself. And he tells us that apperception is not only a (unifying) function that subjects of experience have, it also represents subjects to themselves. Thus, Kant fuses apperception-as-function with apperception-as-consciousness-of-self. The two run hand-in-glove ever after.

A number of things could be said about this duality of uses and their fusion. The one thing I will say here, and it may be of consequence as we shall see near the end, is that the slide from the one use to the other and the fusing of the two occur in the very passages in which another and very important slide occurs. Up to the end of A105 in the A-Deduction, Kant discusses the creation of individual objects of experience and urges that to create such objects, we must first apprehend them in time (and, often, in space), reproduce earlier stages of them in association with later states, and, finally, recognize the associated stages under a concept. These are all stages in the creation of single isolated objects.

Most of A106 proceeds in the same vein. Near the end of A106 and without warning, however, Kant suddenly starts talking about “synthesis of the manifold of all our intuitions” – *all* our intuitions, not just the small subset that would go with the creation of each single object. And he tells that what ties all our intuitions together is transcendental apperception – *transcendental* apperception. I call this I call Kant’s 90° turn and have discussed it at length elsewhere (1994, Ch. 5). It is clearly crucial for Kant because at least half and arguably three-quarters of the Categories are about relationships *among* objects, not properties of *individual* objects.

Is there a relationship between the shift to consciousness of self in connection with apperception and the shift to relating multiple objects to one another (the 90° turn) in connection with synthesis? There may well be. We will return to this question near the end of the paper.³

Whatever the exact relationship between the two uses, the second use of the term ‘apperception’ was forever more the dominant one, often dragging the first use along with it. On A108, for example, it is clear by implication that by TA he means *consciousness* of “the identity of function” whereby one combines a number of items into a single unified conscious state. The same is true for the remainder of the A-edition chapter on the Deduction.

And later. Throughout the A-edition chapter on the Paralogisms of Pure Reason, I think is the “formal proposition” of apperception (A354); i.e., ‘I think’ describes the form of apperception as a whole.⁴

It is equally clear in the Solution to the 3rd Antinomy (the antinomy of freedom and determinism) that Kant is using the term to mean consciousness of self:

Man, ... who knows the rest of nature solely through the senses, knows himself also through pure apperception; and this, indeed, in acts and inner determinations which he cannot regard as impressions of the senses. (A546=B574)

No ambiguity here!

In the second edition, there is no shift. Kant makes rules this out by the way in which he sets up the Deduction. He *begins* with consciousness of self, at any rate the possibility of consciousness of self (“It must be possible for ‘I think’ to accompany all my representations.” (B130)). He then argues that for this to be possible, the mind must engage in the synthesizing activities of apperception. This passage from early in the second-edition Deduction makes it clear that for Kant, ‘apperception’ is the name for a kind of consciousness of self:

This representation [viz, ‘I think’] is an act of *spontaneity*, that is, it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility [inner sense]. I call it *pure apperception* [B132]

³ A complication: None of the passages from CPR that I have quoted so far appear in the second edition and the shift in usage that I have been laboring to unveil does not occur in the second edition. We will return to the latter point.

⁴ In the first edition, the term ‘I think’ is introduced for the first time only in the chapter on the Paralogisms, a fact that has not received much attention. Dyck (2014, 71) is a notable exception.

Kant then says explicitly that apperception is self-consciousness: “original apperception ... is that self-consciousness which ... “ (B132).

Likewise, in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (published only very late, 1798, but reflecting views that had appeared in lectures on the subject for over twenty-five years going back before his Critical period):

Inner sense is not pure apperception, *consciousness of what we are doing*; for this belongs to the power of thinking. It is, rather, consciousness of what we undergo as we are affected by the play of our own thoughts (7:161, my emphasis).

Examples such as these could be multiplied.

So what are we to make of the fact that Kant used the term ‘apperception’ in these two quite different ways? It could be pointed out, correctly and in Kant’s defense, that calling apperception a function is not flatly inconsistent with calling it a form of consciousness of self.⁵ This does not take us very far, however, because the two usages are very different from one another and Kant certainly appears to have slid from one to the other without noticing.

Indeed, the phenomena named by the two uses of the term are, it would appear, largely independent of one another. A synthesizing function that ties represented objects together in single unified representations need not make one conscious even of the representations, let alone of oneself. Or so it would seem. The most that we need be conscious of, it would seem, is what the representations present. And it would seem that one could be conscious of oneself, perhaps even as the “common subject” (A350) of one’s experience, without having a faculty that unifies the objects of one’s experience into one experience, certainly without one that unifies them under concepts.

To be sure, the two are related. One of the products of the unifying faculty of the first usage is, or could be, the unified consciousness of self of the second. But why not give each its own name? I suspect that Kant held that unified representation of objects and consciousness of self as the common subject of our experiences are not independent of one another in the way just suggested. To the contrary, he seems to have thought that apperception both unifies representation of objects and yields consciousness of oneself as subject.

⁵ Thanks to a referee for the Canadian Philosophical Association for stressing this point.

Another possibility for explaining why Kant did not give each its own name is that he never properly distinguished the two. The way the second usage, apperception as unified consciousness of self, slides onto the page unannounced and unintroduced on A107 and A108 certainly suggests this. Perhaps the usage connecting apperception to consciousness of self was always primary for Kant as it was for Leibniz, perhaps, indeed, it was the only one he fully articulated. He certainly seems to have viewed the unifying function of apperception as part of the machinery of consciousness of self – an argument that has this structure appears as early as A122-A124 in the first edition Deduction and it is the dominant strategy in the second.

Taking a broader perspective, notice that Kant begins the first-edition Deduction in a way that would be congenial to contemporary cognitive science. He lays out a model of how the mind must be built to form for itself, first objects of experience, then unified complex single experiences of multiple objects. Proceeding in this way, it was natural to focus on cognitive functions. He could have – and almost did – mount his whole argument for the necessity of using concepts (specifically, the concepts that he called Categories) without any reference to consciousness of self. Since he was also certain that apperception is central to cognition, apperception was bound to enter the analysis – which it did on A94 and then in more detail starting on A105. When that happened, it was not long before the term slid from the first way Kant used it in *CPR* (synthesizing function) to the second, the one given to it by Leibniz (a form of consciousness of self).

At this point a puzzle arises, a puzzle that, to my mind, is far more important than the ones we have examined so far. As I said, in the second edition Deduction, Kant starts from the possibility of consciousness of self (B131-B132) and argues that unification of objects of experience under concepts is necessary for this consciousness of self. But why did Kant focus so exclusively on a potential for consciousness of self? Even if unifying experience is necessary for consciousness of self, he never argues in the Deduction that the former is *sufficient* for the latter. Tying things together under concepts could, it would appear, be done, as we would put it now, unconsciously. Why link unification of representations to consciousness of self so closely?

Especially given, and this is a really striking point, that Kant knew full well and said repeatedly that we have lots of representations for which consciousness of self is *not* a possibility. There are the representations that he called *Dunkeler Vorstellungen* (a term that, as I said, I translate ‘dark representations’.) Dark representations “are those of which one is *not*

conscious” (25:480, my emphasis). So not only is one not aware of oneself in having dark representations, one is not even aware of having the representations.

Dark Representations

Certainly Kant did not think of dark representations as rare or unusual. “The field of dark representations is the largest in the human being ...” (7:136). The number of “dark representations far exceeds that our of clear representations [representations, that is, of which we are conscious] ... Should all of our dark representations become clear at once, we would be stunned by the multitude. ... Dark representations constitute the depth of the soul” (29:879, see 28:227). Again, if “we were to become conscious of all our dark representations at once, we would be astonished at their inventory” (25:1221). In short, the human mind has lots of dark representations. Non-human animals have nothing else (28:276, 29:879).

Moreover, Kant grants dark representations considerable causal power. They are the source of prejudices, biases and other unsupported beliefs. (If so, judging by the lectures on anthropology, Kant himself must have had lots of dark representations!). Also of customs, tastes, and insights, and theories and other creative ideas that get worked up into clear ideas over time. Dark representations can produce fears and desires that we repudiate consciously (25:1222-3) and we use dark representations to hide difficult subjects from ourselves, sexuality being his example (7:136). (These last two points are a remarkable anticipation of the psychoanalytic notions of the unconscious and defence.) He even plays with the Socratic doctrine of reminiscence, the idea that we all know everything, we just don’t know that we do (so that teaching is just midwifery, bringing to consciousness things that we already know) (28:227-8), going so far as to say that “all propositions of philosophy are known to everyone” (25:1222).

Further, he had some interesting things to say about perception and dark representations. He urged, for example, that when we see the Milky Way with a naked eye, we are seeing all the individual stars (now known to number in the billions), though we are not conscious of them as stars (25:1221, 25:1273, 28:227, 29:879). And he argued at least once that when we see a person at a distance, we must be seeing their eyes, nose, mouth and the like, even though we are not conscious of doing so, because we do not see empty spots where those parts are (25:1441, see

28:879). (This analysis of seeing the Milky Way and a person at a distance is ingenious; it is an anticipation of our distinction between seeing and seeing as: we see the stars but we do not see them *as* stars.) He even pulled in memories: “Everything in memory lies in the field of dark representations” (25:1439; on 25:1221 he exempted the (very few) memories of which one is conscious at any one time).

Kant discussed dark representations at least eight times, as early as 1766, so fifteen years before the first edition of *CPR* and the official beginning of Critical philosophy, and as late as 1798, so five or six years before his death, always in the same terms. As I said, Kant gave a series of lectures on anthropology for a general audience every year or two for more than twenty-five years starting in 1772-3. In addition, he frequently lectured on metaphysics and discussed dark representations in those lectures at least twice. We now have notes on, in some cases amounting to transcripts of, the lectures put together by (and named for) various members of the audiences. Kant’s earliest discussion pre-dates even the first lectures on anthropology. It occurs in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* (1766). Only the text of this discussion and the final one in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* were written by Kant himself; they are also the only ones published in his lifetime.⁶

The bald number of discussions is misleading, however. The treatment of dark representations in the lectures and books remained very much the same over the years, even down to examples such as seeing the Milky Way. So it would be truer to say that there is one discussion of the topic occurring eight times than that there are eight discussions. Moreover, all the discussions are quite short, including the two that he wrote himself.

All but the first and last discussions having taken place in lectures suggests that, while Kant found dark representations ‘anthropologically’ (humanly) interesting, he did not see much theoretical potential in them. Otherwise he would have discussed them in his professional philosophical works. One would certainly expect a discussion of them, for example, in *CPR*. Yet

⁶ The discussion in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* is at 2:338. Those in the lectures on anthropology are found in Anthropology Collins (25:20-5), Anthropology Friedländer (25:479-82), Anthropology Mrongovius (25:1221-4), and Anthropology Busolt (25:1439-41), in the lectures on metaphysics in Metaphysik L₁ (28:227-8) and Metaphysik Mrongovius (29:878-80). The last one is in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (7:135-7).

in this work, dark representations are even mentioned only twice, both times very briefly and in footnotes, footnotes moreover that are notoriously, well, obscure. There is one in each edition. In the first edition, the footnote in question is on A117 in the middle of the Deduction, the one in the second edition is on B415-6 in the new critique of the Paralogisms.

On A117, Kant says that “whether this representation [viz., of the I] be clear ... or dark, or even whether it actually occurs does not here concern us. Rather, the possibility of the logical form of all cognition depends necessarily on the relationship to this apperception *as a faculty*” (A117, his emphasis). This passage is interesting in its own right because in it Kant tells us that apperception does not need make us actually conscious of ourselves in order for it to unify representations into a single ‘general experience’ (A110). This claim that consciousness of the world can exist without consciousness of oneself runs counter to the Strawsonian view of Kant and is interesting in the light of the puzzle about the relationship of dark representations to apperception and consciousness of self that we are investigating. However, it tells us nothing new about dark representations.

On B415-6 Kant is mounting an argument, against Mendelssohn’s inference from the soul being simple to it being immortal, that even a simple soul could ‘fade to black’ (what Kant calls *elanguageszenz*). In a footnote, Kant responds to a (not very plausible) rejoinder that consciousness is sufficient for clarity (which to become a response to the argument from elanguageszenz requires additional premises that we are conscious of the soul and clarity in this consciousness would be sufficient for the soul to exist, premises that Kant does not give). Kant responds that consciousness of representations and clarity of representations are not the same thing because “a certain degree of consciousness ... must be met with even in some dark representations” (B415). His argument is that a representation is clear “when the consciousness suffices for the *consciousness of the distinction* of this representation from others” (B415, his emphasis) but that we can also have enough consciousness to make the distinction *without* being conscious of the distinction. Here the distinction would be a dark representation but there would still be some consciousness in connection with it. He offers no reason for making the latter claim and it is not very plausible. However, these problems are not the most striking thing.

The most striking thing, here as on A117, is that Kant makes nothing of dark representations. Given that Kant focuses from A107 in the first edition and entirely in the second on representations of which their subject is conscious, one would have thought that the claim in

the footnote on A117 in particular, that one can have a unified representation of the world while one's representation of oneself is dark, i.e., while one is not conscious of oneself, would have been of great interest to Kant.

Dark Representations and Consciousness of Self (Apperception)

Apparently not. Yet the tension between this claim and some other things he said is intense. In the passage from the B-edition Deduction that we considered earlier, for example, Kant says that "it must be possible for the I think to accompany all my representations" (B132-3). When he has told audiences, repeatedly, that the bulk of representations in humans and all representations in non-human animals are dark representations, i.e., representations which the I think could *not* accompany, one would have thought that the relationship of dark representations to the 'I think' would have been of some interest to him. It is not easy to find any argument for the claim that we must be able to attach I think to all representations and the claim is quite implausible. Indeed, Kant himself immediately restricts the claim to representations that could be something to me (A132), a much more plausible claim but one that opens the way to all manner of dark representations, or so it would appear. Moreover, as we saw, in the A-edition Deduction, starting as it does with the threefold doctrine of synthesis, the analysis of the conditions of constructing individual objects of representation is finished before *consciousness* of representations or of oneself even makes an appearance, an explicitly one anyway (on A107). Yet Kant never discussed the relationship of I think to dark representations. Very puzzling.

Here is another form of the puzzle. Given that Kant discussed what we would now call unconscious representations in his popular works, repeatedly over more than thirty years, why did he focus so heavily on conscious representations and consciousness of oneself having them in his professional theoretical writings on the mind? Kant never discussed dark representations and human cognition in any detail so we cannot answer this question with any certainty. However, he did give us what might be some clues: he discussed both dark representations and apperception in non-human animals and made some interesting claims about them. (In the anthropological works, he discusses non-human animals with surprising frequency.)

Among other things, he tells us that “animals will have all representations of the outer senses [but no] representations which rest on inner sense, on the consciousness of oneself, in short, on the concept of the I” (28:276). Later in the same set of lectures, he tells us that “an animal has no apperception” (29:879), which seems to come down to much the same deficiency for him. Later still (28:690) and in *CPR* (A546=B574), he tells us that animals have only sensible representations and cannot think about them. The representations that they have can motivate action, but such actions are “coerced by sensibility”, so are *brutum*, not *liberum* (A534=B562).

This deficiency in consciousness costs non-human animals dearly. Consciousness of self, Kant tells us, is necessary for having moral principles (29:879) and for actions of the understanding and reason (28:276, 29:879). The importance of morality and the understanding for Kant would give him a pretty good reason to focus on the kind of experience necessary for having them, namely, consciousness of self or apperception in the Leibnizian sense. This and of course the fact that apperception unifying our representations into one “general experience” (A110) is central to his deduction of the categories.

Note that Kant does not insist and could not on pain of inconsistency insist that we cannot apperceive *any* dark representations, because in the footnote to A117 that we examined he implies that the representation of oneself that results from apperception could be dark. Maybe animals cannot apperceive dark representation but, in this one case at least, we can. However, Kant could have held this and still have been of the view that, with respect to the vast majority of our dark representations, we are no better off cognitively than animals. If he were of this view, dark representations would have had little or no theoretical interest for him and it is not surprising that they are hardly mentioned in *CPR*.

Even if this story about why Kant focused so exclusively on consciousness of self and representations of which the subject is conscious is along the right lines, it too faces a major difficulty: memory. The vast majority of our memories are dark representations at any one time. As we saw, Kant knew this. However, given the role of memory in recognition under concepts, he could not say, as he might have wanted to say about other dark representations, that memory has little theoretical interest. I have found nothing in the passages on memory in the *Lectures on Metaphysics* and the anthropological works, two of which have sections on memory, that sheds any light on this new puzzle and there is nothing about memory as a dark representation in *CPR*.

A final note. If what I have said about Kant and consciousness of self is on the right track, then, to return to a topic touched on near the end of the first section, this aspect of Kant's work on cognition would be very *unlike* contemporary cognitive science.

(However he arrived at it, the part of Kant's concept of apperception concerned with consciousness of self was a rich breeding ground for important ideas new about consciousness of and reference to oneself. What follows sketches some of those ideas. For reasons of time, I will probably not read this section of the paper but I will summarize it if times allows.)

Apperceptive Consciousness of Self

I will finish on a different though related note. However awkwardly Kant introduces apperception in his second usage in the first edition of *CPR*, it is a good thing for the history of philosophy that he got to it. In the course of defending a claim (in the chapter on the Paralogisms) that apperceptive consciousness of self does not provide knowledge of self, Kant achieved some remarkably deep-running insights into apperceptive consciousness of self and the machinery used to generate it, insights that not only have not been superseded by subsequent work but have not been fully assimilated by it.

Kant focuses on the act of reference to self used to gain apperceptive consciousness of self. Here are some of the things that he said. It is a consciousness of self in which "nothing manifold is given." (B135). In the kind of reference in which we gain this consciousness of self, we "denote" but do not describe ourselves (A382). We designate ourselves without noting "any quality whatsoever" in ourselves (A355).

This group of claims anticipates Shoemaker and Perry nearly two hundred years later. As Shoemaker (1968) argues, one can be conscious of something as oneself without identifying it as oneself via properties that one has ascribed to the thing (self-reference without identification). And as Perry (1979) argues, first-person indexicals (I, me, my, mine) cannot be analyzed out in favour of anything else, anything descriptionlike (the essential indexical). As Kant put these ideas,

In attaching ‘I’ to our thoughts, we designate the subject of inherence only transcendently ... without noting in it any quality whatsoever—in fact, without knowing anything of it either directly or by inference [A355; Kemp Smith translation, which is preferable].

And,

Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thoughts = X. It is known only through the thoughts which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them, we cannot have any concept whatsoever, but can only revolve in a perpetual circle, since any judgment upon it has always already made use of its representation. [A346=B404]

The last clause is key: “any judgment upon it has always already made use of its representation”. Kant seems to be saying that to know that anything is true of me, I must first know that it is me of whom it is true. This is something very like the claim that an indexical is essential.

If apperceptive consciousness of self is indexical and non-descriptive, one will appear to oneself in a special way. As Kant put it, “through the ‘I’, as simple representation, nothing manifold is given.” (B135)

Transcendental designation is important to Kant because it allows him to make the key claim of the Paralogisms chapter that apperceptive consciousness of oneself gives one no knowledge of oneself. As he put it in the second edition Deduction, “consciousness of self is ... very far from being a knowledge of the self” (B158).

These ideas about apperceptive consciousness of self, which I have only sketched here, were truly prescient (for more on them, see Brook 1994 and 2001).⁷

⁷ My thanks to Julian Wuerth for many useful references and comments and to an anonymous referee for the Canadian Philosophical Association for excellent comments.

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