

Kant and the Problem of Self-Identification¹

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ABSTRACT: Ever since Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense*, the transcendental apperception device has become a theoretical reference point to shed light on the criterionless self-ascription form of mental states, reformulating a contemporary theoretical place tackled for the first time in explicit terms by Wittgenstein's *Blue Book*. By investigating thoroughly some elements of the critical system the issue of the identification of the transcendental subject with reference to the *I think* will be singled out. In this respect, the debate presents at least two diametrically opposed attitudes: the first – exemplified in the works by Hacker, Becker, Sturma and McDowell – considers the features of the *I think* according to Wittgenstein's approach to the *I as subject* while the second, exemplified by Kitcher and Carl, criticizes the various commentators who turn to Wittgenstein in order to interpret Kant's *I think*. The hypothesis that I will attempt at articulating in this paper starts off not only from the transcendental apperception form, but also from the characterizations of empirical apperception. It may be assumed that Kant's reflection on the problem of self-identification lies right here, truly prefiguring some features of Wittgenstein's uses of *I*, albeit from different metaphysical assumptions and philosophical horizons.

KEYWORDS: Empirical apperception – Kant – self-identification – self-reference – transcendental apperception – Wittgenstein.

¹ Kantian English quotations are from the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. The citations include the page numbers in the 'Akademie' edition of Kant's works. For references to the first *Critique* (KrV), the page numbers are from the A (1781) and B (1787) editions.

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In a well-known passage Wittgenstein (1958, 66-67) introduces his philosophico-linguistic analysis of the grammatical rule of the term *I*, where he distinguishes two types of uses, the *use as object* ('I have grown six inches') and the *use as subject* ('I have toothache'):

One can point to the difference between these two categories by saying: The cases of the first category involve the recognition of a particular person, and there is in these cases the possibility of an error . . . On the other hand there is no question of recognizing a person when I say I have toothache. To ask "are you sure it's you who have pains?" would be nonsensical.

This passage should be considered as part of the philosophical framework articulated by Wittgenstein starting from the 1930s on the basis of some theses that might be regarded as the background for the analyses of the two uses of *I*.² While the *I used as object* performs a referential function relative to the body and to physical features in general, the *I used as subject* apparently regards mental states as well as processes and no subject identification is taken into account.³

Likewise, Strawson (1966, 165) argues that in the self-ascription of a mental state (e.g., 'I'm hungry'), a subject of experiences uses the term *I* employing no identification criteria:

It would make no sense to think or say: *This* inner experience is occurring, but is it occurring to *me*? (This feeling is hunger; but is it I who am feeling it?)

² For example: a) the irreducibility of the manifold 'games' that build up language, whose rules are to be made explicit in order to solve any sort of philosophical problem; b) anti-referentialism, which lies on the recognition of the manifold functions performed by language as well as on the necessity to avoid the erroneous search for the use of a sign on the basis of the object-sign relation; c) anti-mentalism, for which suggesting that thinking is a mental activity is misleading.

³ From a Wittgensteinian angle, the *I used as subject* has no referential function: according to this thesis – supported by Geach (1957), Hacker (1972), and Anscombe (1975) – it is just our inclination to assume that a linguistic term has a meaning only if it stands for an object that induces us to believe that the *I used as subject* denotes the thinking subject, mind, soul, etc. Cf. Sluga (1996); Wright (1998).

More precisely, Strawson refers to *criterionless self-ascription*. On the other hand – unlike Wittgenstein, as we shall see – the absence of an identification device does not entail that the use of *I* will not perform a referential function.

Some judgments bearing a first-person reference (e.g., ‘I have pain’) display what Shoemaker (1968, 565) defines *self-reference without identification* (which is linked to the feature of the essential indexical *I* singled out by Kaplan, Castañeda and Perry):

My use of the word “I” as the subject of my statement is not due to my having identified as myself something of which I know, or believe, or wish to say, that the predicate of my statement applies to it.

In other words, in the self-ascriptions of mental properties, the self-reference underlying some self-conscious forms occurs without any inference from conceptual properties ascribable to the subject: there is no previous identification of something as its own self owing to properties that can be ascribed to that same something. Due to the absence of any identification component, some *singular judgments* involving the self-ascription of mental (and physical, as will be seen) properties are *immune to error through misidentification* relative to the first-person pronoun (*IEM*). The subject formulating this sort of judgments in given epistemic contexts cannot be mistaken as to whether it is he who is attributing a particular mental property to his own self.

In his turn, Evans goes beyond the terms of the matter as suggested by Wittgenstein and, to some extent, by Shoemaker. In some self-ascriptions, self-reference is direct and unmediated: as Evans notes, here we are dealing with *identification-free self-reference*. In particular, Evans (1982, 220) contends that a judgment of the kind ‘I am F’ is *identification-free* unless it corresponds to the inferential conclusion drawn from the two premises, i.e., ‘a is F’ (*predication component*) and ‘I am a’ (*identification component*), such judgment is based on the unmediated self-ascription of properties through introspective consciousness (as is the case with mental properties) or proprioception (as with physical properties). For example, according to our general capacity to perceive bodies, to our sense of proprioception, of balance, of heat and cold, and of pressure, the kind of information generated by each of these modes of perception seems to give rise to judgments that are immune to error through misidentification:

None of the following utterances appears to make sense when the first component expresses knowledge gained in the appropriate way: ‘Someone’s legs are crossed, but is it my legs that are crossed?’ (Evans 1982, 220)

Peacocke’s (1999; 2008) strategy in its turn consists in tracing *IEM* proprieties back to more fundamental characterizations. More precisely, Peacocke (1999, 274) distinguishes between a representationally dependent and a representationally independent use of the first-person concept in order to define what he terms *delta account*. The point at issue here is primarily epistemological as it concerns the philosophical branch of *self-knowledge* as well as the possibility of forming beliefs relative to the self-ascription of mental and physical properties. While the representationally dependent use of the first-person concept is based on the fact that the subject is represented in the content of the judgment, in the representationally independent use of the first-person concept the very occurrence of a particular experience (e.g., visual, its content being, in Peacocke’s example, ‘I see the phone is on the table’) determines the reason why the subject is justified in making a judgment about herself, without the thinking subject being represented in the judgment itself:

the explanation is just the occurrence of the experience itself to its subject. Nor does any thought or representation of herself as the subject of the experience enter her reasons for her judgement. (Peacocke 1999, 273)

Mutatis mutandis, Recanati (2007; 2009) employs a similar strategy through a philosophical analysis on the distinction between *de re* and *de se* thoughts, a distinction gained by Chilsholm, Lewis and Perry. The author distinguishes two types of *self-ascriptions*, two types of *de se* thoughts – *implicit de se* and *explicit de se* – according to the presence or absence of the representational reference of the subject in terms of judgment content. Although very problematically, Peacocke relates the *IEM* phenomenon to the representationally independent use of the concept *I*, and in the same way Recanati finds a link between *IEM* and implicit *de se* thoughts. As will be seen, Peacocke appeals to the representationally independent use of *I* to explain the origin of the transcendental subject in Kant.

2

The question of the identification of the subject in the transcendental apparatus can be developed through two theoretical dimensions. Firstly, it is necessary to introduce a metaphysical reflection on the transcendental subject in order to detect the characterizations assigned to transcendental apperception and contained in several passages of the *Transcendental Deduction* and *Paralogisms* sections: from the point of view of spontaneity of understanding, *I* manifests itself neither as it is nor as phenomenon. Secondly, within the transcendental constraints characterizing the designation of the *I* of the *I think*, I will discuss the empirical dimension and the epistemic conditions in and under which the subject reveals himself in the temporal sphere of receptivity.

As is well known, transcendental constraints represent the conditions of possibility of experience and knowledge, and in the final analysis they are based on transcendental apperception, i.e., on self-consciousness, which, via the *I think*, Kant regards as the highest point of transcendental philosophy. Apperception is the foundation of representational synthesis in order for knowledge to occur, and the *I think* must be able to accompany every representation: regarded as an analytical unity of apperception, the representation *I* produced by apperception is a feature of every representation as the *I think* must be able to accompany each representation; regarded, on the other hand, as a synthetical unity of apperception, the *I* produced by apperception is a feature of representations synthesized horizontally, which calls in question the categories' claim to have objective validity and to be predicates of objects in general, so that the judgments can be formed wherever knowledge arises. Although it presents the thinking subject as substantial, simple, identical in time and separate from body, the *I* of the *I think* is not the concept of an object but refers to 'something in general (transcendental subject)' in which thoughts inhere as its own predicates.

Pure apperception is original consciousness and can be expressed by *sum*. Here, as emphasized by Capozzi (2007, 288), an ontological question arises: *sum* is nothing but activity – which has nothing receptive about it – as it will not mingle with any element of the sensible dimension; hence, it is a thinking activity to the extent that *sum* and *cogito* are *on a par*: in the first act of knowledge, “I am a thinking thing is a tautology.” The ontolog-

ical question is specified in the assertion that “the subject bound to the first act of knowledge, to former apperception, is the first subject as well as the first *Wesen* being thought: with the first act of knowledge, the subject is the being itself.”

From this metaphysical perspective emerge a few characterizations of the transcendental subject which may explain the lack of identification in representational synthesis. On the one hand, the *I think/I am* is a formal condition of all thinking: “the *I think* must be able to accompany all representations” (*KrV* B 132). On the other hand, this subject/being is something in general, unidentifiable from an epistemic point of view; it is an intellectual self-existence awareness summarized by the *I am* or *I think* representations which accompany every other representation and, as such, don’t present any propriety. In point of fact, due to the absence of intuition, it is not possible to determine whether that something is existent as a persistent substance in order to make knowledge:

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. (*KrV* B 278)

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. (*KrV* B 157).

What is being assumed on the basis of the representation *I* is just an existent devoid of any propriety. The subject is able to know that he exists as a thinking activity, but he is not able to know what he is: the subject’s being is inaccessible from an epistemic point of view, and what is given is nothing but thoughts regarded as his predicates, which do not enable us to grasp the thinking subject’s nature. In a famous passage Kant states:

Through this I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = x, which is recognized only through the thoughts that are its predicates, and about which, in abstraction, we can never have even the least concept. (*KrV* A 346/B 404)

Accordingly, there emerge a few peculiarities of the self-referential apparatus involved in transcendental apperception: “the subject of inherence

is designated only transcendently through the I that is appended to thoughts, without noting the least property of it, or cognizing or knowing anything at all about it” (*KrV* A 355). It follows that the act of reference performed by the subject to refer to her own self entails no mediation of knowing, namely it involves no identification by means of properties ascribable to the subject herself.

With the notion of *transcendental designation*, Kant anticipates some of the *self-reference without identification* features (cf. Howell 2000; and Brook 2001). The condition of possibility of all judgments relies on the act *I think* and, at this level, the intellectual representation *I* designates only transcendently, no conceptual mediation being involved: it is a simple representation bearing no content and solely referring to something in general, namely to a transcendental subject: “its properties [of subject] are entirely abstracted from if it is designated merely through the expression ‘I, wholly empty of content (which I can apply to every thinking subject)” (*KrV* A 355). An empty or bare form (cf. *KrV* A443/B471), *I* designates but does not represent (cf. *KrV* A 381; Kant 1786, 542-543). The difference is important, the *I* designates the transcendental subject without representing it, i.e. without any content mediation and therefore without any prior instance of identification because the *I* is not a conceptual representation, articulable in conceptual marks, nor an intuitional one, which presupposes a relation to the sensible spatio-temporal forms, but is a ‘simple’ or ‘empty’ representation.

3

The analysis of the form of the *I* is intertwined with several epistemic and metaphysical questions. In general, it should be highlighted that the absence of an identification component does not imply that the *I* doesn’t perform a referential function, nor that it necessarily involves a specific metaphysical thesis on the nature of the self-conscious subject. As a matter of fact, the *I-thoughts* self-reference features have been supported by both a materialist conception regarding the self-conscious subject as a bodily object – for example, by Strawson and Evans – and a different metaphysical framework, as in Wittgenstein’s eliminativist thesis or in Kant’s exclusion thesis.⁴

⁴ At face value, Kant suggests a metaphysical thesis of exclusion according to which the *I* of the *I think* as intellectual representation produces no knowledge as to the nature

The point at issue here is the possible contiguity between the analysis of the form of *I think* and the contemporary reflections on the question of self-identification: although it is possible to find different elements of affinity, the theoretical contexts are still deeply distant.

With his transcendental designation, Kant does not certainly seem anachronistic with respect to the considerations raised by the contemporary debate. On the contrary, at least as far as the genesis of the Cartesian illusion on the thinking subject's immaterial nature is concerned – one of the issues addressed in the *Blue Book* – Kant and Wittgenstein seem to share the same philosophical concerns and both focus, although not exclusively, on the type of reference involved by the *I*, of course through very different philosophical paths, and, as already said, with what at first may appear to be antipodal metaphysical assumptions.

Wittgenstein (1958, 43) starts from the analysis of language and the use of the *I as subject* to dissolve any question on the nature of the ego in an anti-metaphysical key. Philosophical inquiry must investigate only the *grammars* of the mentalistic terms used and no metaphysical distinction between the mental and the physical should follow from the distinction between propositions describing facts of the world and propositions describing psychological experiences. It is necessary to analyze the uses and related grammars of terms such as *thinking*, *meaning*, *wishing* because the investigation “rids us of the temptation to look for a peculiar act of thinking, independent of the act of expressing our thoughts, and stowed away in some peculiar medium”. Thinking is using signs according to rules and philosophical difficulties may arise only from the misleading use of language

of the thinking subject, and refers only to something which is no object: the transcendental subject. At the same time, the empty form of the referential apparatus in transcendental apperception has been appraised in intrinsically different ways, from Heinrich and Guyer's *Substantial Ownership Reading* to the *Formal Ownership Reading* upheld by Allison and Ameriks, and, more recently, by Bermúdez (1994). Further, more than once an elusive reading suggesting that the *I* of the *I think* has no reference has been argued, i.e., the so-termed *No-Ownership Reading*; the close affinity between Wittgenstein and Kant alleged by some commentators lies within this framework – cf. Becker (1984), Sturma (1985), Powell (1990), McDowell (1994). In this paper, contiguity between Wittgenstein and Kant on this issue is refused, since, as already pointed out, the *I* of the *I think* has a referential function which refers to the transcendental subject.

which leads us to look for something that might correspond to a noun. This may be the case in the use of the *I as subject*.

The referential thesis according to which the use of a sign is based on its relation with the object – strongly criticized when taken as the sole basis to explain the semantics of the language, along with the proper consideration that some uses of the *I* do not denote physical properties – leads to false Cartesian metaphysical conclusions:

We feel then that in the cases in which “I” is used as subject, we don’t use it because we recognize a particular person by his bodily characteristics; and this creates the illusion that we use this word to refer to something bodiless, which however, has its seat in our body. In fact this seem to be the real ego, the one of which it was said, “Cogito ergo sum”. (Wittgenstein 1958, 69)

In no way is the question of the absence of identification in the use of the *I* lacking in Kant, as already seen with the transcendental designation of the *I* of the *I think*. Given that there is no empirical intuition, the *I* of the *I think* cannot be based on public employment through the identifying mediation of properties attributable to the transcendental subject. However, and in contrast to Wittgenstein, in the first place Kant moves from a metaphysical reflection in the sense of transcendental idealism concerning the conditions of possibility of experience and knowledge and from the transcendental assertion that the *I think* is the center of such conditions. Philosophical inquiry can only analyze the formal constraints of knowledge. In revealing the genesis of the illusion of a Cartesian immaterial ego, mainly addressed in the analysis of paralogisms, Kant argues that nothing about the metaphysical order and the ontological nature of the transcendental subject can be elicited from the conscious form of unity of apperception and from the representational order of the *I think*: the *I* of the *I think* is not a concept of an object, but an empty representation, ‘the concept of a mere something’.

Needless to say, it was Strawson himself who insisted on the characterizations of the form of the *I think*: based on some arguments recalling Wittgenstein’s theses in more than one way, Strawson (1966, 166) claims that Kant has revealed the source of the Cartesian error from a purely internal referential use of the *I*, which severs all ties with the ordinary and empirical criteria of self-identity. At the same time, Strawson criticizes Kant for not

considering explicitly, as a condition of possibility of experience, the requirement that the subject is recognizable as an object of intuition, a thesis further developed by Evans (1982) and Cassam (1997), and challenged, in its turn, by some Kantian commentators (cf. *infra*).

Although Peacocke does not explicitly mention Strawson, he nonetheless uses his same type of argument against Kant, stating that the German philosopher would have mistaken an epistemological phenomenon for a metaphysical one. The author refers, among others, to the above-mentioned *KrV* B 404 passage to specify the notion of transcendental subject: this is not an empirically determinable object through the application of the categories and it can only be known through the thoughts regarded as its own predicates. This metaphysical conclusion of exclusion can only stem from a failure to recognize the representationally *independent use* of the *I* of the *I think*, which is the form of any judgment; yet, as such, it neither presents the subject in the content of the judgment itself, nor can determine or identify it *a fortiori* (see Peacocke 1999, 284).

Now, for those who harbor sympathies for the hypothesis according to which Kant asserts a metaphysical thesis of exclusion (cf. *supra*, footnote 4), Peacocke's argument might be reversed in its turn by contending that Kant may have held a metaphysical position on the exclusion of the transcendental subject from the metaphysical order of reality to generate the epistemic phenomenon of the representationally independent use of *I*, not vice versa. For those wishing to recall the *Formal Ownership Reading* and the above-mentioned Kantian arguments contained in the analysis of paralogisms, it is not possible to elicit any metaphysical conclusion about the transcendental subject from the formal and representational order of the *I think*. Indeed, when Kant focuses on the logic exposition of apperception, he describes the transcendental subject's function through a completely abstract locution such as *Das Denken* (see *KrV* B 428-9). At this transcendental level for the simple thought the thinking thing is the being itself and shows no proprieties at all, to the extent that Kant leaves even the pronoun indeterminate ('I', 'he', 'it'), and yet he points out that it is a something in general, i.e., the transcendental subject.

4

Therefore – at last we are thus confronted with the assessments marking the distance between Kant’s approach and contemporary reflections – considerations on the *I* of the *I think* rest at a very different level of investigation than the contemporary approaches. The transcendental unity of apperception is the foundation of representational synthesis, through which an objective determination of representations arises for possible cognition: each empirical manifold given in the intuitions of sensibility is determined by the functions of the power of judgment based on the application of the categories of understanding that bring it back to consciousness. In this sense, every manifold bears a necessary relation with the *I think* that is the foundation of the necessary unity of the objectively valid connection of all representations expressed by the judgment. In this picture, the *I think* resides in a metaphysical frame which necessarily involves any thinking activity since it does identify with such activity. At least at this level of investigation, and with respect to the passages considered, this represents the highest level of abstraction in the transcendental reflection.

At the same time, in transcendental self-consciousness, the self-attributions of any thought (and also of a transcendental category: I think substance, cause, etc.) are not based on identification component relative to the representation *I* underlying the determination of those thoughts: as already remarked, although the representation *I* designates the transcendental subject, it cannot be determined to identify the thinking entity as empirical object (cf. *KrVA* 346/B 404).

However, if the act of spontaneity expressed by the *I think* is necessarily involved in the making of any judgment, the lack of identification component entailed in the transcendental designation appears to be totally empty of meaning: the Kantian reflections on the *I think* cannot articulate the different types of singular judgments expressing self-ascriptions of mental and physical properties as these regard form and condition of possibility of any kind of judgment, regardless of the particular use of *I* (as *subject* or as *object*, in Wittgensteinian terms) involved in the singular judgments produced. In other words, and more concretely, the transcendental designation mechanism of the *I think* cannot account for the presence or absence of subjective identification component relative to the first person in judgments such as

'I have grown six inches' or 'I have toothache' since that is the condition of possibility of both.

In this regard, Longuenesse (2012) distinguishes two different uses of the *I as subject*. The first use is relative to Strawson and Evans, as well as Cassam (cf. Longuenesse 2006), who point to the consciousness of the self as a spatio-temporally located object and to the channels from which the subject draws information about himself so as to produce possible *IEM* judgments relative to the first person. The second *I as subject* use, instead, relates to Kant's position as well as to the subject's awareness of mental unity. Further, Longuenesse rejects Evans's criticism against Kant – as a matter of fact, a criticism already made by Strawson (1966) and, years later, also emphasized by McDowell (1994) – whereby the *I think* presents a purely formal characterization which is not sufficient to account for the self-referential capacity of the self-conscious subject.

Indeed, it seems difficult to compare two levels of investigation that are so different, *mutatis mutandis* highlighted in a different theoretical framework by Perry (1986) and Recanati (1997): plainly, it is assumed that – starting from the *I think* – Kant articulates a metaphysical reflection also on the conditions of possibility of the identification mechanisms by applying the intellectual forms to the sensitive ones. Such reflection, as already said, is concerned, in contemporary terms, also with the *self-knowledge* domain, establishing that the transcendental subject cannot be the object of neither knowledge nor identification because it is not a phenomenon manifesting itself in time and space. For this reason, Kant's *I as subject* is an empty form. However, perhaps less plainly, this thesis is an epistemological conclusion gained from a metaphysical reflection on the transcendental subject's features, and rests on a different theoretical level than Wittgensteinian reflections (cf. Carl 1997). It is therefore necessary to move to a different level that is empirical apperception articulated by Kant from the sensitive dimension of receptivity.

5

Like Wittgenstein, Kant (1798, 135) also introduces the 'I as subject' and 'I as object' on the basis of the distinction between transcendental and empirical apperception but, as mentioned, their theoretical uses are com-

pletely different. Such distinction determines that the subject can (re)present herself in two ways: through the *I* that thinks and through the *I* that intuits itself. In another passage Kant (AA 28, 224; cit. in Carl 1997, 156) states that “the I can be taken in a twofold manner: I as human being and I as intelligence. I in the first sense means: I am an object of the inner and the outer sense. I in the second sense means that I am the object of the inner sense only.” Obviously, this does not imply that there are ‘two’s I’, on the contrary, the “I as a thinking being am one and the same subject with myself as a sensing being” (Kant 1798, 142).

From the angle of transcendental dimension, and abstracting from any modality of intuition, while *I* is a pure representation, transcendental apperception does not render the thinking subject neither as noumenon nor as phenomenon: “I think myself only as I do every object in general from whose kind of intuition I abstract” (*KrVB* 429).

From the angle of the empirical dimension, considering the *I think* as an empirical proposition equivalent to the *I exist thinking*, there is no logical function any longer but only the determination of the subject at the level of existence, the object of intuition that necessarily involves inner sense: the *I as object* of the perception is revealed by empirical apperception as a *phenomenon* that unfolds through the form of time. On the side of receptivity, at first glance the consciousness of the self as object of perception appears variable:

The consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of our state in internal perception is merely empirical, forever variable; it can provide no standing or abiding self in this stream of inner appearances and is customarily called inner sense or empirical apperception. (*KrVA* 107)

Nonetheless, if the Kantian *I* as subject of thinking, i.e. transcendental apperception, is the condition of possibility of all judgments, only on empirical level of investigation some characterizations of the identification mechanisms of the egological dimension may be added to one another: empirical apperception involves the pure forms of sensibility that articulate, in the specific terms of transcendentalism, the Wittgensteinian uses of the *I as subject* and *I as object* in judgments expressing self-ascriptions of mental and physical properties. The argument can be articulated as follows:

1) *In primis*, also as regards empirical apperception, Kant rejects the possibility to move from the inner perception of something existing as thinking (what Kant calls ‘eine unbestimmte empirische Anschauung’) to the determination of this very something as existing substance in time and space, the forms of inner and outer sense through which all phenomena are given; differently, this would be no thought but matter. Indeed, the consciousness of the self as contemplated by empirical apperception is the inner perception of something that is not the object of outer sense (cf. Kant 1783, 334).

2) Even so, according to the arguments drawn from *Refutation of Idealism*, it is necessary to introduce the external sense on another plane: for the subject to determine its existence in time, it is necessary to assume the existence of objects perceived by outer sense, starting with the subject’s very body.⁵ Thus, following Capozzi (2007), in the consciousness of the self lying on the empirical determination of inner perception – i.e., on the subject’s capability to perceive himself, principally in the paradigmatic instance of the psychological mechanism of attention as something that thinks while apprehending representations in the psychological flow towards the outside – *I* reveals itself as an intuition and phenomenises, *de facto* obtaining indirectly a persistence which exceeds the afore-mentioned variable nature of empirical apperception.

3) This does not imply that the subject phenomenizing in empirical apperception, and which requires outer sense in order to be determined in time as inner phenomenon, can account for an instance of identification. Just as the *I as subject* in transcendental apperception poses no question of identification – it is neither a phenomenon nor a noumenon – the *I as object* of empirical apperception cannot account for any instance of identification: it is a phenomenon that unfolds in time only. What is more, the *temporal* nature of experience, in the absence of space, allows us to count numbers but not to identify objects.

⁵ Taking the cue from Allison (2004, 298), who maintains that in the framework of *Refutation of idealism* “one’s body functions as the enduring object, with reference to which one’s existence is determined in time”, several scholars, such as Cassam (1993) and Hanna (2000), have questioned the notion of ‘embodied subject’ in Kant’s reflection. The historical-critical reconstruction by Capozzi (2007) clarifies some aspects of the issue.

6

According to Kant, it is possible to refer to *Erkenntnis*, which is always *discursive*, only as regards the product of the application of conceptual forms to forms of sensibility, and only with reference to both pure forms of sensibility: time and space. If in the first pure intuition all possible representations are revealed, in space there appears only a specific sub-class of representations, i.e., those referring to sheer *external* objects. Thanks to space itself – the form of outer sense – the objects are represented as something real and different from the subject. Only through a spatio-temporal collocation the object is knowable in the strict sense, and the relative representations become *Erkenntnis*.

As to the empirical apperception features, the activity of thinking (*I exist thinking*) only manifests itself in time, not space, as has been said: it follows that the representation *I* cannot turn into knowledge, since, paradoxically, this would require an intuition in space, i.e., in the form of sensibility wherein the only representations refer to what is represented as something different from the subject. For this reason, the subject cannot determine itself as object within inner sense (see *KrV* A 22–3/B 37).

On the basis of the instances of distinction of time and of the re-identification of space – and, obviously, of the application of the conceptual dimension – not only is it possible to count numbers but also objects, i.e., it is possible to know a world of objects, different from the subject, which bear properties and are endowed with identification conditions. On the other hand, time, without space, represents phenomena as belonging to the thinking subject's internal sphere. For this reason, from the empirical dimension, the *I think* “expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., a perception” (*KrV* B 423 n.). Such is an *empirical* intuition because the empirical-existential proposition *I think/I exist* lies on a sensation which indeed belongs to sensibility and reveals itself only in time. Additionally, it is *indeterminate* due to the lack of space, i.e., the form in and through which objects manifest themselves and can be determined. In this context, it is clear that, in some self-attributions, the *I* of empirical apperception presents a Wittgensteinian use of the *I as subject*.

First of all the question concerns the judgment, the *Prolegomena* (Kant 1783, 298) contains the famous distinction between *judgments of perception* and *judgments of experience*: the former have subjective validity only, while

judgments of experience involve the principles of understanding that make *empirical judgments* objectively valid. But some judgments of perception can never become judgments of experience due to their being solely based on *subjective sensations* or *feelings* (to readapt Kant's examples: 'I'm hot in this room', 'I am disgusted by wormwood'): while a dual reference to the subject's experience and consciousness is required in order for representations to fall within the knowledgeable (cf. *KrV* A 320/B 376; Kant 1800, 33), the internal or subjective sensation (cf. Kant 1798, 156), thus equated to the *Gefühl* (cf. Kant 1790, 206), lacking an even potential reference to an object of reality – such as intuitions (in an immediate way) or concepts (in a mediate way) – is a representation exclusively connected with the subject and, for that reason, manifests itself only in time.⁶

The distinction between judgment of experience and judgments of perception has to be intended as a counterpart to the *Transcendental Deduction* (see Allison 2004, 179), and two accounts of judgment have been individuated (cf. Allison 2004; Longuenesse 1998). The first considers the act of judgment as the unification of distinct representation in a concept that is correlated with a unity in the consciousness. Since "a concept is never immediately related to an object, but is always related to some other representation of it (whether that be an intuition or itself already a concept)", the judgment is the mediate cognition of an object, the representation of a representation of it (see *KrV* A68/B93). Therefore, the judgment includes two concepts related both to each other and to object judged about (cf. *KrV* A68-69/B93-94).

The second account focuses on the objectivity: in *KrV* (B §18-19) Kant points out the distinction between an objective unity of self-consciousness, which presupposes the use of categories, and subjective unity, which is only the product of the reproductive imagination. For this reason he criticizes the logicians' definition of judgment as the "the representation of a relation between two concepts", since they don't specify what this relation amounts to and the rule of the copula: "That is the aim of the copula *is* in them: to

⁶ In another passage Kant (1783, 334 n.) reaffirms that *I*, as a representation of apperception, is no concept: "it is nothing more than a feeling of an existence without the least concept, and is only a representation of that to which all thinking stands in relation (*relatione accidentis*)."

distinguish the objective unity of given representations from the subjective” (*KrV* B 142).

From a Kantian point of view, and with regard to the forms of sensibility and understanding, a judgment such as ‘I’m hot’ doesn’t involve an identification component since it consists of perceptions revealed in time only, whose nexus cannot involve any pure concept of understanding, and therefore the objective unity of apperception, because there is no object directed to the outer sense to be determined and, therefore, identified.

The heart of the matter changes in the self-ascriptions of properties manifesting themselves in time and space which thus refer to a spatio-temporally located subject/body. If the thinking being, as a human being, is at the same time an object of outer sense (cf. *KrV* B 415), from a Kantian point of view, a judgment such as ‘I have a dirty hand’ is a *judgment of experience* in that it involves an outer object – the body – and the principles of pure understanding, which are based on the categories applied to the formal conditions of a possible intuition: the nexus of the representations is necessarily produced by the presence of the object which affects sensibility and is objectively valid through the intervention of the intellectual dimension thus determining the object.

Obviously, this concerns the conditions making a judgment of experience possible based on the relations between forms of thoughts and forms of sensibility considered as rules which, according to the Copernican revolution, represent the universal laws without which nature in general, as object of sense, could not be thought (cf. Kant 1790, 183). It goes without saying that the transcendental account cannot tell whether the judgment ‘I have a dirty hand’ is true or false, it provides the conditions of possibility required to produce an assertive *Erkenntnissatz*, which can be confirmed or denied, with regard to the attribution of the predicate, since the hand of the person having made such judgment may not be dirty, as well as to the subject’s identification. If the judgment is produced on the basis of the reflected image of a tangle of hands in a mirror, the dirty hand might not belong to the person who has produced the judgment but, rather, to someone else. In this context, a *judgment of experience* expressing the self-attribution of a subject/body physical property involves a subject’s identification component as, in point of fact, the subject can be mistaken as to whether he is the one who is attributing himself this particular property.

Therefore, only with the objective unity of apperception it is possible to make a truth-evaluable judgment (i.e. a judgment of experience) that contains a identification component and consequently makes *Erkenntnis* possible; instead a judgment that doesn't involve the objective unity of apperception (i.e. a judgment of perception) is not truth-evaluable, so doesn't include an identification component.

7

In conclusion, following Kitcher (2000, 34) it is true that Kant and Wittgenstein start from what at first glance might appear to be different theses so that 'it is an interpretive and philosophical mistake to try to force an alliance between what are, in fact, deeply opposed camps'. At the same time, following Carl (1997, 149) it is true that Kant's distinction of the 'I as subject' and the 'I as object' is not concerned with Wittgenstein's project of distinguishing different kinds of predicates to be ascribed to oneself, but is concerned with an epistemological perspective focusing on the distinction between spontaneity and receptivity, seen as conditions of all possible knowledge, in order to give an account which incorporates the *I as subject* of apperception into the foundation of the formal conditions of knowledge.

However, it is also true that, even seen via different philosophical horizons, they both come to similar conclusions: the *I used as subject* concerns the self-attributions of mental properties and involves no instance of identification, while the *I used as object* concerns the self-attributions of physical properties and the subject's identification will be provided.

As already seen, the question is further articulated in the transcendental and empirical dimension and can be connected to Carl's (1997, 157) distinction between two classes of self-ascriptions, the kind of self-ascriptions that considers the 'I as passive' related to receptivity and the other sort of self-ascriptions that regards the 'I as active' related to spontaneity:

a) Since it is necessarily involved in the making of any judgment, the *I as subject* of thinking, which means pure apperception, is the condition of possibility of the Wittgensteinian uses of the *I as subject* and *I as object* in judgments expressing self-ascriptions of mental and physical properties: as already remarked, although the representation *I* designates the transcen-

dental subject, it cannot be determined to identify the thinking entity and thus always lacks the identification component.

b) For the *I* as passive of empirical apperception, there are two possibilities: b.1) if the subject reveals itself only in time, the self-attributions concern only mental properties and so there is no question of identification, the *I* is used as subject in judgment of perception; b.2) if the subject reveals itself in time and space, the question of identification arises since there is an *explicit self-attribution* of body physical property relative to *I* which is used as object in a judgment of experience. This Kantian reading is also obtained through a reflection on the sources of epistemic sensibility and mediation of the forms of time and space and, also for this reason, it must be included in a very different theoretical framework from Wittgenstein's.⁷

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