

KANT ON PURE APPERCEPTION AND INDETERMINATE EMPIRICAL INNER INTUITION

YIBIN LIANG

*Center for Studies of Values and Culture, School of Philosophy,
Beijing Normal University*

It is well known that Kant distinguishes between two kinds of self-consciousness: transcendental apperception and empirical apperception (or, approximately, inner sense). However, Kant sometimes claims that “I think,” the general expression of transcendental apperception, expresses an indeterminate empirical inner intuition (IEI), which differs in crucial ways from the empirical inner intuition produced by inner sense. Such claims undermine Kant’s conceptual framework and constitute a recalcitrant obstacle to understanding his theory of self-consciousness. This paper analyzes the relevant passages, evaluates the major interpretations of IEI, revisits the notion of pure apperception, and proposes an alternative reading: IEI is a ubiquitous, nonfocal, “obscure,” and empirical inner intuition that is built into all nonintrospective conscious states. This reading can successfully account for the peculiarities of IEI, resolving a major mystery in Kant’s theory of self-consciousness.

Keywords: Kant; self-consciousness; apperception; inner sense; inner intuition

1. Introduction

Kant famously distinguishes between two kinds of self-consciousness: empirical and pure apperception. Both play a fundamental role in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹ Roughly, empirical apperception (or equivalently, inner sense) is the

1. Quotations from Kant’s works are from the *Akademie-Ausgabe* (1900–). The *Critique of Pure Reason* is cited by the standard A/B edition pagination, and the other works by volume and page. Translations are based on the *Cambridge Editions of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (eds. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood). I regularly consulted the Hackett editions (ed. Werner Pluhar). Specific texts are abbreviated, as indicated at the end of this paper.

Contact: Yibin Liang <yibinliang.de@hotmail.com>

subject's empirical intuition of its own mental states, which arises from self-affection. Pure (or transcendental) apperception is the self-consciousness that is essentially related to the *I think*,² which must be able to accompany any representation that possesses cognitive value for the subject. Pure apperception is intellectual, i.e., it originates solely from understanding. Nevertheless, in several passages, Kant (B422n.) surprisingly deals with an "indeterminate empirical [inner] intuition, i.e., perception" (henceforth, "IEI").³ In crucial respects, this is peculiar and distinct from the empirical inner intuition that Kant more frequently addresses and regards as determinable by some categories (henceforth, "DEI"). IEI is closely connected to pure apperception, such that Kant even declares pure apperception to be an "inner perception" (A343/B401) or a "feeling of an existence" (Prol 4: 334). This would bring about a major breach in his division of sensibility and understanding, rendering the concept "pure apperception" incomprehensible and degrading its paramount status in transcendental philosophy (B134n.). Apart from a few passages, Kant elaborates very little on IEI, which has perplexed commentators. Manfred Frank, for instance, even calls IEI an "absurdity" [*Unding*] within Kant's system (1991: 421–422).⁴ Many commentators simply ignore these passages. Suggestions about the nature of IEI range from intellectual self-intuition and bare sensation to empirical materials for thoughts. None of these approaches prove satisfactory. In this paper, I argue that the textual evidence for an unusual inner perception prevails. IEI is neither mysterious nor trivial, as some commentators suggest. Rather, it is a ubiquitous, nonfocal, "obscure," and empirical inner intuition that accompanies all nonintrospective conscious states. As Kant's relevant remarks are scant and obscure, my reconstruction of IEI is an inference to the best explanation. Nevertheless, I think this reading fits the textual evidence, is coherent with most parts of Kant's system, and solves a long-standing puzzle. In §2, I briefly characterize pure and empirical apperception. I then introduce IEI by describing and unpacking some key passages. In §3, I survey previous efforts to interpret these passages. In §4, I provide and defend an alternative account of IEI.

2. Preliminaries

To explain why IEI poses an interpretative problem, an overview of Kant's doctrine of apperception is necessary. Due to its complexity and obscurity, parts of

2. Henceforth, italics symbolize mental states. For example, "the *I think*" denotes a representational inner state with the propositional content "I think."

3. Henceforth I use "empirical intuition" interchangeably with "perception." See Prol 4: 283, 350; Anth 7: 134n. For subtle distinctions between them, which do not influence the argumentation of this paper, see McLearn (2020: ch. 2).

4. Similarly, see Sturma (1985: 116–117), and Kemp Smith (2003: 330).

this doctrine are controversial, so this preliminary presentation of its contentious aspects relies on Kant's original texts and their *prima facie* meaning.

2.1. Pure Apperception

Pure apperception is the nonsensible self-consciousness that is essentially related to the *I think*, an act of self-ascription of mental states (B132).⁵ The *I think*, portrayed as the "act" of pure apperception (B137), arises from this self-consciousness.⁶ A representation can be "my representation," i.e., cognitively meaningful for me (B131–132, A116) or conscious (A117n., B133), if and only if it can be accompanied by the *I think* (B131–132, A116, A117n.).⁷ The *I think* is a "concept, or rather, if one prefers, [a] judgment" (A341/B399), and contains the "I think," the "formal proposition" (A354) that expresses pure apperception (A398–399). In contrast, the representation *I* is not a concept (Prol 4: 334; MAN 4: 543). Pure apperception is intellectual: it arises from understanding (B136, 140) and does not contain any sensible content. Its product, the *I think*, consists of the *I* and a representation of thinking, or, equivalently, a representation of spontaneous cognitive mental acts.⁸ Neither rests upon sensibility: the *I* is empty (A345/B404f., B135, A77/B102), such that it contains no sensible manifold (B135, A355, A381–382), and the representation of thinking is intellectual (B278; NTKrV 23: 39; Anth 7: 141). Pure apperception is transcendental due to its epistemic role: it combines all (intrinsically) separate episodes of consciousness (which include acts of thinking) into one consciousness and, hence, enables all possible functions of understanding (A341–342/B400, A117n, B133–134; Prol 4: 334n.).

Consequently, pure apperception does not count as an experience (i.e., an empirical judgment about spatial or temporal objects); instead, it "precedes" any experience (A354, B276–277).⁹ This is because the *I think* of pure appercep-

5. Pure apperception is also called "transcendental apperception" (A106–107) or "transcendental consciousness" (A117n.). The term "apperception" denotes not only self-consciousness but also, occasionally, the faculty for self-consciousness (A115, A117n.; MAN 5: 542). I use "apperception" mainly in the first sense.

6. "[Pure apperception] is that self-consciousness which...produces the representation *I think*" (B132, emphasis in original). Nevertheless, Kant straightforwardly uses "I think" when referring to pure apperception (e.g., B140, A343/B401, B406). For more on their relation, see §4.2.

7. This is labeled the "apperception principle"; see Cramer (1990), Allison (2004: 163–167), and Longuenesse (2017: 176–181).

8. For Kant, "act" (*actus*) involves spontaneity (B130, B132, B137). Henceforth, "mental act" or "act" signifies "spontaneous cognitive mental acts." I do not consider noncognitive mental acts in this paper.

9. Kant usually employs temporal expressions in a transcendental or logical sense. For example, "A precedes B" means that A is (transcendentally or logically) presupposed by B (Refl 18: 611; A26, B523).

tion does not represent the subject as an object located “anywhere or at any time” (NTKrV 23: 39; B407). The *I think* is the “consciousness of myself in mere thought” (B429), with “mere thought” indicating “merely the logical function and hence the sheer spontaneity” (B428) of mental acts. As a mere thought, the *I think* is detached from any relation to an inner intuition (B429). It thus represents merely an “object in general” (B429) that lacks any objective reality (B148–149). The “I” in the *I think*, as a mere thought, does not refer to any object of empirical cognition.

2.2. Inner Sense

The term “inner sense” denotes either a type of self-consciousness or the faculty for this self-consciousness. As used in the first sense, “inner sense” means one’s empirical intuition of one’s inner states (A33/B49, A107, A176/B217; V-Met-K2/Heinze 28: 738).¹⁰ Inner states include, in addition to perceptions and feelings of pleasure and displeasure, thoughts (A357–358) and desires (Refl 17: 366). The form of inner sense is time. As such, inner sense is the empirical consciousness of one’s being in a particular inner state at a particular time.¹¹ Note that the term “inner sense” is approximately synonymous with “empirical apperception” (A107; Anth 7: 134n.; V-Met/Dohna 28: 673; V-Met-K2/Heinze 28: 713).¹²

When grounded on inner sense, the *I think* becomes distinct from the *I think* as a mere thought in many aspects:

(Q1) [1] [T]he proposition “I think,” insofar as it says so much as that I exist thinking, is not merely a logical function, but rather determines the

10. Kant sometimes misleadingly counts “the self” (B68, A38/B55, A22–23/B37) or, equivalently, “the (thinking) I” (A342/B400, A361) as the object of inner sense. Nevertheless, the self cannot be represented as an object in an intuition (A22–23/B37, B406ff.). The object of empirical inner intuition is rather an inner state (A22–23/B37, A98–99, A107, A370–371; see Mohr 1991: 73–75, Emundts 2013, and Kraus 2019. Cf. Crone 2012: 131). “The I that is observed by itself ... [is] ... a sum total of so many objects of inner perception” (Anth 7: 398)—i.e., the I is the “transcendental object” that is thought of as the sum total of perceptual inner objects through the idea of soul (A682–684/B710–712; Prol 4: 334; Kraus 2020: 7–8, 44, as well as §4.4.2 below).

11. For inner sense, see Mohr 1991, Indregard 2018, and Kraus 2020.

12. One may object that empirical apperception is defined as “the empirical consciousness of the identity of these reproductive representations with the appearances through which they were given, hence in recognition” (A115). Thus, empirical apperception would involve recognition, a spontaneous act, whereas inner sense should be totally receptive. However, this quotation does not concern empirical apperception, but the “empirical use” (A115) of pure apperception, which is responsible for that spontaneous act. Pure and empirical apperception constitute the formal and the material aspects, respectively, of (apperceptive) consciousness or apperception (Anth 7: 141–142; Kraus 2020: 36, 58, 118). The term “empirical apperception” denotes the sensible component of apperception, which consists merely of empirical inner intuition (Anth 7: 141–142).

subject (which is then at the same time an object) in regard to existence, [2] and this cannot take place without inner sense, whose intuition always makes available the object not as thing in itself but merely *as appearance*. [3] Thus in this proposition there is already *no longer merely spontaneity of thinking, but also receptivity of intuition*, i.e., the thinking of my self applied to the empirical intuition of the very same subject. (B429–430, emphasis mine; similarly, B428–429, B430, B277)

Accordingly, the *I think* as a mere thought can be applied to an empirical intuition produced by inner sense. As explained in fn 10, an inner perception cannot be directly about the self, but is rather about inner states. The inner perception upon which the *I think* is grounded is an empirical intuition of thinking.¹³ Its object is an appearance (Q1.2). Appearances are “objects of a possible experience” (A238/B298). Thus, the *I think*, when grounded on inner sense, constitutes an “inner experience” (B276–277, BXLn.),¹⁴ i.e., an empirical cognition about an inner object. The fact that this kind of *I think* constitutes an inner experience implies that it can determine the corresponding inner intuition (i.e., DEI) through some categories (as Q1.1 above confirms).¹⁵ This kind of *I think* amounts to an empirical judgment about the subject’s state of thinking. It is no longer an *a priori* “mere thought,” and the “I think” it contains counts as an “empirical proposition” (B428). As an ordinary empirical judgement that is itself an episode of consciousness, it cannot have any consciousness-unifying function and hence cannot play a transcendental role.

13. Several passages indicate that we can intuit our acts of thinking by inner sense, for instance: “yet what can I think of as inner accidents except for those which my inner sense offers me? – namely that which is either itself thinking or which is analogous to one” (A265–266/B321); “thinking and willing are merely objects of inner sense” (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28: 279). See also A371, A682–683/B710–711; Refl 18: 319; V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28: 222; as well as footnotes 23 and 49 below. Similarly, see Dyck (2006: 40–43), Mohr (1991: 68), Bader (2017: 128n.11), Longuenesse (2017: 87), Kraus (2020: 4, 159). I thank an anonymous referee who requested more evidence.

14. See also Refl 18: 610–611. The texts at B276–277 and BXLn. concern the *I am* rather than the *I think*. Nevertheless, according to the context, Kant regards both as expressions of pure apperception and, hence, as equivalent (see also B138, A405).

15. Admittedly, categories cannot apply to inner intuitions in order to determine the self, as there are no intuitions of the self (A22/B37, A382). Nevertheless, some categories are applicable to determining inner states, otherwise Kant would not mention inner appearance (A107, B506n.; Prol 4: 334–337) and inner experience (BXLn., B277, A403). The categories of quality and quantity are indubitably applicable because inner states possess extensive magnitude (duration) and intensive magnitude (intensity). Although the category of substance and incidence seemingly does not apply to inner states (B420), some commentators argue that in some sense it does (see Frierson 2014: 23–26 and Chignell 2017). See also Klemme (2009: 184), Düsing (1983: 491), and Kraus (2020: 79–80). Cf. Emundts (2006: 300).

2.3. Indeterminate Empirical (Inner) Intuition (IEI)

Some peculiar remarks cannot be accommodated by what has been said thus far:

(Q2) [1] We must not be troubled by the fact that in this proposition ["I think"], which expresses the perception of oneself, I do have an inner experience, [2] and that therefore the rational psychology built on it is never pure but is based in part on an empirical principle. [3] For this inner perception is nothing more than the mere apperception [*bloße Apperzeption*] *I think* that makes even all transcendental concepts possible, since in them we say: I think substance, cause, etc. (A342–343/B400–401)

In this passage, Kant speaks of "the mere apperception" that "makes even all transcendental concepts possible." This is precisely what pure apperception does (A341/B399). Further evidence shows that the term "mere apperception" denotes pure perception (A546/B574, A400). It is thus perplexing that Kant regards pure apperception as inner perception, since pure apperception should be free from any sensible element. In the same way, it is puzzling that the formal proposition of pure apperception, the "I think," expresses this "perception of oneself." This is not the only puzzling passage concerning pure apperception in Kant's *Critical* writings. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*KrV*), he characterizes the *I think* as an "empirical inner representation" (A848/B876, similarly B421). At MAN 4: 543, he maintains that "the thought I...is *no concept* at all, but only inner perception." Famously, he describes the *I* as a "feeling of an existence" (Prol 4: 334n.). In all such passages (henceforth, "target passages"), pure apperception counts as an empirical representation containing or relying on sensation.

A deflationary explanation of the target passages would be that the *I think* here is a genuine empirical judgment based on the inner perception that is produced by inner sense (DEI). It is thus the type of *I think* addressed in Q1, rather than *I think* as a mere thought. Accordingly, Kant's equation of pure apperception with inner perception in Q2.3 would be ascribed to a sloppy way of formulation: he should have written "this mere apperception which expresses an inner perception," just as he does in Q2.1 and in Q3.2 below.

I agree that the equation of these two concepts is probably a slip; otherwise, we would have to accept that a representation could simultaneously be a thought and a perception.¹⁶ Nevertheless, a significant difference separates the *I think* in Q2 from the *I think* involved in Q1. The *I think* in Q2 is presupposed by all transcendental concepts (Q2.3; see also A341/B399). Hence, it is also presupposed by the transcendental synthesis of imagination according to these con-

16. Similarly, Howell (2000: 149).

cepts. Since this synthesis affects inner sense (B153–154),¹⁷ the *I think* in Q2 is presupposed by inner sense and its product, DEI. In contrast, the *I think* in Q1 is grounded on inner sense and DEI (Q1.2). Because DEI is generated by the self-affection transcendental synthesis of imagination provokes, the *I think* in Q1 depends on and occurs “after” this synthesis.

Sceptics of a third type of *I think* might point to a sentence in Q2.1: “in this proposition [*I think*]...I do have an inner experience.” This suggests that Q2 involves the same kind of *I think* as Q1, because an inner experience is an empirical judgment that results when understanding is applied to, and hence conceptually determines, an inner perception.¹⁸ Nevertheless, “experience,” employed in a weak, nontechnical sense, could also denote the act or process of having epistemic contact with an object through sensations (B1, BXVII, A11; Anth 7: 128).¹⁹ Therefore, the quotation above could merely mean that the *I think* is related to experience in this nontechnical sense, rather than that it conceptually determines an inner perception, thus constituting a genuine empirical judgment.²⁰

A contentious footnote in *KrV* provides decisive evidence for a third type of *I think*:

(Q3) [1] The “I think” is, as has already been said, an empirical proposition, and contains within itself the proposition “I exist.” ... [2] It expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., perception²¹ (hence it proves that sensation, which consequently belongs to sensibility, grounds this existential proposition), but it precedes the experience that is to determine the object of perception through the category in regard to time; [3] (a) and here existence is not yet a category, (b) which is not related to an indeterminately given object, (c) but rather to an object of which one has a concept, and about which one wants to know whether or not it is posited outside this concept. [4] An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real, which was given, and indeed only to thinking in general, thus not as appearance, and also not as a thing in itself (a noumenon), but rather as something that in fact exists and is marked as an existing thing in the proposition “I think.” [5] For it is to be noted that if I have

17. At B67–68, Kant refers to the act that affects inner sense as “this positing of [the mind’s] representation” in time. This is precisely the transcendental synthesis of imagination. Some passages suggest that any thought affects inner sense (Anth 7: 161). If this were true, obscure thoughts, which cannot affect inner sense, would be impossible (MS 6: 345, 376; also see §4.1 below).

18. Hannah (2021: 184).

19. Similarly, see Prien (2015: 521) and Kraus (2020: 24).

20. Cf. Longuenesse (2017: 88).

21. I follow Pluhar’s translation. Compare Guyer and Wood’s translation—“i.e., a perception”—which indicates that a perception is an indeterminate empirical intuition. This conflicts with the expression “an indeterminate perception” in Q3.4.

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. [6] Only without any empirical representation, which provides the material for thinking, the act I think would not take place, and the empirical is only the condition of the application, or use, of the pure intellectual faculty. (B422–423n., bracketed numbers mine)

Apparently, Q₃ and Q₁ address the same type of *I think* because both concern the empirical proposition “I think” that contains the proposition “I exist,”²² and because in both cases the “I think” expresses, and is grounded on, inner perception representing an act of thinking.²³ Nevertheless, compared with Q₁, in crucial respects the *I think* in Q₃ is distinct and manifests some surprising peculiarities that go beyond the conceptual framework of *KrV*.

First, although both relate to an inner perception, the inner perception in Q₁ represents an appearance (Q_{1.2}), whereas that in Q₃ represents neither an appearance nor a noumenon (Q_{3.4}). This undermines Kant’s basic distinction between phenomenon and noumenon.²⁴ An empirical intuition, even if indeterminate, should represent an appearance, which constitutes its intentional object (A20/B34).

Second, the *I think* in Q₁ can, in some sense, determine the subject according to the category of existence (Q_{1.1}; §4.4.2),²⁵ whereas this is clearly not the case in Q₃ (Q_{3.2}, Q_{3.3}).

Third, the *I think* in Q₁ constitutes an inner experience (Q_{1.2}), whereas the *I think* in Q₃ does not, as it “precedes the experience that is to determine the object of perception through the category in regard to time” (Q_{3.2}; henceforth, “precedence claim”).²⁶

All these peculiarities involve a special indeterminacy of the IEI.

22. For more on this, see Kemp Smith (2003: 325) and Klemme (1996: 385).

23. The *I think* is “empirical,” whereas its constituent, the *I*, is “purely intellectual” (Q_{3.5}). Therefore, the sensory material of IEI, which renders the *I think* empirical, merely corresponds to the concept “think.” Thus, IEI must be a representation of an act of thinking. See Liang (2021: 94, 98–99).

24. Similarly, see Zobrist (2011: 164).

25. See also Refl 18: 611. For related controversies, see Kraus (2013; 2019) and Chignell (2017).

26. I construe the second half of the quotation as “determine the object of [inner] perception through the category [of existence]” (similarly, see Longuenesse 2017: 90, and Kraus 2020: 126). Some interpreters render that as “determine the object of [outer] perception through [categories]” (e.g., Crone 2012: 143). This reading does not fit in with the context that concerns an “existential proposition” and the category of existence. Notably, Kant employs “the category” in the quotation in question, whereas in the immediate context of that quotation he uses “categories” four times to refer to all categories. However, the controversy does not affect the reading of the precedence claim because the determination through all categories belongs to the same process.

The *I think* in Q3 is instead the same type as that in Q2.²⁷ In Q3.1, Kant reminds his reader of previous passages where he classifies the “I think” as an empirical proposition, and Q2 fits this characterization.²⁸ Moreover, in the main text where Q3 is provided in a footnote, Kant addresses “the unity of consciousness, which grounds the categories” (B421). Clearly, Kant has in mind here the *I think* that plays a transcendental role. In this respect, the *I think* of Q3 is closer to Q2’s than it is to Q1’s, where the *I think* cannot play a transcendental role (see §2.2), but is instead an introspective representation of an act of thinking (see §4.3).

Consequently, Q3 and Q2 plausibly involve a special kind of inner intuition (i.e., IEI) that is distinct from the one (i.e., DEI) in Q1.^{29,30} Understanding the IEI’s characteristics and its locus in Kant’s doctrine of mind is decisive for clarifying the target passages. I now evaluate the major interpretations of IEI before offering a novel interpretation.

3. Contemporary Interpretations and Evaluations

In addition to the deflationary approach mentioned above, there are four major strategies to accommodate IEI.

3.1. Intellectual Intuition

Famously, Rolf-Peter Horstmann construes the IEI as the forerunner and origin of the Fichtean “*Tathandlung*” (Horstmann 1993: 425). The IEI is an “analytic implicature of the act of thinking” (425). It is not “something that is (like an object), but...something which, in the event of thinking, as it were realizes itself” (425). Consequently, IEI is an intellectual intuition of the self.³¹ I will not engage with this approach extensively since it needs textual support and contradicts Kant’s dichotomy of sensibility and understanding, his explicit rejection of human intellectual intuition (B135), and his repeated characterization of IEI as empirical. I would merely add one point to Rosefeldt’s (2000: 226–227)

27. Similarly, see Frank (2007: 188), Longuenesse (2017: 87–88).

28. The other passage at B420 coheres with my reading. Longuenesse (2017: 87–88) also classifies Q2, Q3 and B420 together.

29. Similarly, see Frank (1991: 421–422). See also Liang (2021: 82). For DEI, see also A107, BXL–XLI, B68, B156, B277, and B430.

30. I claim that the *I think* involved in Q2 and Q3 is special in that it is related to a special inner intuition, an IEL, rather than a DEI. This claim does not imply that pure apperception itself involves IEI. For more details, see §4.2.

31. See also Frank (2007: 189, 191–192; 1991: 425).

and Klemme's (1996: 385–386) thorough criticism of this reading. In Q3.4, Kant asserts that the “indeterminate perception” is “given...only to thinking in general” (B423n.). One could suggest that this shows that IEI is an intuition given to the faculty of thinking, i.e., understanding, rather than to sensibility.³² However, the phrase “thinking in general” is a technical term that refers not to the faculty of thinking but rather to thoughts considered under abstraction from their individual objects.³³ Thinking in general, which includes categories (Br 11: 314; Refl 18: 229), is the form of thinking (Log 9: 13) and is *a priori* (A382; NTKrV 23: 38). In Q3.5, Kant uses this term again: “for it [the I] is rather purely intellectual, because it belongs to *thinking in general*” (emphasis mine). If the phrase “thinking in general” referred to understanding, one would infer that empirical thoughts are “purely intellectual” because they belong to understanding.

The phrase “[the IEI's being] given ... only to thinking in general” indeed means that IEI provides empirical materials for the thought *I think*, which, considered alone, belongs to thinking in general (B399). This reading fits the context of Q3.4 and Q3.5 better—i.e., Q3.6, which explains their meaning.³⁴ In contrast, the “intellectual intuition” reading could hardly accommodate Q3.6.

3.2. Perception of the I Think

IEI has also been seen as a perception of the *I think* that constitutes the transcendental awareness accompanying all “my” representations, and that enables all acts of understanding (Emundts 2006: 304–306; Kraus 2020: 126–127). Thus, in contrast to DEI, IEI is a perception of the epistemically privileged representation, the *I think*, rather than a perception of some ordinary representation (Emundts 2006: 304). Admittedly, this reading is favorable for explaining the IEI's indeterminacy: One could ascribe the IEI's peculiarity to the special status of the *I think*. However, because the “I think” expresses and thus presupposes IEI (Q2.1, Q3.2), IEI cannot be a perception of the *I think*.

3.3. Bare Sensation or Feeling

Some commentators maintain that in referencing “indeterminate empirical intuition,” Kant has in mind not an object-related representation but a bare sensation (henceforth, “initial sensation,” following Banham 2011: 121).³⁵ For Kant, sensa-

32. I thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

33. A397, A259/B314; KU 5: 171; ÜE 8: 195. See also Baumgarten (2015: 2371), and fn 49 below.

34. See also §3.4.

35. Reuscher (1975: 285), Klemme (1996: 390), Schulting (2017: 128), Banham (2011: 140), Crone (2012: 143), and Longuenesse (2017: 90–91, 100).

tion is, in contemporary parlance, a qualitative feel, i.e., a subjective experience³⁶ of a certain phenomenal quality. Sensations are either objective or subjective (KU 5: 206). Objective sensations, e.g., “the green color of a meadow,” can constitute a “representation of an object” (KU 5: 206). In contrast, the faculty of pleasure and displeasure generates subjective sensations, e.g., “[the green color’s] agreeableness,” which cannot constitute an objective representation (KU 5: 206). Some advocates of this reading consider initial sensation to be an objective sensation.³⁷ Motivated by Kant’s claim that the *I* is “a feeling of an existence” (Prol 4: 334), others hold that initial sensation is a subjective sensation.³⁸

Advocates of both views rely on a distinct property of sensation:

[Q4] Sensation in itself is not an objective representation, and in it neither the intuition of space nor that of time is to be encountered, it has, to be sure, no extensive magnitude, but yet it still has...an intensive magnitude. (B208, similarly see Prol 4: 306)

Since sensation in itself does not involve the intuitions of space and time, “the real” of a sensation³⁹ is “not given as a received object” in the sensation (Reuscher 1975: 285), and “does not register as phenomenon” (Banham 2011: 121). This naturally leads to the conclusion that “the real” which is given in sensations is “not a manifold...[and] not subject to the categories” (Reuscher 1975: 285). Therefore, this interpretation can accommodate IEI’s categorial indeterminacy and its character of not representing appearance. Nevertheless, this reading contradicts textual evidence. Objective sensations are certainly “not an intuition” (Prol 4: 306) and feelings are even less so, whereas IEI is declared as an intuition in Q2 and Q3. Moreover, immediately after Q4, Kant says that “apprehension, merely by means of sensation, fills only an instant (*if I do not take into consideration the succession of many sensations*)” (A167/B209, emphasis mine). Evidently, instants are products of theoretical abstraction. They are only imaginary temporal “boundaries” and are not real (A169/B211). Accordingly, bare sensation, which occupies “only an instant,” must be an imaginary mental item. The phrase “sensation in itself” in Q4 also indicates that it involves a theoretical abstraction, one which seeks to illustrate intensive magnitude. Finally, IEI is “related to an indeterminately given object” and “signifies...something real.” IEI’s object-relatedness, despite being indeterminate, contradicts the description in Q4.

The “subjective sensation” reading suffers from additional problems. Kant did not develop the notion “feeling of an existence” after the *Prolegomena*. Like-

36. “Experience” in combination with “subjective” or “conscious” is employed in a contemporary sense, signifying an inner state with some phenomenal character.

37. Crone (2012: 142–143), Liang (2021: 89, 94–104).

38. Longuenesse (2017: 90–91, 100n.48), Klemme (1996: 401–403).

39. The real “corresponds to it [the sensation] in *the object*” (A166, emphasis mine).

wise, the expression “feeling of an existence” does not necessarily designate a radically subjective sensation. Sufficient evidence shows that “feeling” can also denote objective sensation in Kant’s *Critical* period before he regulates the terms “sensation” and “feeling” at KU 5: 207.⁴⁰ Therefore, “feeling of an existence” could literally signify a sensation of an object (more specifically, its states; see fn 10). The claim that “the I...is nothing more than a feeling of an existence” could accordingly mean that objective sensations of an existence’s states underlie the *I*. It does not preclude the possibility that such feelings can constitute an indeterminate empirical intuition. Therefore, that claim stands in line with Q2 and Q3.

3.4. *Sensory Materials for the Act of Thinking*

Many commentators regard Q3.6 as crucial for deciphering the mysteries of IEI: the “I think” is an empirical proposition because it expresses an act of thinking, for which some empirical representations are required to supply materials.⁴¹ In other words, there must be empirical data to provide content for the “that” clause following the “I think.”⁴² Accordingly, the IEI in Q3.2, which is expressed by the “I think” and is responsible for its empirical character, is rendered as a perception that provides sensory content for the “that” clause, rather than as a perception of the act of thinking.⁴³

Although this reading is dominant in the literature, it is untenable in crucial respects. First, a single instance of *I think* does not necessarily presuppose empirical materials, because the content of the “that” clause could be pure (B3), e.g., it could concern God or logic. For an *I think* with such a “that” clause, no corresponding IEI can be found. Thus, the suggested reading of Q3.6 can be improved as follows: “the *I think* is empirical, because instances of *I think* as a whole depend on empirical representations.” Nevertheless, an empirical representation is defined as one that itself contains or relies on sensations (A20/B34). Additionally, if the inference underlying the modified reading were correct, then logical propositions would be empirical, because logical reasoning as a whole will not take place without empirical data.⁴⁴

The sensory materials required for the “that” clause could be outer or inner perceptions. Therefore, if the third approach were correct, then IEI could be an

40. E.g., Refl 15: 268, 688–689; Refl 14: 113; V-Met-L1/Pölitiz 28: 265 (mid-1770s). Note that in *Prolegomena* (4: 299, 299n.), “feeling” includes warmth. Warmth is an objective sensation (A374).

41. Dyck (2014: 189), Emundts (2006: 305), Düsing (1983: 491), Howell (2000: 143n.19), Wunderlich (2011: 167–169, 178), Klemme (2009: 184; 2015: 1068, 1072), Mohr (1991: 126), Frierson (2014: 88), Allison (2004: 354), Forgiione (2017: n.26), and Kraus (2020: 127).

42. See Klemme (1996: 386–387) and Rosefeldt (2000: 228).

43. Rosefeldt (2000: 228), Kitcher (2011: 196, 286n.10, 287n.15).

44. Logic is “the formal rules of *all thinking*” (Bix, emphasis mine).

outer perception. However, the sensation of IEI grounds the “I exist” (Q3.2). What IEI represents is “mark[ed]” [*bezeichnet*] as an “in fact exist[ing]” thing in the “I think” (Q3.4). What is expressed by the “I think” and explains its empirical character is “the perception of oneself” (Q2.1). All these quotations imply that the sensory content of IEI concerns inner rather than outer objects. IEI can only be an inner perception that represents an act of thinking, as demonstrated in fn 23. Furthermore, if IEI were an outer perception, then it would be inexplicable why an outer perception could manifest the peculiar features mentioned in Q3. How could an outer perception not represent any appearance? How could an outer perception that is expressible in propositional form (i.e., in a “that” clause) be indeterminate? As far as I am aware, no commentator has satisfactorily addressed these questions.⁴⁵

4. Nonintrospective, Nonfocal, Obscure, and Empirical Inner Intuition

In this section, I argue that IEI is a nonfocal, obscure, and empirical inner intuition, and is accompanied by the obscure *I think* that is ubiquitous in nonintrospective conscious states. Then, I demonstrate how this can help solve the puzzles surrounding the target passages.

4.1. Revisiting the Nature of the I Think

This section revisits the nature of the *I think* and demonstrates three propositions: 1) as an actual mental state, the *I think* is either clear or obscure; 2) as such, it must be grounded on an empirical intuition (i.e., either IEI or DEI), and cannot be a “mere thought” (see §2.1), which is not accompanied by any empirical intuition; and 3) the *I think* based on IEI is ubiquitous in conscious states. Subsequent sections build on these propositions.

I will first demonstrate that the *I think* occurs only in two modes of consciousness. Kant engages with this issue in a footnote:

[Q5] [1] The mere representation I in relation to all others (the collective unity of which it makes possible) is the transcendental consciousness. [2] Now it does not matter here whether this representation be *clear* (*empirical consciousness*) or *obscure*, even whether it be actual [*Wirklichkeit*]; [3] but the possibility of the logical form of all cognition necessarily rests on the relationship to this apperception as a faculty. (A117n., emphasis mine)

45. For another criticism, see Longuenesse (2017: 89–90).

The italicized text indicates that the *I think*, if it “actually” occurs, is either a clear or an obscure representation. For Kant, a representation is clear if and only if the subject is conscious of having it, i.e., of being in this representational state. A representation is obscure if and only if the subject represents something but is not conscious of being in this representational state (Anth 7: 135ff.).⁴⁶ Such a representation is something present in one’s mind, since it can be accessed and can contribute to cognition despite being an unconscious inner state.⁴⁷ In both modes, the *I think* counts as “actual.” Labeling something “actual” means that it is an “existence at a determinate time” (A145/B184).

The *I think* in both modes is actual for two reasons. First, because the *I think*, whether clear or obscure, is a representation, which is a “modification” (B242, A97) or “determination” of mind (B74, B242; LB 30). As such, the *I think* is a state of mind, a mental occurrence at a determinate time. Second, the predication of actuality to an object presupposes that this object stands in connection with “some actual perception” (A225/B272). Both modes of the *I think* meet this requirement. The *I think* that is clear (or, roughly, conscious) is accompanied and represented by an inner perception (see “empirical consciousness” in Q5.2 and fn 46). The *I think* that is obscure (or, roughly, unconscious) can become the object of an inner perception and thus become clear if one introspects, i.e., directs attention inward to examine one’s own thoughts.⁴⁸

As an actual mental state, the *I think* must be an empirical representation, and the proposition “I think” that it contains must be empirically founded. The reason for this is as follows: the spontaneous mental act that the *I think* represents occurs in time (A103, A99; NTKrV 23: 18).⁴⁹ The *I think*, whether clear or obscure, accom-

46. The consciousness whose deficiency makes a representation obscure is the subject’s empirical, temporal consciousness of being in this particular representational state (Anth 7: 135–136; UD 2: 290; Refl 16: 80; V-Lo/Pöhlitz 24: 510). This is, by definition, what inner sense provides (§2.2), i.e., the inner perception DEL. See Liang (2020); cf. Kitcher (1999; 2012).

47. One could be aware of obscure representations indirectly, e.g., by inference (Anth 7: 135; V-Met/Mron 29: 879; V-Met-L1/Pöhlitz 28: 227), attention shifts (V-Anth/Mron 25: 1239) or altering perceptual conditions (Anth 7: 135). See Liang (2017), Liang (2021).

48. For attention and inner perception, see Merrit & Valaris (2017), Kraus (2020), Liang (2020).

49. If one accepts that (a) acts of thinking can be intuited, one must also accept that (b) thinking, as far as its appearance is concerned, is a temporal process. This is because if acts of thinking can be intuited, they must be represented in time, the form of inner sense. Therefore, all arguments for (a) in fn 13 are also indirect arguments for (b). One could cite the last passage at Refl 18: 319 from the famous Reflection 5661, objecting that thinking is not experienced (empirically cognized) in time. Nevertheless, a sentence preceding this passage indicates the opposite: “the thought itself, even though it occurs in time, takes no regard of time when the properties of a figure are to be thought” (Refl 18: 319, emphasis mine). In addition, the passage in question addresses “the consciousness of instituting an experience or also of thinking in general,” and seeks to demonstrate that this consciousness is nonempirical, nontemporal and transcendental. Such a transcendental consciousness of “thinking in general” is precisely pure apperception (Anth 7: 141; similarly, A341/B400, B409, B277, A341/B399). Thus, the passage in question indicates merely that *in pure apperception*, one cannot be aware of thinking in time, rather than that acts of thinking cannot be intuited in time

panies an individual, spontaneous mental act at some moment, and the “I think” contained within the *I think* refers to this act.⁵⁰ According to the intuition–concept dichotomy (A19/B33), the relation of a representation to an individual object can be established only through empirical intuition (see also NTKrV 23: 26). Therefore, the *I think*, as an actual mental item, must rest upon an empirical intuition of that spontaneous cognitive act which is responsible for the representation that the *I think* accompanies. As §§2.2 and 2.3 demonstrate, the empirical intuition is either IEI or DEI. In other words, the *I think* must be an empirical representation based on either IEI or DEI. This implies that there is no actual occurrence of the *I think* as mere thought or logical function, as depicted in §2.1. Consequently, part of the puzzle surrounding the target passages (see §2.3) can be clarified.

The conclusions we have drawn so far in this section can also cast light on IEI. There is a kind of *I think* that is ubiquitous in—i.e., permanently built into—conscious states:⁵¹ the *I* “accompanies—and indeed with complete identity—all representations at every time in my consciousness” (A362–363; see also A123). The *I think* is “in all consciousness ... one and the same” (B132). This “one and the same” *I* is “the formal element of consciousness” (Anth 7: 141; A382); this implies that it cannot be separated from consciousness.⁵² Clearly, this ubiquitous *I think* repre-

through inner sense. Similarly, Kant apparently denies (a) at A546–547/B574–575 by saying that “the actions and inner determinations” of “understanding and reason” “cannot be accounted at all among impressions of sense.” Nevertheless, Kant thematizes there only the “mere apperception,” which, as argued, refers to pure apperception. Finally, a source contrary to the evidence I have provided above—a highly ambiguous, obscure passage in a handwritten note—cannot be assumed to be Kant’s considered view (Kitcher 2011: 173). I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me on this point.

50. Here, I follow the mainstream descriptivist interpretation of the *I think*, which maintains that the “I think” describes a mental act. The concurrent nondescriptivist interpretation holds the opposite view. See Freitag & Kraus (2022) and Henning (2010). The evaluation of both approaches is beyond the scope of this article.

51. I denote the sum of the subject’s conscious experience at a given moment as a “conscious state.” This consists of all “conscious inner states” at this moment, e.g., perceptions, thoughts, desires, or moods.

52. Against the standard view about empirical apperception, Janum Sethi has recently drawn attention to a particular case: one can be aware of a series of empirical intuitions “related merely through association” (henceforth, “subjective sequences,” or “SS”; see Sethi 2021: 8). That is, one can be conscious of the temporal order of these empirical intuitions merely “as they are given prior to combination by the understanding.” (Sethi 2021: 4). One’s consciousness of SS is determined at most by mathematical categories, and lacks determination by relational categories. Therefore, it is not fully determined by understanding. SS stand in empirical unity of apperception (henceforth, EUA) rather than transcendental unity of apperception (henceforth, TUA; Sethi 2021: 8–9). The self-consciousness accompanying SS is empirical apperception without pure apperception (Sethi 2021: 15). This is because pure and empirical apperception correspond to and accompany TUA and EUA, respectively (Sethi 2021: 3, 14), and EUA cannot be an instance of TUA (Sethi 2021: 4). In contrast, I hold that the *I think* (and hence pure apperception, which produces the *I think*; see B132) obtains in all conscious states. Due to space limitations, I cannot fully engage with this highly complicated debate. I regard this paper as an approach to IEI within the framework of the standard

sents the transcendental condition of consciousness. Such a kind of *I think* cannot be the *I think* depicted in Q₁, because the latter cannot play any transcendental role (see §2.2). It can only be the *I think* characterized in Q₂. Accordingly, the empirical inner intuition underlying it must be IEI rather than DEI.⁵³ In conclusion, the IEI underlying it is also ubiquitous in consciousness.

One may object that these quotations, as interpreted above, contradict both the apperception principle (see §2.1) and Q_{5.2}, since this principle does not require every cognitively meaningful representation to be actually accompanied by an instance of *I think*. The mere possibility of such an accompaniment is sufficient.⁵⁴ However, the principle concerns all “my” representations rather than all “my” conscious representations. It does not preclude the possibility that every episode of (attentional) consciousness contains an instance of *I think*. The statement that “it does not matter ... even whether it [the *I think*] be actual” (Q_{5.2}) indeed alludes to some obscure representations. Such representations are not accompanied by (apperceptive) consciousness and an instance of *I think*, yet they are cognitively meaningful as they can be accompanied by one such instance indirectly.

4.2. Revisiting Pure Apperception

In this section I argue that pure apperception is content awareness rather than act awareness. Pure apperception, as such, results from a theoretical abstraction

reading. I nevertheless sketch my concerns in the following: (1) Kant defines awareness through inner sense or empirical apperception broadly as intuitions of one’s inner states without restricting “inner states” to any subset of representations (A_{22–23}/B₃₇; see also A_{98–99}, A₁₀₇). Moreover, all representations are in inner sense (A_{98–99}, A₁₅₅/B₁₉₄, A₁₇₇/B₂₂₀; MS 6: 214); whereas for Sethi, empirical apperception is attached merely to representations in EUA (Sethi 2021: 14). (2) All consciousness belongs to an “all-embracing pure apperception” (A₁₂₃; see also A₁₁₆). Hence, one’s consciousness of SS cannot occur without it. (3) Consider the conscious states involving SS. The subject of SS cannot be aware of the objective order of events that SS represents and consequently cannot even be aware of the objective order of intuitions constituting SS, since objective time-determination presupposes relational categories that are unavailable in SS (Sethi 2021: 8). Moreover, since the relation of conscious experience to its object is characterized by a special kind of necessary relation among perceptions (A_{104–105}, B₁₄₂, A_{190–191}/B_{235–236}), one which is established by means of relational categories (B_{218–219}; Prol 4: 309–310), the subject does not have conscious experience of sensible objects by merely attending to SS (A₁₁₁, A₁₁₂; Hoppe 1983: ch. 14; Sethi 2021: 9n.22). Such an unusual sort of conscious state is possible only in some unusual cases—such as 1) hypnopompic or hypnagogic states, 2) pathological or psychedelic states, or 3) early infant consciousness (Hoppe 1983: ch. 14)—where TUA totally breaks down. These abnormalities are irrelevant for our investigation of IEI, because IEI accompanies TA (see Q₂) and hence also accompanies TUA.

53. The *I think* based on DEI obtains only in focus of introspection. See §4.3.

54. Allison (2004: 164), Rosefeldt (2000: 224), and cf. Liang (2021: 69–70). I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me on this point.

that captures the contribution of mere intellect in self-consciousness. It is a mental item shared by all conscious states rather than a self-standing mental state. These considerations, combined with §4.1, clarify the relation between *I think*, pure apperception, and IEI. This in turn explains the crucial contradiction in Q2, and sets the stage for understanding IEI.

In some texts, Kant asserts that pure apperception with the formal content “I think” is an immediate intellectual (or pure) consciousness of acts of thinking or synthesis (B133–134, B278, B153; Anth 7: 141–142; V-Met-K2/Heinze 28: 712–713).⁵⁵ This intellectual awareness seems to be present in some significant sense, since the subject can “combine transcendental consciousness” with thoughts (Refl 18: 611; see also B419, A123–124), which are mental occurrences in time. It represents one’s acts of thinking unmediated by an inner empirical intuition, i.e., through the mere thought *I think*.

A natural way of construing the notion of intellectual consciousness of acts of thinking is to read it as intellectual consciousness of mental acts *as* mental acts.⁵⁶ In contrast to perceiving an object, we cannot be intellectually aware of a mental act vaguely as “something there.” To be intellectually aware of a mental act *as* a mental act is to think of it as a mental act, because there is no other intellectual way of representing a mental act as such. On closer examination, nonetheless, this *prima facie* construal of the notion is problematic, as it cannot be coherently integrated into Kant’s system. First, if one had intellectual act awareness of one’s thoughts—i.e., if one were nonsensibly aware of one’s thoughts *as acts*—then one would have intellectual awareness of one’s existence.⁵⁷ Kant rejects intellectual awareness of the self’s existence⁵⁸ (directly at B426–427 and indirectly at B420⁵⁹), and treats it as the result of an abstraction (B426–427) because a judgment about the existence of an object must be synthetic and cannot be “reached *a priori*” (NTKrV 23: 42–43). Second, when one is aware of thinking as a mental activity, this awareness relates to a temporal object because thinking is a process in time (see fn 49). If act awareness represents an individual temporal object, then it must rely on an inner intuition (A19/B33) and cannot be intellectual. Third,

55. Allison (2004: 170–171, 351), Watkins (2004: 274–278), Kitcher (2011: 160), Longuenesse (2017: 81). For a criticism, see Kraus (2020: 95–98).

56. In other words, one is not only aware of the thought’s content but also aware of the mental activity responsible for it.

57. Allison (2004: 353) and Longuenesse (2017: 86–87, 92–93) ascribe this inference to Kant. Cf. Rosefeldt (2000: 223).

58. Some remarks suggest the opposite, e.g., the beginning sentence of §25 (B157). However, in that context, Kant is addressing a mere “thought of something existing” (B277). As such, “I think myself only as I do every object in general from whose kind of intuition I abstract” (B429; see also NTKrV 23: 42–43). Thus, without any empirical base, “I am” cannot be an empirical cognition (B277; NTKrV 23: 42–43), i.e., it cannot be truth-apt.

59. He moves from the circumstance that “I think” entails “I exist thinking” to the conclusion that “I think” is empirical.

intellectual consciousness alone cannot represent a mental act *as a mental act*, because act awareness as such is too demanding for intellectual consciousness. There are roughly three interpretations of the notion “thinking of a mental act as a mental act”: 1) thinking of a mental act as such, 2) thinking of a mental act as a mental act of certain type (e.g., as a thought about the concept of a triangle), or 3) thinking of a mental act as a particular mental act with some content at some time point (e.g., as a thought about the concept of a triangle at 11: 00 AM Eastern Time). Consider the first, weakest reading. Thinking of a mental act as a mental act requires that the subject can think of it under the concept “mental act.” According to Kant’s theory of concept (Log 9: 58–62, 95), this means that the subject can bring the act under the marks “spontaneous,” “mental,” and “event”. This in turn presupposes that the subject can conceptually distinguish mental acts from nonspontaneous mental events such as sensations, and from nonmental objects such as material things.⁶⁰ These distinctions are impossible through mere intellectual awareness and must rely on empirical representations. All three readings fall prey to this problem.

The third reading also requires that the subject be able to identify a mental act as a determinate object (i.e., as a particular mental act that has content p at time t) and can distinguish it from other objects. Arguably, if the third reading is followed, the act awareness is even more demanding because representing a mental act as an individual occurrence depends on an identificatory framework: a function which, in this context, only time can serve.⁶¹ The awareness that two instances of a type of thought are different instances of this type presupposes the awareness that these instances are two different events at two different times. Finally, pure apperception is ubiquitous in episodes of (attentional) consciousness (A123; see also A116). If it were truly intellectual act awareness, then Kant would not claim that one is “seldom even conscious” of the synthetical acts themselves (A78/B103, A103–104).

Pure apperception, despite being claimed as the intellectual consciousness of mental acts, is content awareness rather than act awareness.⁶² Three reasons support this view. First, if the “act awareness” reading fails, then pure apperception can only be content awareness. If the subject can still be said to be, in some sense, intellectually conscious of her mental acts without intellectual act awareness, then she must be intellectually conscious of their contents, which are pure concepts or judgments.⁶³ This is because there is simply nothing else in acts of thinking that is cognitively accessible for the subject in an intellectual way. Thus,

60. Even thinking of mental acts under a minimal description such as “something mental” requires that the subject can distinguish them from “something nonmental.”

61. Liang (2021: 76, 101). For an argument analogous to this, see A263–264/B319–320.

62. For another line of argumentation reaching a similar position, see Dickerson (2003: 88).

63. Their content is pure due to the nature of the intellectual consciousness.

with the notion of a nonsensible and nontemporal awareness of spontaneous mental acts, Kant means that one is nonsensibly aware of what the mind does by spontaneous acts—that is, that one is nonsensibly aware of their content, i.e., pure concepts or judgments.⁶⁴

Second, the “content awareness” reading offers a better explanation of pure apperception’s role and nature than the “act awareness” reading. Through content awareness, the subject has access to, and hence can manipulate, the content of individual mental acts occurring at different times. Content awareness is consequently presupposed by the unity of consciousness, which is in turn required for intellectual operations such as synthesis, judgment, and inference. In this sense, content awareness fulfills Kant’s description of the transcendental role of pure apperception (A341/B399–400). If pure apperception were intellectual act awareness, then it would be difficult to explain why basic operations of understanding require the highly demanding act awareness rather than content awareness. Additionally, content awareness is necessary for the subject to be aware of representations and to self-ascribe them by means of the *I think*; hence, content awareness is also presupposed by empirical self-consciousness, and is that which gives rise to individual instances of *I think*.

Third, the “content awareness” reading better accommodates textual evidence. In terms of content awareness rather than act awareness, pure apperception is described as “a consciousness of *what* the human being does” (Anth 7: 161, emphasis mine). In addition, the fact that Kant, in passages cited above, refers to pure apperception as one’s consciousness of acts of thinking or synthesis does not contradict but rather reinforces this reading. Let us first inspect the most significant such passage:

[The thought that these representations given in intuition all together belong to me] still presupposes the possibility of [the consciousness of the synthesis of the representations], i.e., only because I can *comprehend their manifold in a consciousness* do I call them all together my representations.” (B134, emphasis mine)

Remarkably, the second, explanatory part of this passage does not appeal to act awareness. It suggests that “the consciousness of the synthesis” is consciousness of the synthesized content rather than consciousness of the synthetical act. A similar case, occurring just a few lines before at B133, further confirms this reading. Moreover, thinking is nothing but operating concepts and judgments (A68–69/B93–94, A126), and these are the contents of thought. Therefore, con-

64. Rosefeldt (2000: 224) and Dickerson (2003: 88) effectively reject the interpretation of pure apperception as intellectual act awareness. Cf. Kraus (2020: 36, 39).

tent awareness, although not an awareness of an act of thinking as such, is an awareness of the essence of such an act, and can count as consciousness of acts in a broad sense. Finally, Kant occasionally employs terms related to mental items, such as “representation” and “concept,” liberally: They can refer either to a mental state or act of some kind, or to its content.⁶⁵ Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that a similar ambiguity exists in how the terms “act,” “thinking,” and “synthesis” are used in the notion of “consciousness of (acts of) thinking or synthesis.”

It can be further argued that pure apperception is not a self-standing, distinct representation. The concept of “pure apperception” results from a theoretical abstraction: for a given conscious state, one focuses on that nonsensible, formal aspect which constitutes its transcendental conditions and abstracts from all its sensible components.⁶⁶ The rationale for this relates to the originality of pure apperception, a privileged status that it enjoys against ordinary representations. All one’s (ordinary) representations—i.e., representations that convey a cognitive value or content for the subject—must be such that the *I think* can accompany them (B131–132). In contrast, pure apperception is “original” and does not require another layer of *I think* (B132). Clearly, pure apperception is not a self-standing, ordinary representation.

Strong textual evidence supports this reading. Pure apperception constitutes “the formal element” and empirical apperception “the material of consciousness” (Anth 7: 141–142).⁶⁷ This suggests that a conscious inner state cannot consist of pure apperception alone. Pure apperception grounds the categories in terms of judgments such as “I think substance, cause, etc.” (Q2.3). No such judgments can be detected by introspection. The proposition “I think” does not specify the type of spontaneous acts that it self-ascribes, whereas actual instances of self-ascription can occur with expressions such as “I perceive,”⁶⁸ “I infer,” “I assume,” and “I will.” Thus, it is no wonder that the “I think” is claimed as an idealized “general expression” (B138, A398) or “formal proposition” (A354), i.e., as an abstraction from actual instances of self-ascription. Furthermore, Kant occasionally speaks of “the I” rather than the “I think” when discussing pure apperception (A117n., B68, B278; Anth 7: 141). This indicates that he is not bound to the “I think.” Finally, whereas empirical apperception belongs to psychology (Anth 7: 141, 134n.) or physiology (Anth 7: 398), transcendental apperception belongs to

65. “Representation,” typically denoting a representational mental state, occasionally also signifies its intentional content, e.g., “all objects in space are...representations of our sensory intuition” (Prol 4: 288; see also A490–491/B518–519; Stang 2016: ch. 3.1, especially note 25). “Concept” can refer to either a synthetical act (A103–104, A112) or its content, e.g., “alteration is a concept” (B3).

66. Cf. Kraus (2020: 25–26, 36, 124).

67. Note that, here, Kant equates apperception with consciousness.

68. The subject also self-ascribes intuitions and hence perceptions (A382).

logic (Refl 20: 270; Refl 15: 85; Anth 7: 141; A398). The logical viewpoint relies on an abstraction “from every object” (A398). The concept of “pure apperception” results from considering apperception separately from, among other things, the object of empirical apperception. This object is a particular inner state (Anth 7: 141–142). A highly illuminating remark reveals that such an abstraction indeed underlies Q2, a crucial passage for IEI:

[Q6] For inner experience in general and its possibility, or perception in general and its relation to another perception, *without any particular distinction or empirical determination being given in it*, cannot be regarded as empirical cognition, but must be regarded as cognition of the empirical in general, and belongs to the investigation of the possibility of every experience, which is of course transcendental. (A343/B401, emphasis mine)

Note that Q6 immediately follows Q2, which contains the mysterious claim that pure apperception expresses a “perception of oneself.” Q6 evidently addresses this perception.

In light of my argumentation thus far, the notion of apperception underlying Q2 and Q6 can be outlined as follows: The actual, and, in conscious states, ubiquitous act of self-ascription *I think* (§4.1) is motivated by a particular perception (IEI) of the cognitive act involved in generating the content that is expressed in the “that” clause following “I think.” The *I think* refers, via IEI, to this particular cognitive act, and constitutes a kind of act awareness. Thusly, the *I think* self-ascribes the relevant representational state and is, hence, an empirical representation. To determine the transcendental condition and structure of self-consciousness, the instances of *I think* and episodes of consciousness into which these instances are built could be considered under abstraction. That is, one abstracts from their sensible details (e.g., their temporal features), the special character of the spontaneous act that the *I think* represents, and from the properties of the inner perception provoking the *I think*.⁶⁹ What remains with respect to self-consciousness are pure apperception (intellectual content awareness that gives rise to the instances of the self-ascriptive *I think*), the self-ascriptive act of *I think* in general, and IEI in general. Due to their general character, they belong to transcendental investigation. Thus, the apparent contradiction in Kant’s claim that pure apperception expresses an inner perception (Q2) can be ascribed to a confusion caused by this theoretical abstraction. What he actually has in mind is that the instances of *I think*, from which the notion of pure apperception is abstracted, express an inner perception.

69. For further evidence, see A398, B426–427. Similarly, see Koßler (1999: 21). Longuenesse (2017: 83, 85) treats the *I think* as a “type of thought.”

4.3. Indeterminate Empirical Intuition (IEI)

In this section I address the characteristics of IEI and its locus in the structure of self-consciousness, and will demonstrate that IEI is ubiquitous in nonintrospective conscious states. As such, it is obscure, since attention is externally focused. As introspection occurs rarely compared to outer experiences, conscious states (especially in the context of *KrV*) can be considered as generally containing an obscure IEI that gives rise to an obscure *I think*. Textual analysis indicates that Q₂ and Q₃ concern nonintrospective conscious states, and hence concern the IEI as an obscure representation.

Upon first inspection, IEI is always present in conscious states. There are two reasons for this. First, as argued in §4.1, the *I think* grounded on IEI is ubiquitous in conscious states. Second, as mentioned above, IEI is effectuated by affection through synthetical acts that are constitutive of experience. Since such acts occur constantly in conscious experience, IEI must be ubiquitous in conscious states.

This claim requires further specification and qualification concerning different modes of conscious states. In nonintrospective conscious states, attention is externally directed, i.e., toward objects in the material world. IEI is obscure insofar as attention is externally directed. This is because attention makes the representations inside its focus clear but leaves those that are outside its focus and inside the sensory field obscure.⁷⁰ Therefore, in nonintrospective conscious states, IEI stays outside the focus of attention and hence remains obscure (hence “nonfocal obscure representation”).⁷¹ IEI can become a clear, empirical inner intuition only through introspection, i.e., when one attends to one’s own inner states. Additionally, in introspection, what IEI represents becomes conceptually determined, because understanding determines inner sense in attention (B157n.). Thus, in introspection, IEI becomes DEI, and the obscure *I think* that accompanies it becomes a clear, conscious one. As introspection occurs rarely compared to conscious outer experiences—after all, steering attention inward requires voluntary effort (V-Met-L1/Pölitz 28: 227)—conscious states can still be said to generally contain an obscure *I think* that is motivated by an obscure IEI. This is especially the case in the context of *KrV*, which mainly concerns empirical cognitions of the external world.⁷²

70. Anth 7: 131; Refl 15: 63; V-Anth/Mron 25: 1239. See also Liang (2020).

71. IEI is also described as an “inner perception” (Q₂) or “indeterminate perception” (Q₃). One may raise the concern that a perception, by definition, contains consciousness (B160, 207, A120), and hence, IEI cannot be obscure. However, consciousness is gradated; some obscure representations can contain weak consciousness (B414, B414–415n., A104). IEI belongs to such obscure representations, since by means of it, the subject can be vaguely aware of “something real” that can be thought of as “an existing thing” (Q_{3.4}). Consequently, IEI legitimately counts as a perception. For “obscure perception,” see LH103–104.

72. It could be suggested that in introspection, one’s attention is directed on one’s current inner states. In the focus of attention, one perceives one’s inner states and simultaneously determines this perception through some (higher-order) cognitive acts (B156n.). In the periphery, one

On closer scrutiny, Q₂ and Q₃ address precisely the nonintrospective scenario. Their immediate contexts (i.e., A343/B401 and B421–423) show that the *I think* that Kant has in mind there cannot be the clear or conscious *I think* occurring in introspective consciousness. The *I think* in Q₂ “makes even all transcendental concepts possible” (A343/B401). It occurs in propositions such as “I think *substance, cause*” (A343/B401, emphasis mine). The *I think* in Q₃ is the representation to which the “unity of consciousness” is anchored (B421); it is a transcendental condition for the unified conscious experience in general. These expressions indicate that the intentional object of the conscious state that contains this type of *I think* is not the subject.⁷³ Especially considering the context of *KrV*, which mainly concerns empirical outer cognitions, Kant cannot be addressing introspective consciousness as a default when he speaks of the *I think*. Thus, the *I think* in Q₂ and Q₃ is not the conscious *I think* that is involved in introspection, an unusual type of consciousness; rather, Kant is referring to the ordinary mode of *I think*, the obscure self-thought that occurs in all episodes of nonintrospective consciousness. In this mode, the corresponding IEI constitutes an obscure empirical self-consciousness.

A comparison with Q₁ can further reinforce this observation. In Q₁, Kant deals with “[t]he proposition ‘I think’, insofar as it says *so much as that I exist thinking*” (B429, emphasis mine). The subordinate clause indicates that what concerns Kant is the empirical *I think* that represents the determination of the subject’s existence, i.e., its inner state of thinking. Moreover, the text following this quotation says that the subject is “at the same time an object” (Q_{1.1}, or B429). Clearly, this *I think* occurs in a conscious representational state whose intentional object is the subject and its determination. Therefore, in Q₁, Kant has in focus the conscious *I think* in introspection. When one is introspecting one’s thoughts and contemplating one’s own existence, the self-perception underlying this *I think* is not obscure. It stands in the focus of attention, and hence is determined with respect to (some) categories (fn 15).

4.4. Solving the Puzzle of IEI

I now demonstrate how the suggested reading explains all obscurities around the target passage Q₃, and resolves long-standing controversies regarding IEI.

could still have an obscure indeterminate inner intuition (IEI) of such acts, which motivates a higher-level, obscure *I think*. This suggestion is favorable to my reading because it removes the “nonintrospective” qualification and would allow for the existence of IEI in introspective states. However, due to a lack of textual support, I will not further explore this option in this paper.

73. One may object that “I think *substance, cause*” could be a regulative application of categories to the subject. However, in the context of IEI, more specifically in that of Q₃, categories are considered with respect to their role as a necessary condition for the unity of consciousness, and hence, they are constitutive of experience.

4.4.1. IEI's Indeterminacy

The suggested account offers a better explanation for the indeterminacy of IEI's, which is the source of all the difficulties in Q₃ (see especially Q_{3.2} and Q_{3.4}). To see why, let us first query what this indeterminacy means. Perception is indeterminate in that its object is indeterminate (A₃₇₄). To determine an object is to predicate something of it, i.e., to subsume the object under a concept (A_{571–572}/B_{599–600}; Log 9: 61, 94). Thus, IEI is indeterminate in that its sensory content cannot be subsumed under empirical concepts or categories.⁷⁴ Hence, it cannot provide content or meaning for the *I*.⁷⁵

The *I think* in Q₃, despite corresponding to IEI (Q_{3.2}), cannot determine IEI with categories. For Kant, this is because the *I think* “precedes the experience that is to determine the object of perception through the category *in regard to time*” (the “precedence claim” from Q_{3.2}, emphasis mine). The *I think* in Q₃ precedes the act of the categorial determination of IEI, and this act is precisely the *I think* that is grounded on DEI (see Q_{1.1}; B_{276–277}).⁷⁶ Like the *I think* grounded on DEI, the *I think* grounded on IEI could act as an assertoric judgment, and it has the same possibilities of categorial determination. This is because the *I think* in either case contains the same logical form, and hence the same logical function. Therefore, if Kant denies the former but not the latter the function of categorial determination in Q_{3.2}, then the reason cannot lie in the *I think*, the determinative mental act itself. The difference must bear on sensibility rather than understanding. The suggested reading of IEI locates IEI's indeterminacy precisely in the form of sensibility, i.e., in temporal awareness. Accordingly, the IEI is obscure. Obscure representations are characterized by a deficiency of that empirical consciousness of inner states which are generated by inner sense (see fn 46). This deficiency implies a deficiency of temporal awareness because inner sense is responsible for temporal awareness. For this construal, the precedence claim provides a crucial clue: it accentuates temporality (“...in regard to time”). Therefore, IEI is indeterminate, probably because, in contrast with DEI, it resides at a level where temporal awareness is deficient such that no schematized categories can apply to it.

74. Cf. Longuenesse (2017: 87).

75. MAN 4: 542. See also Rosefeldt (2000: 222) and Klemme (1996: 299).

76. Q_{1.1} and B_{276–277} remarkably both echo and contrast with Q_{3.2}. In Q_{1.1} Kant maintains that the “*I think*” that contains “*I exist thinking*” and is grounded on DEI “determines the subject...in regard to existence.” DEI represents its object “as appearance.” At B_{276–277}, the *I exist* that the *I think* contains, and that rests on DEI, counts as (inner) “experience.” Accordingly, the *I think* grounded on DEI represents appearance and conducts categorial determination. See also B₄₂₀, BXLn.

I have demonstrated how the suggested reading explains the IEI's indeterminacy. I will show why it is a better explanation by examining three major alternatives. First, one could invoke the Paralogisms (B406–409): there is no categorially determinable empirical intuition of the self.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the Paralogisms merely deny empirical intuitions of the self. Empirical intuitions of inner states, such as DEI, are possible and are determinable by some categories (see fn 15).

Second, one could suggest that IEI, in contrast with DEI, consists of ephemeral, hardly conceptualizable sensations. Nevertheless, there is no reason to deny ephemerality to DEI but credit IEI with it, given that both result from sensibility's being affected by the same spontaneous acts. In addition, the ephemerality is too strong to account for indeterminacy because an ephemeral feeling is indeterminate, whereas IEI is, although "not yet" determined, principally determinable at a later stage.

Finally, a more plausible suggestion would be that IEI and the *I think* that accompanies it arise at an intermediate stage of the process of empirical cognition: one where IEI is conceptually indeterminate.⁷⁸ For instance, it could be a stage at which outer experience has yet to arise. Both one's cognition of the existence of outer objects and their temporal determinations are presupposed for the temporal and hence categorial determination of "my being in time" (B275–278, BXL). Therefore, at this stage, IEI cannot be categorially determined.⁷⁹ This reading, relying on the Refutation of Idealism, is, nevertheless, untenable. First, the *I think* grounded on IEI is part of the transcendental synthesis involved in the constitution of outer experience: "I think substance, cause, etc." (Q2.3 or A342–343/B400–401). Therefore, IEI results from the process in which understanding categorially determines outer objects. It is implausible that the reason IEI is indeterminate is that outer experience has yet to arise. More significantly, it makes little sense to deal with the *I think* in a scenario where outer experience has yet to occur. Such a scenario could probably be one of the unusual states mentioned in fn 52, but no evidence suggests that Kant is concerned about a scenario of this kind in the context of IEI.

The three alternative readings concern material aspects of sensibility, i.e., sensory content (deficiency of intuition of self, or deficiency of outer experience) and sensory quality (ephemerality). If they are ruled out as loci for indeterminacy, then the only candidate left is the formal aspect of sensibility, i.e., temporality.

77. Rosefeldt (2000: 222–223).

78. The expression "precedes" in Q3.2 indicates a difference in stages.

79. Klemme (1996: 389), Longuenesse (2017: 91).

4.4.2. Inapplicability of the Category of Existence

The suggested interpretation of the IEI also demystifies the cryptic Q3.3.⁸⁰ I unpack Q3.3 before offering a complete interpretation. In Q3.3a, Kant confusingly states that the existential proposition which the *I think* grounded on IEI contains does “not yet [contain] a category [of existence].” Q3.3c is the key to understanding this because it echoes Kant’s famous analysis of the concept of existence: existence is not a predicate or determination of an object that could add to its concept (A598/B626; BDG 2: 72). Rather, existence is a predicate of a concept, indicating that this concept is instantiated (A598f/B626f.; BDG 2: 72; Refl 18: 333, 543). The peculiar phrase “posited outside this concept” in Q3.3c alludes to Kant’s doctrine of “absolute position,” which addresses nothing but existence (BDG 2: 73–74; A598/B626).⁸¹ Accordingly, Q3.3b indicates that the category of existence is not a predicate of an indeterminately given object.⁸² It cannot mean, despite literally expressing so, that the categories are not related to an indeterminately given object (see explicitly KpV 5: 65). Schematized categories apply to appearances (B163, 165, 176; NTKrV 23: 19), and an appearance is precisely the “undetermined object of an empirical intuition” (A20/B34, A374). Thus, the sentence Q3.3b means that the category of existence cannot determine an object directly, but should do so mediately by determining a concept of this object. As a whole, Q3.3 seeks to justify the claim that the *I exist* contained in the *I think*—as the “I think” is identical to “I exist” (B422n.)—is not yet a categorical determination with regard to existence. This is not because the *I exist* does not involve a categorially determinative act. Rather, the *I think* grounded on IEI merely relates to a perceptual object, and does not involve the concept of this object. This reading is supported by the subsequent Q3.4: the object of IEI can only be determined by “thinking in general”⁸³ vaguely as “an existing thing,” rather than by a specific concept.

In sum, the *I* in the *I think* which is grounded on IEI is not qualified as a concept of an object, and this explains why the category of existence is inapplicable.⁸⁴ The reason why it is so seems not difficult to find: the *I* is not a genuine concept (A346/B404, A382; Prol 4: 334, 543). A concept contains at least a mark [*Merkmal*] that can be shared by a range of particular objects (Log 9: 58). This is not the case for the *I* because it is a mere thought of something to

80. The conjunction “and” in Q3.3 indicates that Q3.3 offers a further reason for the indeterminacy of IEI.

81. See Haag (2015: 2090–2091).

82. Cf. Kraus (2020: 126).

83. Thinking in general does not contain any predicate or “mark” (Log 9: 58) by which it could refer to an object. In “thinking in general,” we abstract from “all reference...to any object” (A397; ÜE 8: 195; Log 9: 13).

84. Cf. Kraus (2020: 126).

which all inner states are ascribed, and is “in content for itself wholly empty” (A346/B404; Prol 4: 334). Clearly, the IEI does not represent any property that can be grasped in an empirical concept. Nevertheless, this reading is untenable because DEI supports the use of the category of existence (Q1.1), even though its sensory content also cannot be grasped in a concept.⁸⁵ Therefore, there must be something else preventing IEI from being determined by the category of existence.

Indeed, what distinguishes IEI and DEI is whether their content can be organized under the unity of a transcendental idea. Although inner appearances, i.e., inner states that DEI represents, cannot be subsumed under a “concept of experience” (A682/B710), they can be thought “as if” (A684/B712; Prol 4: 334) they were predicates of an actual object—i.e., the I or, equivalently, the soul, which is a transcendental idea in the sense of “a thinking being” (A682–683/B710–711). The objectification underlying this predication rests upon the regulative use of the categories (A682–683/B710–711; Prol 4: 334).⁸⁶ The *I* constitutes a systematic unity for the sum of inner appearances which inner sense generates (A682–683/B710–711). In a derived, nonempirical sense, the subject counts as the (transcendental) object of inner sense (A847–848/B875–876, A342/B400, A361, B415), determinable through categories and hence cognizable by virtue of their regulative use.⁸⁷ To put it more plainly, the *I* is a quasi-empirical concept of a quasi-object.

This explains why IEI falls short of the application condition of the category of existence that is described in Q3.3(c). It also explains why the object of IEI can only be determined “through the category [of existence] in regard to time” at a later stage.⁸⁸ Both are due to the circumstance that DEI, rather than IEI, supports a regulative usage of categories. That is understandable in light of the suggested reading: the regulative determination of inner perceptions is too demanding for IEI. The subject must already have empirical intuitions of particular inner states and empirical cognition (empirical judgments) based on these intuitions. The subject must reflect upon the sum of such judgments in order to apply categories, such as substance or existence, regulatively. Such a systematic reflection requires introspection. Since IEI is obscure and resides outside attention, it has yet to be introspectively reflected upon. The *I think* grounded on IEI is, as dem-

85. Cf. Liang (2021: 90).

86. Oberst (2015: 2211), Kraus (2019), Kraus (2020). Cf. Chignell (2017).

87. Through inner experience, “I am...conscious of the existence of my soul in time, which I cognize only as an object of inner sense through the appearances constituting an inner state” (Prol 4: 336; see also Prol 4: 334; A443/B471; Kraus (2019; 2020).

88. Recall the expressions “precedes” in Q3.2 and “not yet a category” in Q3.3. Although §4.4.1 provides a general reason why IEI is not determined by categories, this section gives a reason specific to the category of existence. There exists such a reason because IEI occasions an illusory use of this category: the IEI itself “signifies...something real, which was given...as something that in fact exists” (Q3.4). In contrast, IEI does not occasion a similar use regarding other categories.

onstrated, obscure, and does not amount to an overall reflection on inner experience. Therefore, IEI as such cannot be regulatively determined by the category of existence.

4.4.3. Status of IEI's Object

The suggested interpretation can also explain Q3.4. As mentioned, the most baffling aspect of Q3.4 is the remark that IEI, as a perception, does not have an appearance as its intentional object, but rather represents a thing that is unspecifiable but "in fact exist[s]." This claim abstrusely contradicts Kant's definition of perception (B160). In my view, it is also motivated by the circumstance that IEI is obscure. As demonstrated, an obscure representation is unaccompanied by the empirical consciousness which inner sense generates. Such empirical consciousness provides the "feel" of the phenomenal qualities that constitute the sensory matter of a perception.⁸⁹ It is these phenomenal qualities that determine how a perceptual object phenomenally appears. Therefore, as IEI is obscure, the subject does not have a noticeable feel of the phenomenal qualities of IEI.⁹⁰ Consequently, the subject cannot be aware of how the object of IEI (i.e., acts of thinking) appears sensibly. Additionally, obscure representations reside outside attention, and hence are not yet apprehended.⁹¹ Since apprehension generates the empirical consciousness of a perceptual object "as appearance" (B160), it is no wonder that the obscure IEI cannot represent an appearance. Admittedly, since obscurity is gradated (see fn 71), the subject can still be dimly aware of the object of IEI. Nevertheless, by such a faint perception, what the subject notices is at most an unspecific, unspecifiable "something real" (Q3.4).

5. Conclusion

IEI is an empirical inner intuition of a mental act in an ordinary (i.e., nonintrospective) conscious state. IEI grounds the *I think* that is ubiquitous in such states. Since IEI is outside externally directed attention, it is obscure, and hence manifests some unusual properties. This reading solves a recalcitrant puzzle in Kant's doctrine of apperception, renders many cryptic passages comprehensible

89. Kraus (2020: 60–65), Liang (2020).

90. Additionally, one is, as said, "seldom even conscious of" synthesis (A78/B103; A103–104); hence, one normally does not have phenomenal consciousness of one's synthetic acts (see also Longuenesse 2017: 181). That is, IEI cannot provide a salient phenomenology.

91. Kant renders "Auffassungsvermögen" as "*attentio*" (Anth 7: 138), and "Auffassung" as "*apprehensio*" (KU 5: 189, 192, 251; Anth 7: 142; Br 11: 515; EEKU 20: 220).

and prevents a major terminological break on Kant's part that would otherwise vitiate the sublime status of transcendental apperception.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to two anonymous referees for their valuable suggestions, as well as the audiences at workshops held at Nanjing University and Tsinghua University. I would also like to thank the organizers of those events, Xingming Hu and Asher Jiang, for their helpful comments and feedback on earlier versions of this paper. Additionally, special thanks go to Wei Cheng for his advice. This research was supported by a grant from the Beijing Municipal Social Science Fund (Grant No. 22ZXC015).

Abbreviations

Anth	<i>Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht</i>
BDG	<i>Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes</i>
Br	<i>Briefe</i>
EEKU	<i>Erste Einleitung in die ‚Kritik der Urteilskraft‘</i>
KpV	<i>Kritik der praktischen Vernunft</i>
KrV	<i>Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i>
KU	<i>Kritik der Urteilskraft</i>
LB	<i>Logik Bauch</i>
LH	<i>Logik Hechsel</i>
Log	<i>Logik Jäsche</i>
MAN	<i>Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft</i>
MS	<i>Die Metaphysik der Sitten</i>
NTKrV	<i>Nachträge zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i>
Prol	<i>Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können</i>
Refl	<i>Reflexionen</i>

UD	<i>Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral</i>
ÜE	<i>Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll</i>
V-Anth/Mron	<i>Anthropologie Mrongovius</i>
V-Lo/Pölit	<i>Logik Pölit</i>
V-Met-K2/Heinze	<i>Metaphysik K2 (Heinze, Schlapp)</i>
V-Met-L1/Pölit	<i>Metaphysik L 1 (Pölit)</i>
V-Met/Dohna	<i>Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1792/1793 Metaphysik Dohna</i>
V-Met/Mron	<i>Metaphysik Mrongovius</i>

References

- Allison, Henry E. (2004). *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*. Yale University Press.
- Bader, Ralf M. (2017). Inner Sense and Time. In Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson (Eds.), *Kant and the Philosophy of Mind* (124–137). Oxford University Press.
- Banham, Gary (2011). Transcendental Idealism and Transcendental Apperception. In Dennis Schulting (Ed.), *Kant's Idealism* (109–126). Springer.
- Baumgarten, Hans Ulrich (2015). Überhaupt. In Marcus Willaschek, et al. (Eds.), *Kant-Lexikon* (2371–2372). De Gruyter.
- Chignell, Andrew (2017). Can't Kant Cognize His Empirical Self? Or, a Problem for (Almost) Every Interpretation of the Refutation of Idealism. In Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson (Eds.), *Kant and the Philosophy of Mind* (138–158). Oxford University Press.
- Cramer, Konrad (1990). Über Kants Satz: "Das: Ich denke, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können". In Konrad Cramer, et al. (Eds.): *Theorie der Subjektivität* (167–202). Suhrkamp.
- Crone, Katja (2012). Pre-Conceptual Aspects of Self-Consciousness in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. In Piero Giordanetti, et al. (Eds.), *Kant's Philosophy of the Unconscious* (131–146), De Gruyter.
- Dickerson, A. B. (2003). *Kant on Representation and Objectivity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Düsing, Klaus (1983). Constitution and Structure of Self-Identity. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 8(1), 409–431.
- Dyck, Corey W. (2006). Empirical Consciousness Explained. *Kantian Review*, 11, 29–54.
- Dyck, Corey W. (2014). *Kant and Rational Psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Emundts, Dina (2006). Die Paralogismen und die Widerlegung des Idealismus. *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 54(2), 295–309.
- Emundts, Dina (2013). Kant über Selbstbewusstsein. In Dina Emundts (Ed.), *Self, World, and Art* (51–78). De Gruyter.

- Forgione, Luca (2017). Kant and the Simple Representation “I”. *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 57(2), 173–194.
- Frank, Manfred (1991). Fragmente einer Geschichte der Theorie des Selbstbewußtseins. In Manfred Frank (Ed.), *Selbstbewußtseinstheorien von Fichte bis Sartre* (413–599). Suhrkamp.
- Frank, Manfred (2007). *Auswege aus dem Deutschen Idealismus*. Suhrkamp.
- Freitag, Wolfgang and Katharina Kraus (2022). An expressivist interpretation of Kant’s “I think”. *Noûs*, 56(1), 110–132.
- Frierson, Patrick R. (2014). *Kant’s Empirical Psychology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Haag, Johannes (2015). Setzen. In Marcus Willaschek, et al. (Eds.), *Kant-Lexikon* (2090–2091). De Gruyter.
- Hannah, Robert (2021). Experience. In Julian Wuerth (Ed.), *The Cambridge Kant Lexicon* (183–186). Cambridge University Press.
- Henning, Tim (2010). Kant und die Logik des “Ich denke”. *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 64(3), 331–356.
- Hoppe, Hansgeorg (1983). *Synthesis bei Kant*. De Gruyter.
- Horstmann, Rolf-Peter (1993). Kants Paralogismen. *Kant-Studien*, 84(4), 408–425.
- Howell, Robert (2000). Kant, the “I Think”, and Self-Awareness. In Predrag Cicovacki (Ed.), *Kant’s Legacy* (117–152). Boydell & Brewer.
- Indregard, Jonas Jervell (2018). Consciousness as Inner Sensation: Crusius and Kant. *Ergo*, 5(7), 173–201.
- Kant, Immanuel (1900–). *Kants gesammelte Schriften*. Eds. Akademie der Wissenschaften. De Gruyter.
- Kant, Immanuel (1992–). *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Eds.). Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel (1996). *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Werner S. Pluhar. Hackett.
- Kemp Smith, Norman (2003). *A Commentary to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*. Macmillan.
- Kitcher, Patricia (1999). Kant on Self-Consciousness. *Philosophical Review*, 108(3), 345–386.
- Kitcher, Patricia (2011). *Kant’s Thinker*. Oxford University Press.
- Kitcher, Patricia (2012). Kant’s Unconscious Given. In Piero Giordanetti, et al. (Eds.), *Kant’s Philosophy of the Unconscious* (5–36). De Gruyter.
- Klemme, Heiner F. (1996). *Kants Philosophie des Subjekts*. Meiner.
- Klemme, Heiner F. (2009). Das Ich denke ... ist ein empirischer Satz. In Jean Ferrari, et al. (Eds.), *Descartes und Deutschland* (177–186). Olms.
- Klemme, Heiner F. (2015). Ich. In Marcus Willaschek, et al. (Eds.), *Kant-Lexikon* (1066–1072). De Gruyter.
- Koßler, Matthias (1999). Der transzendente Schein in den Paralogismen der reinen Vernunft nach der ersten Auflage der *KrV*. *Kant-Studien*, 90(1), 1–22.
- Kraus, Katharina (2013). Quantifying Inner Experience? *European Journal of Philosophy*, 24(2), 331–357.
- Kraus, Katharina (2019). The Parity and Disparity Between Inner and Outer Experience in Kant. *Kantian Review*, 24(2), 171–195.
- Kraus, Katharina (2020). *Kant on Self-Knowledge and Self-Formation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Liang, Yibin (2017). Kant on Consciousness, Obscure Representations and Cognitive Availability. *Philosophical Forum*, 48(4), 345–368.

- Liang, Yibin (2020). Kant on Inner Sensations and the Parity between Inner and Outer Sense. *Ergo*, 7(10), 307–338.
- Liang, Yibin (2021). *Bewusstsein und Selbstbewusstsein bei Kant: Eine neue Rekonstruktion* (Kantstudien-Ergänzungshefte Band 215). De Gruyter.
- Longuenesse, Béatrice (2017). *I, Me, Mine: Back to Kant, and Back again*. Oxford University Press.
- McLear, Colin (2020), Kantian Conceptualism/Nonconceptualism. In Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (Eds.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2024 Edition).
- Merritt, Melissa and Markos Valaris (2017). Attention and Synthesis in Kant's Conception of Experience. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 67(268), 571–592.
- Mohr, Georg (1991). *Das sinnliche Ich*. Königshausen & Neumann.
- Oberst, Michael (2015). Substanz. In Marcus Willaschek, et al. (Eds.), *Kant-Lexikon* (2008–2212). De Gruyter.
- Prien, Bernd (2015). Erfahrung. In Marcus Willaschek, et al. (Eds.), *Kant-Lexikon* (2090–2091). De Gruyter.
- Reuscher, John A. (1975). Kant's Theory of Ego as Existence Awareness. *Man and World*, 8(3), 276–295.
- Rosefeldt, Tobias (2000). *Das logische Ich*. Philo.
- Schulting, Dennis (2017). Apperception, Self-Consciousness, and Self-Knowledge in Kant. In Matthew C. Altman (Ed.), *The Palgrave Kant Handbook* (139–161). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sethi, Janum (2021). Kant on Empirical Self-Consciousness. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 102(1), 79–99.
- Stang, Nicholas F. (2016). Kant's Transcendental Idealism. In Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (Eds.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2024 Edition).
- Sturma, Dieter (1985). *Kant über Selbstbewusstsein*. Olms.
- Watkins, Eric (2004). *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wunderlich, Falk (2011). *Kant und die Bewußtseinstheorien des 18. Jahrhunderts*. De Gruyter.
- Zobrist, Marc (2011). *Subjekt und Subjektivität in Kants theoretischer Philosophie*. De Gruyter.