



Routledge Studies in Eighteenth-Century Philosophy

KANT AND THE PROBLEM OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Luca Forgione



Kant and the Problem of Self-Knowledge

This book addresses the problem of self-knowledge in Kant's philosophy. As Kant writes in his major works of the critical period, it is due to the simple and empty representation 'I think' that the subject's capacity for self-consciousness enables the subject to represent its own mental dimension. This book articulates Kant's theory of self-knowledge on the basis of the following three philosophical problems: (1) a semantic problem regarding the type of reference of the representation 'I'; (2) an epistemic problem regarding the type of knowledge relative to the thinking subject produced by the representation 'I think'; and (3) a strictly metaphysical problem regarding the features assigned to the thinking subject's nature. The author connects the relevant scholarly literature on Kant with contemporary debates on the huge philosophical field of self-knowledge. He develops a formal reading according to which the unity of self-consciousness does not presuppose the identity of a real subject, but a formal identity based on the representation 'I think'.

Luca Forgione is Associate Professor in Philosophy of Language and in Philosophy of Mind at the University of Basilicata, Italy.

Routledge Studies in Eighteenth-Century Philosophy

Kant and the Cultivation of Virtue

Chris W. Surprenant

The Post-Critical Kant

Understanding the Critical Philosophy through the Opus Postumum

Bryan Wesley Hall

Kant's Inferentialism

The Case Against Hume

David Landy

Rousseau's Ethics of Truth

A Sublime Science of Simple Souls

Jason Neidleman

Kant and the Scottish Enlightenment

Edited by Elizabeth Robinson and Chris W. Surprenant

Kant and the Reorientation of Aesthetics

Finding the World

Joseph J. Tinguely

Hume's Science of Human Nature

Scientific Realism, Reason, and Substantial Explanation

David Landy

Hume's Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Psychology

Edited by Philip A. Reed and Rico Vitz

Kant and the Problem of Self-Knowledge

Luca Forgione

For more information about this series, please visit: www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Eighteenth-Century-Philosophy/book-series/SE0391

Kant and the Problem of Self-Knowledge

Luca Forgione

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2019

by Routledge

52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2019 Taylor & Francis

The right of Luca Forgiione to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Forgiione, Luca, 1973– author.

Title: Kant and the problem of self-knowledge / by Luca Forgiione.

Description: 1 [edition]. | New York : Taylor & Francis, 2018. | Series: Routledge studies in eighteenth-century philosophy ; 17 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018039559 | ISBN 9781138385467 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Kant, Immanuel, 1724–1804. | Self-knowledge, Theory of.

Classification: LCC B2798 .F665 2018 | DDC 126.092—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018039559>

ISBN: 978-1-138-38546-7 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-42709-1 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon

by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Contents

Key to Abbreviations of Kantian Works

Acknowledgements

A Brief Introduction

1 Self-Knowledge and Self-Consciousness

The Problems of Self-Knowledge

The Question of Self-Consciousness

Indexicality

Immunity to Error Through Misidentification

Kant's Theory of the Mind: Faculties and Representations

The Inner Sense

An Introspective Account of Self-Consciousness

The Inner Sense and the Ideality of Time

The Epistemic Limits of the Inner Sense

The Transcendental Deduction and the Principle of the Unity of Apperception

The Metaphysical Deduction

The Transcendental Deduction

I Think and the Principle of the Necessary Synthetic Unity of Apperception

2 Two Senses of 'I think'

The Synthetic Unity of Apperception and the I Think

Transcendental Dialectic: The I Think and the Analysis of the Paralogisms

The Analysis of the Paralogisms

I as a Concept

The 'I Exist Thinking': The Empirical Apperception

Thinking Is Being

The Concept of a 'Transcendental Subject'

I think qua Thinking and I think qua Representation

3 The Problem of Self-identification

'I think' and the Question of Self-Identification

The Genesis of the Cartesian Self

Two No-Ownership Readings and One Thesis of Exclusion

The I of Pure Apperception and the I as Subject

The I of Empirical Apperception

4 The Simple Representation I and the Transcendental Designation

I Think and the Direct Reference Theory

Kant Between Conceptualism and Non-Conceptualism: Concepts and Intuitions

Intuition as an Indexical Representation

The Logical Form of Singular Judgments

The Dismissal of the Lowest Species

The Conceptualist Form of Singular Terms

The Role of Designation in Natural Kind Terms

Kripke and Putnam on the Theory of Direct Reference

Kant and the A Priori Nature of the Judgment "Gold Is a Yellow Metal"

The Relationship of Term, Concept, and Natural Substance

The Semantic Reflection in the Logical Corpus

The Role of Designation

The Simple Representation 'I' and the Role of Transcendental Designation

5 On *de se* and *de re*

Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description: The Weak Conceptualist View

The Theory of the Transcendental Object

Non-Conceptualism Versus Weak Conceptualism

“The Object Must Be Thought of Only as Something in General = x”

De se Thoughts Between Descriptivism and Singularism

Kant on de se

I Think and de se Thoughts

I as Form of Thinking

The Paradox of Self-Consciousness and the Non-Conceptual Forms of Self-Awareness

The Problem of Self-Knowledge

The Dualism of the I of Apperception and the I as Human Being

Longuenesse and Ginsborg on the I Considered as Human Being

Capozzi and the Role of Attention in the Inner Sense

A Brief Conclusion

References

Index

Key to Abbreviations of Kantian Works

The majority of English language quotations from Kant's works in this book are from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, edited by P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1992ff.). When a translation was not available, I provided my own. Apart from the references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, all references to Kant are to the volume and pages of *Kant's gesammelte Schriften* (KGS), herausgegeben von der Deutschen (formerly Koniglichen Preussischen) Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902). References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the standard A and B pagination of the first and second editions, respectively. Specific works cited are referred to by means of the abbreviations listed below. The translations used are also listed below and, with the exception of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, are referred to immediately following the reference to the volume and page of the German text.

- A/B** Kritik der reinen Vernunft [KrV] (KGS 3–4)
Critique of Pure Reason, ed. and trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Anth** Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (KGS 7)
Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View, ed. and trans. R. B. Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Anth-B** *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. R. B. Louden and G. Zöller, trans. M. Gregor, P. Guyer et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Br** Kant's Briefwechsel (KGS 10–13)
Correspondence, ed. and trans. A. Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- FM** Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolf's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat? (KGS 20)
- 'What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany Since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?'**, in *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, ed. H. Allison and P. Heath, trans. G. Hatfield, M. Friedman et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

- KGS** Kant's Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Königlich Preußischen, später Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900—)
- KU** Kritik der Urteilskraft (KGS 5)
Critique of the Power of Judgment, ed. P. Guyer, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- LBL B 12** *Lose Blätter B 12 Critique of Pure Reason* (KGS 23)
Notes and Fragments, ed. P. Guyer, trans. C. Bowman, P. Guyer, and F. Rauscher. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- LM** *Lectures on Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. K. Ameriks and S. Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Log** Logik (KGS 9)
 'The Jäsche Logic', in *Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. M. Young, pp. 521–640. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- MAN** Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften (KGS 4)
Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science, ed. and trans. M. Friedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- OP** Opus postumum (KGS 21 u. 22)
Opus Postumum, ed. and trans. E. Forster and M. Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)
- PhilEnz** Philosophische Enzyklopädie (KGS 29)
- Prol** Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik (KGS 4)
Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science, ed. and trans. G. Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Refl** Reflexionen (KGS 14–19)
Notes and Fragments, ed. P. Guyer, trans. C. Bowman, P. Guyer, and F. Rauscher. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- V-Lo/Blomberg** Logik Blomberg (KGS 24)
 'The Blomberg Logic', in *Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. M. Young, pp. 5–246 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- V-Lo/Dohna** Logik Dohna-Wundlacken (KGS 24)
 'The Dohna-Wundlacken Logic', in *Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. M. Young, pp. 438–516 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- V-Lo/Pölitz** Logik Pölitz (KGS 24)
- V-Lo/Wiener** Wiener Logik (KGS 24)
 'The Vienna Logic', in *Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. M. Young, pp. 251–377 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- V-Met-L1/Pölitz** Kant Metaphysik L 1 (Pölitz) (KGS 28)

'Metaphysik L₁, mid-1770s', in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. K. Ameriks and S. Naragon, pp. 17–106 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2001)

V-Met/Mron Metaphysik Mrongovius (KGS 29)

'Metaphysik Mrongovius, 1782–1783', in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. K. Ameriks and S. Naragon, pp. 109–288 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Acknowledgements

In the last years I dwelled on the topics of self-knowledge, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind in Kantian philosophy through several papers and talks in international journals and congresses, for instance: *Kant on de se* (forthcoming in *Akten des XII Internationaler Kant- Kongresses—Kant-Gesellschaft*); *Kant, the Transcendental Designation of I, and the Direct Reference Theory* (forthcoming in *Theoria. An International Journal for Theory. History and Foundations of Science*); *The Structure of I-Thoughts. Kant and Wittgenstein on the Genesis of Cartesian Self* (forthcoming in *Paradigmi*); *Kant and the Simple Representation I* (*International Philosophical Quarterly*); *Kant and Natural Kind Terms* (*Theoria. An International Journal for Theory. History and Foundations of Science*); *Kant on de re: Some Aspects of the Kantian Non-Conceptualism Debate* (*Kant Studies Online*); *Kant and I as Subject* (*Akten des XI Internationaler Kant-Kongresses—Kant-Gesellschaft*); *Kant and the Problem of Self-identification* (*Organon F*).

This book stems from the ideas contained in these works and also from discussions with several scholars and reviewers. It's impossible to list all them here, but I want to express all my gratitude to my editor Andrew Weckenmann for his support and to the two scholars who have reviewed this book for their comments and suggestions. In publishing this book, my first and warm greeting goes to Stefano Gensini; once again on this occasion he encouraged me by restating his teaching on the inseparable bond between theoretical reflection and historical–interpretive investigation. If all of Mirella Capozzi's work has always represented for me an indispensable reference point in my research on Kant, her 2007 essay on Kant and self-knowledge was the compass that allowed me to orient myself in this fascinating Kantian territory, starting from the Kantian quotation that serves as an exergue to this book. Finally, an affectionate thought to Pasquale Frascolla, from whom I have drawn so many teachings every day for almost 15 years; I hope there will be many others to come. I dedicate this book to Emilia de Lucia, for her affection that has accompanied me ever since I was born.

A Brief Introduction

Gott erkennt alles, indem er sich selbst erkennt. Der Mensch erkennt sich selbst, indem er andere Dinge erkennt.

God knows all knowing itself. The man knows himself knowing the other things.

(R. 3826, KGS 17: 304)

In the famous first paragraph of the *Anthropology*, by drawing attention to both concepts of ‘person’ and ‘unity of consciousness’, i.e., the transcendental apperception expressed by the representation ‘I’, Kant links the moral and theoretical aspects of his philosophical approach in order to consider the human being infinitely above all other living beings on Earth:

The fact that the human being can have the “I” in his representations raises him infinitely above all other living beings on earth. Because of this he is a *person*, and by virtue of the unity of consciousness through all changes that happen to him, one and the same *person*—i.e., through rank and dignity an entirely different being from *things*, such as irrational animals, with which one can do as one likes.

(Anth 7: 127, 15)

The aim of this book is to enquire about the theoretical aspects of Kant’s philosophy that are connected to the representation ‘I’, whereas the moral dimension will not be considered.¹ As Kant said in his major works of the critical period, it is due to the ‘simple’ and ‘empty’ representation ‘I think’ that the subject’s capacity for self-consciousness enables the subject to represent its own mental dimension, as well as itself as one and the same subject through all changes. More specifically, the subjective capacity to represent itself through the representation *I* will be articulated on the basis of the following three questions, which cover different philosophical areas:

- (1) a semantic question regarding the type of reference of the representation ‘I’,
- (2) an epistemic question regarding the type of knowledge relative to the thinking subject produced by the representation ‘I think’, and
- (3) a strictly metaphysical question regarding the features assigned to the thinking subject’s nature.

These three different questions obviously touch on the huge philosophical field of self-knowledge, which is concerned with the knowledge of one’s own mental states, e.g., the knowledge of one’s current experiences, thoughts, beliefs, or desires. A

classic problem, for instance, involves the possibility of determining what a subject is feeling or thinking at a given moment, and yet there is significant disagreement about the nature of this knowledge among scholars. The problem of the knowledge of one's mental states involves the self-conscious subjective dimension. The fact that a subject acquires knowledge of her belief that Naples is a lovely city implies that the state is registered as her own; this is related to the question of 'self-consciousness' or 'self-awareness' proper (the terms are interchangeable in this context), one of the major topics in the philosophical arena. Since expressions of self-knowledge employ terms such as "I", as in "I feel an itch", the problem of self-consciousness also concerns how the determination of the reference of *I* and the identification of those mental states as one's own may be achieved. In fact, as Gertler (2017) points out, "self-knowledge" can also be used to refer to knowledge of the self and its nature, which are connected to self-consciousness and a few related issues, for instance:

how it is that one distinguishes oneself from others, as the object of a self-attribution; whether self-awareness yields a grasp of the material or non-material nature of the self; whether self-awareness yields a grasp of one's personal identity over time.

In his approach to self-consciousness, Rödl (2007) takes a step further by linking self-consciousness and self-knowledge in an extremely strong way; firstly, he says, "self-consciousness is the nature of a subject that manifests itself in her thinking thoughts whose linguistic expression requires the use of the first person pronoun, 'I'" (2007, VII). Secondly, he adopts the spirit of Evans' approach, according to which forms of reference have to be understood through corresponding forms of predication, and the theme at issue is a manner of thinking about an object; in other words, a form of reference:

As aspects of thinking a predicative thought, referring to an object and predicating a concept of it bear a unity, which suggests that formal distinctions in the one are linked to formal distinctions in the other. Since, fundamentally, reference is to something real, the relevant forms of predication are forms of knowledge, forms of knowing how things stand with the object.

(2007, VIII)

In this way, an inquiry into self-consciousness corresponds to an inquiry into a form of knowledge, which is knowledge of oneself as oneself; that is, self-knowledge.

Thus, since the form of knowledge connected to the first-person component is a form of knowing acts of thinking, Rödl distinguishes two kinds of thinking, namely practical and theoretical thinking, or action and belief: The former concerns the way in which "I know that I am doing something when my knowing it is an act of self-consciousness", while the latter concerns "the way in which I know that I believe something when, again, I know it in such a way as to know that I believe it". If belief and action can only be known by the subject via a first-person perspective, acts of thought are essentially self-conscious: "Therefore, a theory of self-consciousness is a

theory of action, belief, and knowledge” (2007, VIII). Rödl stresses that the German Idealist tradition (specifically that of Kant and Hegel) considers the philosophical study of action and knowledge as part of an inquiry into self-consciousness. The attempt of this book is precisely to shed light on those central aspects of Kant’s philosophy regarding self-consciousness that are essential in order to understand the thinking activity itself, as Kant considered self-consciousness and thinking to be two sides of the same coin.

In Chapter 1, the notion of self-consciousness that will be considered can be referred to as *basic self-consciousness*. This consists of two specific, correlated features that do not pertain to the consciousness of things other than oneself: Based on the first feature, in fact, self-consciousness can be said to be grounded in a first-person perspective, whereas due to the second feature, self-consciousness must be regarded as a consciousness of the self as subject rather than a consciousness of the self as object. Both peculiarities are grounded in the possibility of using the term/concept *I*, which presents a few specific epistemic and semantic features: Essential indexicality and immunity to error through misidentification. The former is relative to the meaning of the term/concept *I*, any expression of self-consciousness being based on indexical terms such as “I” or “me”; the latter, on the other hand, refers to the fact that certain singular judgments involving the self-ascription of mental (and physical, as will be seen later) properties are immune to error through misidentification relative to the first-person pronoun (IEM). The subject formulating such judgments in given epistemic contexts cannot be mistaken as to whether it is she herself who is attributing a particular mental property to her own self. Briefly stated, the capacity for self-consciousness depends on the possibility of producing *I*-thoughts, which, as such, employ an indexical self-reference immune to error through misidentification relative to the concept *I*. The general point that will be developed in this book is that Kant’s approach to self-consciousness seems to succeed in explaining these features as it does consider the above-mentioned features of the concept *I* in the terms of transcendentalism in some way. Kant points to two forms of self-consciousness: The inner sense, or empirical apperception, based on a sensory form of self-awareness, and transcendental apperception. Through the notion of inner sense, Kant also allows for an introspective account of self-awareness; nonetheless, the point and purpose of this book is to show that an utterly sophisticated notion of basic self-consciousness is, in fact, provided for by the notion of transcendental apperception. As we will see, the doctrine of apperception is not to be confused with an introspective psychological approach: in reality, it is a formal model for the thinking activity itself.

Chapter 2 aims to address certain characterisations of ‘I think’ connected to the problems of self-consciousness and self-knowledge according to the so-called *Formal Ownership Reading* so as to set the Kantian metaphysical assumptions about the thinking subject against this interpreting background that is so central to the Kantian debate. Most importantly, two distinct meanings of ‘I think’ need be identified: while

in its first meaning, mainly found in the Transcendental Deduction, the 'I think' is the act of apperception, in the second meaning, found in Transcendental Deduction and in the section of Paralogisms in particular, *I think* (in italics in these pages) is assumed in its representational nature. The notion of the 'transcendental subject' will be interpreted in formal terms as a specific concept that, *mutatis mutandis*, has the same function as the concept of the 'transcendental object'. With regard to the three philosophical key questions—the semantic, the epistemic, and the metaphysical problems—the 'I think' and the so-termed transcendental subject will be analysed in an attempt to establish certain specific metaphysical characterisations of the thinking subject introduced by Kant in the critical period. In particular, starting from the general interpretative scenario of the formal reading, I will attempt to present and develop three specific theses:

- (1) a metaphysical thesis: Thinking, the being itself, is spontaneity,
- (2) an epistemic thesis: Thinking is not the object of knowledge. If Thinking is the being itself, and if nothing is thereby given to the subject for thinking, then the subject can think of itself only as an object in general through the concept of a transcendental subject, i.e., the thought of a thinking being that has an existence in itself, and
- (3) a semantic thesis: The *I think*, the bare or empty representation *I*, is the representational vehicle for the concept of the transcendental subject; as such, it is a simple representation. The awareness of oneself as thinking is only expressed by the *I*—the intellectual representation of the spontaneity of a thinking subject.

While the epistemic bone of contention concerns how the subject thinks of itself, and the knowledge it can form through the I-thought based on the representation *I think*, the semantic question involves the nature of the representation *I* and the type of designation (if any) that is involved in the reference of the thinking subject. In the transcendental system, the epistemic and the semantic theses seem to stem directly from the metaphysical thesis. The epistemic thesis and some points of the semantic thesis will be discussed in Chapter 3, with special attention to the problems of self-identification and the reference of *I*. The semantic thesis and the problem of transcendental designation will be addressed in depth in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 3, the notion of *transcendental designation* and the relative question of self-identification will be explored in depth because Kant seems to anticipate some of the self-reference without identification features. As mentioned previously, due to the absence of identification components, certain *singular judgments* involving the self-ascriptions of mental and physical properties are *immune to error through misidentification* relative to the first-person concept. The subject formulating such judgments in given epistemic contexts cannot be mistaken as to whether it is she who is attributing a particular property to herself. The issue is introduced by Wittgenstein in his philosophico-linguistic analysis of the grammatical rule

governing the term *I*, used as subject as well as object. Shoemaker specifies the question of *self-reference without identification*, and Evans of *identification-free self-ascription*. As will be discussed later, the issue is slightly more complex when expounding on the Kantian approach. The transcendental unity of apperception is the foundation of representational synthesis, through which an objective determination of representations for possible cognition arises. In this picture, the 'I think' resides in a metaphysical frame, which necessarily involves any thinking activity because it does identify with such an activity. At least at this level of investigation, and with reference to the passages that will be considered, this represents the highest level of abstraction in the transcendental reflection. In this scenario, several Kantian interpretative readings in the debate will be considered and discussed in order to specify the appropriate framework for the *I think* feature associated with the question of self-identification so as to highlight the difference from Wittgenstein's approach and the contemporary debate.

In Chapter 4, the issue of the nature of the representation *I* and of the *transcendental designation* will be analysed in order to answer the following questions: What exactly does Kant mean when he states that *I* is a simple and empty representation? Can the features of the representation *I* and the correlative 'transcendental designation' explain the indexical nature of the *I*? Do the Kantian considerations on indexicality anticipate any of the semantic elements or—if nothing else—the spirit of the direct reference theory? With regard to the last question, some sort of contiguity between the Kantian approach to the *I think* and the contemporary direct reference theory concerning the semantic function of *I* has been suggested in the Kantian debate. In addition, the direct reference theory has also been applied to the Kantian approach to the semantics of natural kind terms. In order to rule out any proximity to the direct reference theory in these specific semantic issues, Chapter 4 will focus on how Kant treats indexicality. Furthermore, non-conceptual content theorists have taken Kant as a reference point in recent years due to his notion of intuition, and some Kantian scholars in the current debate regard sensible intuition as an indexical representation. It is necessary to explore a number of complementary issues intertwined with the notion of non-conceptual content in order to understand Kant's treatment of indexicality. Of these, the first is solely concerned with the role of the intuition as an indexical representation, whereas the second pertains to the presence of some epistemic features that will be discussed in the next chapter based on the distinction between *knowledge by acquaintance* and *knowledge by description*. Following this, the designation involved in the relationship of words, concepts, and intuition will be discussed with particular regard to the kind of designation involved in natural kind terms. In so doing, the features that Kant assigns to the different representations and to the correlative designation will be compared to the representational features of *I* and its correlative transcendental designation: Undoubtedly, since transcendental designation displays utterly unique designation features, a *simple* or *empty* representation is a representational *unicum* among the

kinds of representations examined by Kant. Accordingly, it will be possible to pinpoint the peculiarities of the representation *I* in order to comprehend the role of transcendental designation.

In the last chapter, other complementary questions will be addressed. The first of these revolves around the question of *de re* thoughts, whereas the second refers to the articulation of *de se* thoughts in the transcendental system. As mentioned previously, shifting from the semantic considerations concerning the referential mechanism of the intuitive representations expounded in the preceding chapter to a more strictly epistemic perspective, with regard to the distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual content, the Kantian difference between concepts and intuitions has been partly associated with the distinction between *knowledge by acquaintance* and *knowledge by description*, which specifies two basic types of knowledge. Firstly, this chapter intends to dismiss the possibility that intuition has an autonomous function of *de re* knowledge in support of an interpretative reading that could be labelled “weak conceptualism”. To this end, the exploration will be conducted from a strictly transcendental perspective; that is, by referring to the so-called theory of the concept of a transcendental object. The interpretative reading features a number of results that are in contrast to the main points stirring the debate on Kantian *non-conceptualism*. At the same time, with reference to *de se* thoughts, when beginning with the faculty analysis, one may certainly reconstruct Kant’s stance regarding the different types of *de se* thoughts. There is no doubt that Perry and Recanati’s *de se*-thoughts perspective discussed in these pages is particularly attractive: Certain features of transcendental apperception and *I think* seem to anticipate certain points of this approach, with particular reference to a basic typology of implicit *de se* thoughts. Finally, the problem of self-knowledge in the empirical and transcendental dimension will also be analysed. *Prima facie*, there seems to be some incompatibility between self-knowledge as a human being, that is, as an object embedded in a spatio-temporal causal order governed by natural laws, and the knowledge that the subject possesses as a thinking subject through the spontaneity of the I of apperception: The representation *I think* contains no intuition that can connect it to the subject considered to be an empirical object. The final part of the book is dedicated to overcoming this kind of dualism between the I of apperception and the I as human being on the basis of the formal reading adopted here.

Note

1. Cf. Ware (2009), La Rocca (2013), for a first introduction to the Kantian issue of self-knowledge in the moral sphere, starting from the famous § 14 from the “Doctrine of Virtue” in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where Kant introduces “to know (scrutinize, fathom) [Erkenne (erforsche, ergründe)] yourself” as “the first command” among all duties. Bagnoli’s works on

Kant's account of practical reason in metaethical debates touch on different issues pertaining to the philosophical area of self-knowledge.