WHY THERE CAN BE NO FUTURE ACHILLES – THE INHERENT FALLACY IN THE PARALOGISMS

Forthcoming in:
G. Motta (ed.): *Kant und die Einheit des Bewußtseins*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017
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I – INTRODUCTION

In her article in this volume Camilla Serck-Hanssen showed that the Achilles of rational psychology fails, for by not distinguishing between two scopes of negation in the negative and infinite judgments the rational psychologist neglects to legitimise the infinite, object-related reading that is necessary for the argument to work. This oversight leaves undecided the question, essential to metaphysics, whether the idea of soul expresses a merely logically possible (non-contradictory) concept or also denotes a real (possibly existing) object. Through the Achilles alone rational psychology therefore gains no metaphysical traction, and so even its most powerful argument leaves it open whether the soul as the object of the idea exists in the first place.

This shortcoming could be remedied by appending a proof that the soul as the object of the idea does exist, hence justifying the use of the infinite judgment. In this article I will step back from the 2nd paralogism and show that the shortcoming – tangibly present in the Achilles – in fact extends to all current as well as future arguments of

rational psychology so that it is according to Kant impossible to complement these arguments via proof of the existence of the soul. Hence rational psychology is an altogether failed undertaking, owing to an underlying disparity between the rational idea of soul and the necessary conditions that must be met if one is to claim that the soul exists at all.

I will argue for my thesis in five steps. In section II I will explain that rational psychology seeks to determine the thinking subject as an existing object and that there are two general ways to do this: the *synthetic* and *analytic procedure*. In section III I will show that the rational psychologist erroneously believes to have accomplished this because he conflates *the idea of the soul* with an *existing object of that idea*. In section IV I will explicate in detail how the synthetic procedure falls victim to this error, and in section V I will do the same for the analytic procedure. Finally, in section VI I will combine the two procedures in order to show that rational psychology fails altogether, as it is impossible to couple the idea of soul with an existing object, i.e. the soul itself.

II – The Analytic and Synthetic Procedure

The task of rational psychology is to determine *a priori* the necessary metaphysical properties of the thinking subject or the "I", i.e. to determine the *subject* of thinking as an *object* – as the *thing* called soul. According to Kant rational psychology sets out from the most abstract representation of thinking: "I think" – an expression of pure consciousness or apperception. It is "the vehicle of all concepts" (A 341/B 399) and "the sole text of rational psychology, from which it is to develop its entire wisdom" (A 343/B 401). This pure thinking already indicates an object, namely the *thinker* or the "I" of the "I think," considered as "an object of inner sense" or as "soul" (A 342/B 400).

But the "I think" is according to Kant an empty formal proposition and can indicate the thinker merely indeterminately as the (logical) subject "I," as a "simple and in content for itself wholly empty representation" (A 345f/B 404). This apperception alone can establish only that since there is thinking, *something* thinks, but it cannot be used to determine *what* it is that thinks, for it does not even suffice for "distinguishing

a particular object" (A 346/B 404). Any determination of the properties of this thinker requires thinking of it as the *object* rather than as the *subject* of thinking. As Kant puts it: "It is not the consciousness of the *determining* [i.e. thinking] self, but only that of the *determinable* [i.e. thought] self […] that is the *object*" (B 407).

To determine an object in the metaphysically weighty sense (as a real object), i.e. to *cognise* it, it is not enough to establish what predicates must pertain to its *thought* or *concept*. One must also show that the object *exists* or at least *can* exist, i.e. that the concept has *objective reality*. (E.g. A 220–3/B 268–70.) For Kant, that the object of a concept exists means that the set of predicates that constitute the concept (its thought-content) are instantiated by some given thing. For example, "unicorns exist" is true if and only if there are things that instantiate the properties of unicornness, e.g. are one-horned horses. Furthermore, in determining that to a set of predicates an existing thing corresponds, one can proceed in two ways: either one starts with the predicates and shows that they pertain to some given thing (determines an object for a given concept), or one starts with something given and shows that it has these predicates (determines a concept for a given object). In the Paralogisms, Kant considers both ways to show that the object of the idea of soul exists. He calls these *synthetic* and *analytic* procedures, respectively (B 416–9).

In the synthetic procedure we start with the proposition "All thinking beings are, as such, substances" and "go backward through the series of propositions until the circle closes […] and we finally come up against the existence of thinking beings" (B 416f). Here attributing the metaphysical properties (categories) to the concept of thinking being, i.e. judging it to be, as such, a unified simple substance, is separated from attaching existence to this being. In contrast, in the analytic procedure we start with the proposition "I think" as "already includ[ing] an existence in itself" and then "analyse" it to "separate everything empirical" from it in order to "infer[] what pertains to a thinking being in general" (B 418f, translation altered). Here I start with my own given existence and seek to show by way of abstraction that I have to instantiate the properties coveted by the rational psychologist.

According to Kant, neither procedure accomplishes the task of rational psychology. Although this two-fold method and its critique is not very clearly present in Kant's

presentation – and indeed is not mentioned explicitly at all in the A-Paralogisms – a careful reading shows that Kant does deal with these two manners of argumentation throughout, often side by side in a confusing and convoluted way.[1] Indeed, although little attention has been paid to the distinction between synthetic and analytic procedure in the Paralogisms, scholars have for a long time identified two strains of rational psychology that Kant seems to target, recently dubbed *narrowly* and *broadly rationalistic psychology* by Corey W. Dyck (2014). These two rationalistic psychologists employ the synthetic and analytic procedure, respectively.

The two procedures seek to determine the subject "I" as an object "me" or "myself" via two different concepts of soul. Since the synthetic procedure starts with pure consciousness of a thinking being in general, free of everything sensibly given, its concept of soul is the *rational* and *inferred* idea of soul as the unconditioned subject of thinking (e.g. A 340/B 398). This idea is an intellectual concept that refers to a putative intelligible object or a noumenon – it represents the *I* as it is in itself. The analytic procedure, in virtue of starting with the empirical proposition "I exist thinking," is grounded on the *empirical* and *experienced* concept of soul as the subject when it is perceived through inner sense rather than thought through reason. When I perceive my thoughts, emotions, and desires, I also perceive *myself* as that who has these thoughts, emotions, and desires. But since this intuition or "determination of my existence can only occur in correspondence with the form of inner sense" (B 157f), i.e. under the restricting conditions of sensibility, according to transcendental idealism by this means I do not cognise "myself *as I am*, but only as I *appear* to myself" (B 158).

These are then two ways to determine the as-such indeterminate representation "I" of the "I think", either through an idea of reason as the noumenal self or through an intuition of inner sense as the phenomenal self. Kant is clear that these two determine

[1] See for example the second paralogism in the A-edition, where Kant – after noting that the "*nervus probandi*" of the 2nd paralogism "cannot be treated as analytic" (A 352f) – recognises two ways of justifying the required proposition: synthetically *a priori* or by deriving it (*a posteriori*) from experience (A 353). (Cf. also Serck-Hanssen's contribution in this volume.) Similarly, albeit less obviously, in the 1st paralogism Kant notes that we can neither "infer these properties from the pure category of substance" nor "would we be able to establish such a persistence through any secure observation" (A 349f.), i.e. *a priori* or *a posteriori*.

the *same subject*, i.e. the same *I* of apperception, although they represent it in vastly different ways:

> But how the I that thinks is to differ from the I that intuits itself (for I can represent other kinds of intuition as at least possible) and yet be identical with the latter as the same subject, how therefore I can say that *I* as intelligence and *thinking* [i.e. determining] subject cognize my myself as an object that is *thought* [i.e. determinable], insofar as I am also given to myself in intuition, only, like other phenomena, not as I am for the understanding but rather as I appear to myself, this is no more and no less difficult than how I can be an object for myself in general and indeed one of intuition and inner perceptions. But that it actually must be so can be clearly shown […]. (B 155, translation altered.)

III – The Error In the Paralogisms

Although there are then no less than two ways to determine what it is that thinks when thinking occurs, the attempts to determine its properties turn out to be futile. According to Kant, "in the procedure of rational psychology", through which it seeks to determine the "I" as the simple, unified, substantial object of the unconditioned idea of soul, "there is [*herrscht*] a paralogism, which is exhibited through the following syllogism" (B 410, translation altered):

Major premise: *What cannot be thought otherwise than as subject also does not exist otherwise than as subject, and is therefore substance.*

Minor premise: *Now a thinking being, considered merely as such, cannot be thought otherwise than as subject.*

Conclusion: *Therefore it also exists only as such a being [ein solches], i.e., as substance.* (B 410f., translation altered)

Kant claims that the inference is paralogistic because "the conclusion is drawn *per sophisma figurae dictionis*" (B 411), i.e. through a fallacy of equivocation (JL 135). Unfortunately, Kant's own analysis of what exactly is equivocated in this syllogism is

confusing to say the least. Kant offers essentially three different analyses, one in the A-edition and two in the B-edition: one in the main text and another in a footnote.

> (**A**) The paralogism is a fallacy "in which the major premise makes a merely transcendental use of the category, in regard to its condition, but in which the minor premise and the conclusion, in respect of the soul that is subsumed under this condition, make an empirical use of the same category" (A 402f.).
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> (**B1**) "The major premise talks about a being that can be thought of in every respect, and consequently even as it might be given in intuition. But the minor premise talks about this being only insofar as it is considered as subject, relative only to thinking and the unity of consciousness, but not at the same time in relation to the intuition through which it is given as an object for thinking." (B 411.)
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> (**B2**) "'Thinking' is taken in an entirely different signification in the two premises: in the major premise, as it applies to an object in general (hence as it may be given in intuition); but in the minor premise only as it subsists in relation to self-consciousness, where, therefore, no object is thought, but only the relation to oneself as subject (as the form of thinking) is represented. […] [Unlike the first premise, the] second premise, however, talks not about *things*, but about *thinking* […]." (B 411n.)

These passages are confusing for several reasons. First, the A-edition speaks of "a merely transcendental use of the category" in the major premise, whereas the B-edition major speaks of a being that "might be given in intuition", which would seem to make the being empirical instead. Similarly, while the A-edition minor speaks of an empirical use of the category, the B-minor speaks of a being "insofar as it is considered as subject relative only to thinking […], but not at the same time in relation to" intuition – hence it precisely could not be empirical. If anything, the A- and B-editions hence seem to reverse the analysis of what goes wrong in the Paralogisms! The B-edition footnote adds to the confusion. First, its claim that the premises equivocate "thinking" contrasts with Kant's claim in *B1* that it is rather "a being" that is taken in two senses. Second, that the equivocation is in the term

"thinking" is also at odds with the A-edition claim that it is the *use of the categories* rather than thinking that is equivocated. Finally, the footnote ultimately claims that in fact *neither* "thinking" *nor* "a being" is equivocated, but rather thinking is *conflated* with things.

Although these disparities may seem insurmountable, they are less conflicting than they appear. I suggest a reading – one that cannot be defended in detail here – that takes all three diagnoses as different aspects of one and the same underlying error. First, since *all* (objective) thinking must apply the categories,[2] *the use of the categories* is indeed the same as *thinking of objects*, so the A- and B-editions are not at odds on this score. Furthermore, specifically *transcendental* use of the categories is thinking applied to *objects in general*, i.e. without (*inter alia*) distinction between things in themselves and appearances.[3] Thus Kant's addition in the B-edition that the object in the major premise "may be given in intuition" is unproblematic, if a tad confusing, for intuited appearances are of course included among objects in general.

Second, the A-edition analysis of the minor premise is brought back in line with the rest by Kant's additional remark that the "empirical use" in it is "illegitimate [*unzulässig*]" (A 403, translation altered). That is, the empirical use is *unjustified*, and it is that exactly because – as the B-edition makes clear – in fact the minor premise asserts no connection to intuition but is true only when restricted to the subject. Thus whereas in the A-edition Kant focuses on what the rational psychologist (erroneously) takes the minor premise to accomplish, in the B-edition Kant explains what the minor premise, in order to be true, really does accomplish.

Finally, the B-footnote, too, can be reconciled with the main text. First, both *B2* and *B1* speak of "thought in every respect" or application of thought to "an object in general", i.e. transcendental use of the categories, and both add that the being or

[2] B 165. This is why Kant so briefly explains that also the idea of the soul must be thought through them, giving rise to the specific metaphysical tenets of rational psychology (A 344/B 402).
[3] A 238/B 298, A 242/B 299, A 246-8/B 303-5; cf. A 146–7/B 185–7. Sometimes Kant defines transcendental use of the categories as application to things in themselves, but other passages suggest that it is in fact application to things in general and therefore *also* but not *exclusively* to things in themselves.

object may be given in intuition. Both also state that in the minor premise this being is considered only subjectively, not as an object. And although *A* and *B1* point to an equivocation of "a being" or of "the use of the category," rather than of "thinking" like *B2*, the equivocation turns out more properly to be a *conflation* of something *merely thought* as subject with something *really existing* as object. These various expressions would then be merely different aspects of this fundamental conflation.

Recall that the "I" of apperception as such represents an indeterminate *subject*, which must further be determined as an object. The B-edition makes clear that the minor premise is true only because it restricts itself to this subjective "I" and precisely does not determine it as an object: "But the minor premise talks about this being only insofar as it is considered as subject […] but not […] in relation to the intuition through which it is given as an object for thinking" (B 411). Or: "in the minor premise ['thinking' is understood] only as it subsists in relation to self-consciousness [i.e. apperception], where, therefore, no object is thought, but only the relation to oneself as subject (as the form of thinking) is represented" (B 411n). This "I" "always serves as subject of consciousness" (B 412) but does not as such determine an object (A 436/B 404). The major premise, in turn, "applies to an object in general" (B 411), i.e. speaks of the self as a possible thing in itself or an appearance. Since the minor premise fulfils the condition of the major only insofar as the thinking being is considered just as subject and not as object, and the major premise specifically pertains to objects, the inference is a fallacy.

Although Kant is admittedly beating around the bushes, all three diagnoses can be interpreted as making the same claim: the premises conflate the *thought* of something with the possibly existing *object* thereby thought – in this case the idea of soul with the soul itself. Indeed, it will be made clear that it is exactly this conflation of thinking and being or existence that is the "transcendental ground of inferring falsely" (A 341/B 399) in the transcendental paralogisms. To support this, let us attend to the above syllogism once more and see what its logical form discloses.

IV – THE PARALOGISTIC SYLLOGISM AND SYNTHETIC PROCEDURE

Note that the syllogism is supposed to "exhibit" the paralogism that is prevalent in the "procedure of rational psychology." It does not represent any of the four paralogistic inferences directly but a more general paralogism that underlies these specific inferences. Hence my treatment will necessarily differ somewhat from Serck-Hanssen's analysis of the second paralogism. Moreover, as I formalise the argument in contemporary rather than classical logic, the diagnosis must deviate from Kant's explicit words – although it is compatible with them.

As I have defended and developed the following formalisation in more detail elsewhere, I will present it only briefly here.

Major premise: For all x, if it is not possible that x is not thought as subject, then it is not possible that x exists and is not thought as subject.
$\forall x(\neg\Diamond(\neg Sx) \rightarrow \neg\Diamond(\text{`x exists'} \ \& \ \neg Sx))$[4]

Also, by definition, if *x* exists and can only be thought as subject, then *x* is substance. Now, if we apply the negations, we get:

Major premise: For all x, if it is necessary that x is thought as subject, then it is necessary that either x does not exist or x is thought as subject.
$\forall x(\Box(Sx) \rightarrow \Box(\neg(\text{`x exists'}) \vee Sx)$

This shows that the major premise is in fact tautological and hence true in any interpretation of the terms and, what is more important, true irrespective of whether *x* exists. That the major premise is formulated via a negative is crucial because it makes the consequent a disjunction that leaves it undecided whether *x* exists. This is why the

[4] I use *S* to denote the predicate *subject* so that Kant's "thought as subject" equals "is predicated subjecthood." Since "thought as subject" does not equal "exists as subject," I have read "does not exist otherwise than as subject" through the impossibility of the conjunction that *x* exists yet is not predicated *S*. Note that although Kant says "*does not exist*," he must be understood to mean "*cannot exist*" – otherwise the argument would lose its apodictic conclusion.

major premise applies the categories "transcendentally": it applies to existing and non-existing things in general, in a word, to every thought of an object in general.

Now, the minor premise merely affirms that the soul or a "thinking being" cannot be thought otherwise than as subject, that is:

Minor premise: It is not possible that a thinking being is not thought as subject.
$\neg\Diamond\neg Ss$,

which equals:

Minor premise: It is necessary that a thinking being is thought as subject.
$\Box Ss$.

Kant takes this minor premise to be true: we can indeed only think ourselves as subjects (B 407). Thus, as Kant claims (A 402), both premises are true, and since the minor furthermore fulfils the condition of the major, the inference is not only valid but also *sound* and affords the following conclusion:

Conclusion: It is necessary that either the thinking being does not exist or the thinking being is thought as subject.
$\Box(\neg$'s exists' $\vee Ss)$

There are several important results here. First, that the inference is deductively valid and indeed *sound* goes a long way to explain why Kant would think all rational psychologists would rely on this general argumentative form and believe it to work. Yet, quite astoundingly really, it in fact does *not* work, for, second, the conclusion is a disjunction and hence, although it might appear to do so, it does not decide whether the soul exists as substance or does not exist at all. This logical jugglery has in fact accomplished nothing. Surely the rational psychologist, a metaphysician rather than a logician, wants the soul to *exist* as substance and not merely to be *thought* as one, and for all its soundness the inference offers no way to choose between the two alternatives. Thus it also does not matter that the four tenets of rational psychology are necessarily true of the *concept* of soul if the concept cannot be shown to have

objective reality, i.e., that the tenets would be true of a *possibly existing object* of that concept. Here Bennett is quite right in saying that the inference affords only "an empty or 'formal' truth" (Bennett 1974, 72–3) of logic, not a material truth of metaphysics.

The rational psychologist is between a rock and a hard place: either he does not assume existence so that the inference is sound but fails to provide any metaphysically relevant conclusion; or he assumes the existence of soul and so has a metaphysically relevant yet fallacious conclusion. This fallacy is grounded on an illicit existential presupposition, not warranted by the logical form. Thus it is a specifically transcendental rather than a generally logical fallacy, i.e. a paralogism related to the real possibility of things rather than the mere logical possibility of thinking.

But has Kant hereby shown that rational psychology fails? – By no means. Ameriks is right in pointing out that thus far it has only been shown that the *purely a priori arguments* of rational psychology fail. More precisely, Kant has hereby simply undermined a *method of justification* or an *argumentative procedure* that would proceed purely via the aforementioned syllogism. Although Kant never explicitly calls this method the *synthetic procedure*, he does speak of taking the propositions of rational psychology in a "*synthetic* connection" (B 416), which he then contrasts with "the *analytic* procedure" (B 418). Furthermore, as we saw, when Kant presents the paralogistic syllogism, he intends it to exhibit the *procedure* of rational psychology – which I take to refer to *pure a priori* or, in Dyck's terms, narrow rational psychology, or "rational psychology as a system" (B 416).

The synthetic procedure begins from "the concept of a thinking being in general" (B 418), i.e. from the "I" of pure apperception, and seeks to show that it is, as such, a simple, unified substance that can exist apart from matter. Kant says frustratingly little about this procedure and rejects it almost out of hand. The rejection would not be as arbitrary as it seems, however, if I am right in thinking that the approach that Kant has thus far discussed in the Paralogisms is exactly this synthetic procedure. That this is indeed so is most obvious from the contrast to the analytic procedure that is "grounded on the 'I think' given as a proposition that already includes an existence

in itself [*in sich*]" (B 418, translation altered). Since in the previous passages Kant has emphasised that the "I think" is taken "only problematically; not insofar as it may contain a perception of an existence" (A 347/B 405; cf. B 406), it makes sense that the synthetic procedure that differs from the analytic one precisely in this respect is Kant's characterisation of what has been the topic of the Paralogisms thus far.[5] Thus the insufficiency of the synthetic procedure has been demonstrated by the insufficiency of the paralogistic syllogism above.

Be that as it may, the only explicit reason Kant seems to give for rejecting the synthetic procedure is that it implies "at least problematic idealism" (B 418). In the Transcendental Analytic Kant has already presented his Refutation of Idealism according to which "if the existence of external things is not at all required for the determination of one's own existence in time, then such things are only assumed, entirely gratuitously, without a proof of them being able to be given" (B 418). That is, if the only way to avoid idealism is to ground cognition of myself on cognition of outer things, then starting off with the mere idea of a thinking being, independent of external objects, will – apart from being unfruitful as argued above – *also* deprive us of this strategy and condemn us to idealism. It is not the *only* problem of the synthetic procedure but an *additional* one.

The threat of idealism is worth mentioning specifically, because – as we saw – Kant has only demonstrated the *insufficiency* of the synthetic procedure, i.e. that it falls short of demonstrating what it seeks to prove, whereas its commitment to sceptical idealism presents a detrimental consequence of its own that goes beyond mere insufficiency of proof: it shows not only that the rational psychologist is not warranted in assuming that the soul exists as substance but that he is not warranted *even* in assuming that *external objects* exist either. From this point of view the criticism is fairly crushing, as it would leave the metaphysician with the mere indeterminate flow of inner representations that can be anchored neither in a soul

[5] The characterisation of this procedure as "synthetic" makes also systematic sense: since pure rational psychology starts off with the wholly indeterminate representation "I" of the "I think" and seeks to determine it *a priori* through certain predicates, it effectively seeks to *add* predicates into the *content* of this in itself empty representation, which is to say that it proceeds with *synthetic judgments*. It seeks to determine synthetically *a priori* the self as the object of the idea of soul.

having those representations nor in any external objects giving the content of those representations.

The problem that the synthetic procedure cannot prove the existence of the soul as object of the idea could be remedied easily, however: one needs only to find another way to establish its existence, and rational psychology could enter the path of science. Indeed Kant uses a substantial portion of the B-Paralogisms precisely to argue that this is impossible, for the existence of the soul corresponding to the idea cannot be proved. Thus although rational psychology remains very much alive at this point, at the end of the Paralogisms chapter it will – *pace* Ameriks – be defeated. And not just its arguments, even the Achilles among them, but all future arguments, for rational psychology can never achieve what it covets.

V – The Cartesian Cogito and Analytic Procedure

Unlike the synthetic procedure, the analytic procedure does not start from a concept and seek to demonstrate the existence of its object but on the contrary from a given actuality – from the empirical perception of my own existence – in order to demonstrate that I or the empirical soul must have the properties that the rational psychologist seeks to attribute to it (B 418). That Kant discusses this procedure at all may be surprising, for generally one does not think that rational psychology could be grounded on empirical propositions. But as Dyck (2014) has argued at length and in detail, in fact the rational psychologists that are Kant's most proximate targets – the German metaphysicians since Christian Wolff – did not only allow some empirical facts in the foundations of rational psychology but even took experience to be its touch-stone. For these philosophers soul is an empirical concept and my inner sense provides immediate perception of my own existence as separate from matter.[6] Indeed,

[6] This explains the curious apparent conflict between Kant noting that the "proposition 'I think,' or 'I exist thinking,' is an empirical proposition" (B 428) and his claim that the "I think" is "taken problematically" (B 406) and is thus "pure from the empirical" and may not "contain a perception of an existence" but only its (logical) possibility (A 341–2/B 400, A 347/B 405). There is no conflict here, but two procedures that either start with the general concept of a thinking being ("I think" taken problematically, i.e. as expressing the logical possibility of the concept, for the synthetic procedure) or with the particular empirically perceived existence of a

what is more, Kant himself even indicates that the "Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum*" exactly involves such a "perception of an existence" (A 347/B 405). To this Cartesian *sum cogitans* of the analytic procedure Kant contrasts the mere *cogito* of the synthetic procedure (A 343f/B 401f, A 347/B 405).

Thus Kant's discussion of the analytic procedure is not only highly appropriate but also necessary for refuting the actual rational psychology of his predecessors. Now, as said, this procedure is "grounded on the 'I think' given as a proposition that already includes an existence in itself", so that by abstracting from "everything empirical" (B 418) in this proposition the rationalist seeks to demonstrate that I exist as a thinking, simple, and identical subject (B 418, 428). Whereas in the synthetic procedure one starts from the mere thought of the "I" and seeks to predicate the categories of it in order to determine it as the existing object of the idea of soul, the analytic procedure starts from something that already demonstrably exists, namely from my own empirical perception of myself, in order to "tease out" the metaphysical properties thought in the idea of soul. If successful, the analytic procedure would show that the soul that I perceive *is* the same *object* – not just the same subject – as the soul that reason thinks in the idea of soul, and so whatever I must necessarily think in the latter (unity, simplicity, substantiality, immortality, etc.) must be properties of the former – since the former *is* the object of the latter.

But, first, because the analytic procedure is grounded *a posteriori* on an empirical perception of my contingent existence, "it is not here determined whether I *could* exist and be thought of only as subject and not also as predicate of another being" (B 419, translation altered). Although I do exist and have a body, this contingent and perceived fact does not establish whether I could or could not exist without one and hence whether I *am* immaterial. Similarly, I perceive that I exist *now* and as long as I am alive (experience), but whether I can *always* exist, even after death, and am therefore immortal, remains unknown.

But if I could determine something over and above the fact *that* I exist, namely *how* I exist, then maybe I could use this to infer whether I can or even must always exist?

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thinker ("I think" taken empirically, i.e. as expressing the actual existence of an object, for the analytic procedure).

Indeed, Kant recognizes two alternatives here: *materialism* and *spiritualism*, according to which I exist either as matter or as pure thinking (B 420). He offers admittedly terse rejections of both: Since it is through apperception that I am conscious of my existence, and since the simplicity of apperception "lies already in its possibility" yet "there is nothing in space that is simple", it is impossible to explain "how I am constituted as a merely thinking subject on the basis of *materialism*" (B 419–20). For matter is defined as movable in space, and hence cannot be simple, therefore I, as simple, cannot be material. Thus I cannot argue: I exist only as a body, which as material is compound and therefore corruptible, therefore I am not immortal.

But spiritualism fares no better, for I "need something persisting" for my substantiality, but since "just insofar as I think myself, nothing of the sort is given to me in inner intuition, it is not possible at all through this simple self-consciousness to determine the way I exist" (B 420). Although I am indeed conscious of my own existence via pure apperception, I cannot thereby say anything at all about the *way* in which I exist, i.e. determine any of my predicates. Recall the passage cited earlier: in apperception "I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor *as* I am in myself, but only *that* I am" (B 157). Something is doing the thinking, but what that something is, I cannot say. Thus, again, I cannot be determined as spiritual so that the properties of spirituality could be used to infer how I can and must exist.

A detailed analysis of these claims would take us too far afield. Kant is here relying heavily on a wealth of his own positive philosophy and on the numerous proofs he provides independently of his treatment of the paralogisms. His claim that apperception is simple and his demonstration in the Transcendental Aesthetic that there is nothing simple in space jointly refute materialism. Kant's proof in the Transcendental Analytic that substantiality requires persistence coupled with the claim that there is nothing persistent in inner sense refutes spiritualism. The failure of both materialism and spiritualism means that "in no way whatsoever can we cognize anything about the constitution of our soul that in any way at all concerns the possibility of its separate existence" (B 420). Thus the analytic procedure of broad rational psychology fares just as poorly as the synthetic procedure of the narrow one.

VI – The Idea of the Soul vs the Existence of the Soul

Most of the B-Paralogisms concerns the problem of determining myself as an existing thing that would have the metaphysical predicates of substantiality, unity, immortality, etc., and could therefore be the object of the idea of soul. The individual paralogisms receive a quick and passing treatment, and even the analysis of the general paralogistic syllogism is given in one dense paragraph. This is because ultimately the fate of rational psychology does not depend on whether the *idea* of soul contains the predicates that the rational psychologist attributes to it – for Kant grants that logically, analytically, and *a priori* necessarily it does – but on whether an *existing object* can possibly correspond to this idea. As it happens, it is precisely this assumption that there would be an existing object corresponding to the idea of soul that constitutes the transcendental illusion underlying rational psychology. The errors of rational psychology follow when one takes this illusion for a fact and believes to have determined *not the subjective idea of soul* but the *soul in itself* as the putative *object* of the idea according to the metaphysical predicates.

But if one procedure can determine the metaphysical predicates of the thinker yet not its existence and the other *vice versa* its existence but not its metaphysical predicates, then perhaps the rational psychologist could combine them to get the results he covets? Yet such a strategy would require that the two procedures talk about *the same thing*, which is what one cannot assume. Sure, the *idea* of soul contains by definition certain predicates, and sure, *I* do exist – but what shows that I am the object of the idea of soul? For, as Kant notes, "that the I think must always be considered as *subject"* and must therefore be *thought* as substance "does not signify that I as *object* am […] *substance*" (B 407). The concept must be coupled with the object, and according to Kant this cannot be done, for there is a disparity between the rational *idea* of soul indicating a thing in itself and the sensible perception of my *existence* as appearance.

This is why Kant charges his predecessors of *transcendental realism*. A transcendental realist takes the *object of experience* to be the *thing in itself*, or, what is the same, conflates a *mere appearance* with the *thing in itself*. That Kant's predecessors did in fact fall prey to transcendental realism is visible in that they took

the soul as it is experienced to be the *same* soul as is thought in the idea of pure reason – they took these two concepts, one an empirical concept of inner experience, the other an inferred concept of reason, to have the same object: the soul or the self. Thus it makes perfect sense that rational psychologists would take the metaphysical predicates inferred by pure reason to apply to an existing soul since they took themselves to perceive that soul in experience – even if they did not perceive those metaphysical predicates. But since the predicates in fact apply to the soul as it is in itself and the perceived self is only the soul as it appears under the restricting conditions of sensibility, these predicates cannot be applied to the latter, and so the self that exists is not the same object as the one that is thought.

Arguably, this conflation and hence transcendental realism is grounded on the transcendental illusion that makes it seem as if the object of the idea of soul existed. If one already believes that the soul in itself exists, it is no wonder that one would take the self that one perceives in inner experience to be that soul in itself – as it is perceived. If, however, one recognises this as a mere illusion, then one would have to ask: What justification do I have for my belief that the object of the idea of soul really exists? The rational inferences can only demonstrate that I must *think* the soul in certain ways, i.e. determine the *idea* of soul through certain predicates, but not that the soul *exists* with these properties. Experience does show that I *exist* but can only attribute predicates to myself as I appear, and specifically experience cannot show that the properties predicated of the *idea* of soul would pertain to the *empirical* soul as it is experienced in inner sense. So in no way can I demonstrate that to the idea of soul an existing object corresponds. Although I must according to Kant continue to believe in the illusion that such an object exists, I should not take this illusion for a fact and thereby commit the metaphysical error of rational psychology.

This problem of the incommensurability of the idea of soul and the existing self is most clearly present when Kant summarises the B-Paralogisms. He notes, first, that "[t]hinking, taken in itself, is merely the logical function" (B 428), and that through it "I represent myself to myself neither as I am nor as I appear to myself" (B 429; cf. B 157). Thus even if "I represent myself as *subject* of a thought or even as *ground* of

thinking"[7], I still do not represent myself as *object* through the "categories of substance or cause" – i.e. I do not cognise myself (*ibid.*). This is the failure of the synthetic procedure.

On the other hand, the "proposition 'I think,' insofar as it says only that *I exist thinking*, is not a merely logical function, but rather determines the subject (which is then at the same time an object) in regard to existence" (B 429). The "thinking self must now seek the conditions of the use of its logical functions for categories of substance, cause, etc., so as not merely to indicate itself as object in itself through the 'I,' but also to determine its kind of existence, i.e. to cognise itself as noumenon" (B 430, translation altered). But this, as Kant's verdict goes, "is impossible, since inner empirical intuition […] makes available nothing but data of appearance, which affords nothing for knowledge of the separate existence of the object of *pure consciousness*" (B 430). This is, then, the failure of the analytic procedure.

It is fairly clear from these passages that Kant considers two ways of determining the self as an existing object, through the synthetic and analytic procedure, and ends up rejecting both and through that all rational psychology. Despite its negative results, the paralogisms are of some use however. Since the synthetic procedure shows that I must *think* myself always as subject and the analytic procedure shows that I *exist*, together they resist all kinds of *reduction*, and so Kant concludes:

> Thus there is no rational psychology as *doctrine* that might provide us with an addition to our self-consciousness, but only as *discipline*, setting impassable boundaries for speculative reason in this field, in order, on the one side, not to be thrown into the lap of a soulless materialism, or on the other side not to get lost wandering about in a spiritualism that must be groundless for us in life[.] (B 421.)

[7] These are the *logical counterparts of substance and cause* as mere logical *functions*. As such they have only *logical* significance and do not pertain to *objects*. (Cf. e.g. A 146f/B 186f.)

VII – CONCLUSION

I have shown that neither the synthetic procedure of pure or narrow rational psychology nor the analytic procedure of broad rational psychology succeed in proving universal metaphysical claims about the soul. The former fails because the inferential procedure it employs is neutral to the possible existence of the soul, and so one is given the unsatisfactory choice between a sound syllogism without metaphysical import and a metaphysically pregnant yet fallaciously inferred conclusion. The latter fails because the empirical fact of my existence as a thinker cannot ground any universal metaphysical claims about what is necessary to all possible thinkers.

I think we should see Kant's criticism of rational psychology ultimately not as a final refutation but as a powerful *challenge*. His rejection of the synthetic procedure is independent from his own philosophical tenets and is designed to show a decisive lack in that argumentative strategy. That this rejection also should be independent of transcendental idealism, on the pain of circular argumentation, is clear from Kant's admission that pure rational psychology presents "the only [possible] stumbling block to our entire critique" (B 409) – and its rejection can thus by no means rely on that critique. But, as we saw, Kant's rejection of the analytic procedure that seeks to amend this lack is not and need not be independent of his transcendentally idealistic ontology. Since this procedure employs concepts like *space*, *existence*, and *perception*, Kant is well within his rights to counter it with his own argued-for theories about them. The challenge to the rational psychologist is thus to be formulated as follows: Prove your theories *a priori* without relying on pure logic and refute at the same time the ontological system Kant himself erected. And precisely because Kant especially in the B-edition chose to present this challenge generally and did not focus on specific theories and arguments developed by his immediate predecessors, including his own pre-critical self, the challenge is as alive and as formidable today as it was two hundred years ago.

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