

The Paralogisms

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1 Empirical v. Rational Psychology

- Empirical psychology is concerned with what may be learned via inner observation of one's mental states¹
- Rational psychology concerns what may be deduced from the a priori knowledge of oneself as a *thinking subject*²
 - provides knowledge of the essence or nature of thinking beings in general
 - provides knowledge of objects that are not objects of a possible experience

2 Two Kinds of Self-Consciousness

- The “critical” Kant construes self-consciousness as fundamentally *bifurcated*

Inner sense (empirical apperception): passive sensory representation of the subject as object³

Pure Apperception: sui generis, active, non-sensory (intellectual) representation of the subject as a subject^{4,5}

3 The Paralogisms

- Instance of Transcendental Illusion
- All paralogisms are syllogistic inferences⁶ with three distinguishing characteristics
 - fallacious categorical syllogism exhibiting an error of equivocation between the major premise and the minor premise⁷
 - formally invalid but has true premises⁸
 - as an instance of TI, must involve a plausible and compelling error

1. All M are P—major premise
2. S is M—minor premise
3. ∴ S is P—conclusion

¹ If more than the *cogito* were the ground of our pure rational cognition of thinking beings in general; if we also made use of observations about the play of our thoughts and the natural laws of the thinking self created from them: then an empirical psychology would arise (A347/B405)

² **I think** is thus the sole text of rational psychology, from which it is to develop its entire wisdom...because the least empirical predicate would corrupt the rational purity and independence of the science from all experience. (A343/B401)

³ The consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of our state in inner perception is merely empirical, forever variable; it can give no standing or abiding self [*stehendes oder bleibendes Selbst*] in this stream of inner appearances, and is customarily called **inner sense** or **empirical apperception**. (On the Synthesis of Recognition in a Concept, A107)

⁴ now I want to become conscious of myself only as thinking; I put to one side how my proper self is given in intuition, and then it could be a mere appearance that I think, but not insofar as I think; in the consciousness of myself in mere thinking I am the being itself, about which, however, nothing yet is thereby given to me for thinking. (B-Paralogisms, General Remark B429)

⁵ The consciousness of myself in the representation I is no intuition at all, but a merely intellectual representation of the self-activity of a thinking subject. (Refutation of Idealism, B278; see also B132, B157, B423)

⁶ All basic syllogisms consist of three categorical sentences (e.g. “S is P”), in which the two premises share exactly one term, called the “middle term”, and the conclusion contains the other two terms, sometimes called the “extremes”. The “major” premise is general, the “minor” premise singular. The “major” and “minor” terms figure in their respective premises. (SEP, “Ancient Logic”)

⁷ [A paralogism] arises when the middle concept is taken in different senses in the two premises—when, namely, the *logical* relation (in thinking) in one of the premises is taken as a real one (of the objects of intuition) in the other. (R 5552; 18:218; cf. A402 and B411)

⁸ A **paralogism** is a syllogistic inference that is false as far as its form is concerned, although as far as its matter (the antecedent propositions) are concerned [*bei Vorder-sätzen*], it is correct. (R 5552; 18:218)

4 The First Paralogism – Substantiality

4.1 A-edition Version (A348)

1. That which is the subject of judgment and cannot be predicated of anything else is substance.
2. I, as a thinking being, am the **absolute subject** of all my possible judgments, and this representation of Myself cannot be used as the predicate of any other thing.
3. ∴ I, as thinking being (soul), am **substance**.

PROBLEMS:

- Premise (1) is not a major premise but rather a definition
- Premise (2) is not sufficiently general

4.2 B-edition Version (B410-11)

1. What cannot be thought otherwise than as subject does not exist otherwise than as subject, and is therefore substance.⁹
2. Now a thinking being, considered merely as such, cannot be thought otherwise than as subject.
3. ∴ A thinking being also exists only as such a thing, i.e., as substance.

- Invalid inference because of an equivocation in the use of “thought”¹⁰
- The “logical” use of “I” is mistaken for a “real” use in denoting a purely intellectually graspable, “unschematized” conception of substance.¹¹

4.3 A Gap in the Conception of Substance?

- There is a gap between the category <substance> as derived from the logical structure of thought, and the category as a “schematized” concept of experience
 - <substance>_L: the grammatical conception of a term which always takes subject rather than predicate place in a judgment¹²
 - <substance>_E: the experiential conception of the persisting and permanent substratum of change¹³
- There is further conception of substance between the grammatical/logical & the experiential
 - <substance>_M: the purely metaphysical conception of a subject of inherence (whether persistent or not), which does not itself inhere in anything

⁹ “does not” should read “cannot”?

¹⁰ “Thought” [*Das Denken*] is taken in an entirely different meaning [*Bedeutung*] 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. (footnote, B 411-12)

¹¹ the first syllogism of transcendental psychology imposes on us an only allegedly new insight when it passes off the constant logical subject of thinking as the cognition of a real subject of inherence, with which we do not and cannot have the least acquaintance, because consciousness is the one single thing that makes all representations into thoughts, and in which, therefore, as in the transcendental subject, our perceptions must be encountered; and apart from this logical significance of the I, we have no acquaintance with the subject in itself that grounds this I as a substratum, just as it grounds all thoughts.

¹² [Substance is that which] must always be considered as subject, never as mere predicate (Transition to the Deduction, B129; see also B186)

¹³ The schema of substance is the persistence of the real in time, i.e., the representation of the real as a substratum of empirical time-determination in general, which therefore endures while everything else changes. (Schematism, A144/B183)

- What could be the source of this conception of substance?
 - Cannot be analytically derived from <substance>_L
 - Cannot be derived from content of intuition
- The concept <substance>_M (perhaps along with the other categories) derives from pure apperception^{14,15}

5 The Second Paralogism – Simplicity (A351-61/B407-8)

1. That thing whose action can never be regarded as the concurrence of many acting things, is simple. (All A is B)
2. Now the soul, or the thinking I, is such a thing. (C is A)
3. ∴ The soul is a simple thing (substance). (C is B)

- Known as the “Achilles” argument¹⁶
- Paralogism consists in the confusion in the use of “thing” (logical vs. real)

REVISED VERSION:

1. The subject whose action can never be regarded as the concurrence of many acting things, is simple. (All A is B)
2. The self is such a subject. (C is A)
3. ∴ The self is simple. (C is B)

- Confusion hinges on logical vs. real notion of “subject”
 - “Logical” sense of subject appeals to First Paralogism argument of a representation that could never function as a predicate
 - “Real” sense of subject as something like a substance₁

THE ‘NERVUS PROBANDI’ OF ACHILLES:¹⁷

(UC): if a multiplicity of representations are to form a single representation, they must be contained in the absolute unity of the thinking substance. (A352)

- RP depends on the inference from unity of thought to “absolute” unity of thinker
 - “absolute unity” refers to a thinker which has no proper parts
- Kant: why think that the structure of a thought, as a complex, isn’t mirrored by the structure of the entity, as a complex substance, which thinks it?¹⁸
 - (UC) isn’t analytic
 - (UC) isn’t synthetic a priori¹⁹

¹⁴ [The principles of] the objective determination of all representations, insofar as cognition can come from them...are all derived [abgeleitet] from the principle of the transcendental unity of apperception. (Transcendental Deduction §19, B142).

¹⁵ Apperception is itself the ground of the possibility of the categories, which for their part represent nothing other than the synthesis of the manifold of intuition, insofar as that manifold has unity in apperception. ... Hence of the thinking I (the soul), which [thus represents] itself as substance...one can say *not so much* that it cognizes *itself through the categories*, but that it cognizes the categories, and through them all objects, in the absolute unity of apperception, and hence cognizes them *through itself*. (Observation on the sum of the pure doctrine of the soul, A401)

¹⁶ This is the Achilles of all the dialectical inferences of the pure doctrine of the soul, nothing like a mere sophistical play that a dogmatist devised in order to give his assertions a fleeting plausibility, but an inference that seems to withstand even the sharpest testing and the greatest scruples of inquiry. (A351)

¹⁷ Every composite substance is an aggregate of many, and the action of a composite, or of that which inheres in it as such a composite, is an aggregate of many actions or accidents, which is distributed among the multitude of substances...[Now] suppose that the composite were thinking; then every part of it would be a part of the thought, but the parts would first contain the whole thought only when taken together. Now this would be contradictory. For because the representations that are divided among different beings (e.g., the individual words of a verse) never constitute a whole thought (a verse), the thought can never inhere in a composite as such. Thus it is possible only in one substance, which is not an aggregate of many, and hence it is absolutely simple. (A351-2)

¹⁸ For the unity of the thought, which consists of many representations, is collective, and as far as mere concepts can show may relate just as well to the collective unity of different substances acting together (A353)

¹⁹ Nor will anyone venture to assert that this proposition allows of being known synthetically and completely *a priori* from mere concepts - not, at least, if he understands the ground of the possibility of *a priori* synthetic propositions, as above explained. (A353)

6 The Third Paralogism (A361-66/B408)

1. What is conscious of the numerical identity of its Self in different times, is to that extent a person. (All C is P)
2. Now the soul is conscious of the numerical identity of its Self in different times. (S is C)
3. ∴ The soul is a person. (S is P)

- Reminiscent of Locke's characterization of personhood in the *Essay*²⁰
 - Is Kant's discussion one concerning specifically *personal* identity?
 - * establishing synchronic and diachronic criteria of identity
 - Is Kant dealing with the Wolffian conception of personality?²¹
 - * establishing criteria for distinguishing persons from animals via elaboration of the complex of intellectual powers necessary for personhood, and which would be sustained after the destruction of one's body.²²
- The ambiguity of the middle term: consciousness of numerical identity²³
 - logical unity of grammatical subject
 - real unity of metaphysical subject

²⁰ [being a person requires a capacity for a being to think of] it self as it self, the same thinking thing in different times and places (Locke (1970), 335; II.xxvii.9)

²¹ Wolff claims that "a thing is called a person that is conscious that it is the very same thing that was previously in this or that state" (DM § 924), which definition clearly evokes Locke's original in making the (actual) consciousness of identity essential to personhood. (Dyck (2010), 99)

²² For Kant, the soul's consciousness of its numerical identity, as ultimately a consciousness of the identity of *apperception*, is evidence of the soul's possession of an understanding. Animals, by contrast, do not possess an understanding but only its analogue... That the personality of the human soul signals the possession of an understanding thus serves to distinguish the human soul from that of an animal... (Dyck (2010), 120)

²³ The proposition of the identity of myself in everything manifold of which I am conscious is equally one lying in the concepts themselves, and hence an analytic proposition; but this identity of the subject, of which I can become conscious in every representation, does not concern the intuition of it, through which it is given as an object, and thus cannot signify the identity of the person, by which is understood the consciousness of the identity of its own substance as a thinking being in all changes of state (B408).

References & Further Reading

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