

Kant's Paralogisms (III-IV)

PHIL 871

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1 The Third Paralogism (A361-66)

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*¹
 - 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?²
 - * 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.³
- The ambiguity of the middle term: consciousness of numerical identity⁴
 - logical unity of grammatical subject
 - real unity of metaphysical subject

2 The Fourth Paralogism (A366-80)

1. What can be only causally inferred is never certain. (All C is P)
2. The existence of outer objects can be only causally inferred, not immediately perceived by us. (O is C)
3. ∴ We can never be certain of the existence of outer objects. (O is P)

- Ambiguity of middle term located in the notion of 'outer objects'

2.1 Two Notions of 'Outer'/'External'⁵

Transcendentally External: a separate existence, in and of itself

Empirically External: an existence in space

- Appearances in space are empirically external but transcendentally *internal*
 - Is this just phenomenalism?

¹ [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)

² 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)

³ 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)

⁴ 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).

⁵ since the expression **outside us** carries with it an unavoidable ambiguity, since it sometimes signifies something that, **as a thing in itself**, exists distinct from us and sometimes merely something that belongs to outer **appearance**, then in order to escape uncertainty and use this concept in the latter significance - in which it is taken in the proper psychological question about the reality of our outer intuition - we will distinguish **empirically external** objects from those that might be called "external" in the transcendental sense, by directly calling them "things **that are to be encountered in space**." (A373)

2.2 Two Kinds of Skepticism⁶

Problematic Idealism: we cannot be certain of the existence of any material body

Dogmatic Idealism: we can be certain that no material body exists – the notion of a body is self-contradictory

2.3 The Immediacy Argument⁷

1. Rational Psychology (RP) privileges awareness of the subject and its states over awareness of non-subjective states.
 2. But transcendental idealism entails that we are aware of both subjective and objective states *in the same way* – viz. via a form of *intuition*.
 3. So either both kinds of awareness are immediate or they are both mediate.
 4. Since awareness of subjective states is obviously immediate then awareness of objective states must also be immediate.
 5. ∴ We are immediately aware of the states or properties of physical objects.
- What sense of 'immediate' [*unmittelbar*] is Kant concerned with?⁸

2.4 The Argument from Imagination⁹

1. If RP is correct then it is possible for one to have never perceived any spatial object but only to have imagined doing so.
 2. But imagination cannot fabricate – it can only *refabricate*.
 3. So, if one has sensory experience of outer objects, then one must have had at least one successful perception of an external spatial object.
 4. ∴ It is certain that an extended spatial world exists.
- Does this rule out uncertainty that the physical world is being caused/generated by something radically different from our conception of a physical world (e.g. a malicious demon, a world-soul, etc.)
 - Isn't *this* the worry that Descartes raises?

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⁶ The **dogmatic idealist** would be one who **denies** the existence of matter; the **skeptical idealist** one who **doubts** them because he holds them to be unprovable.

⁷ external objects (bodies) are merely appearances, hence also nothing other than a species of my representations, whose objects are something only through these representations, but are nothing separated from them. Thus external things exist as well as my self, and indeed both exist on the immediate testimony of my self-consciousness, only with this difference: the representation of my Self, as the thinking subject, is related merely to inner sense, but the representations that designate extended beings are also related to outer sense. I am no more necessitated to draw inferences in respect of the reality of external objects than I am in regard to the reality of the objects of my inner sense (my thoughts), for in both cases they are nothing but representations, the immediate perception (consciousness) of which is at the same time a sufficient proof of their reality. (A370-1)

⁸ the transcendental idealist is an empirical realist, and grants to matter, as appearance, a reality which need not be inferred, but is immediately perceived. (A371)

⁹ This material or real entity, however, this Something that is to be intuited in space, necessarily presupposes perception, and it cannot be invented by any power of imagination or produced independently of perception, which indicates the reality of something in space. Thus sensation is that which designates a reality in space and time, according to whether it is related to the one or the other mode of sensible intuition. (A373-4; cf. *Anthropology*, 7:167-8)

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