

# Person and thinking Self in the third Paralogism: Between Nature and Freedom<sup>1</sup>

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**Summary:** This article analyzes the third paralogism of the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, entitled «of personality». In it, Kant criticizes the way of reasoning of rational psychology, which bases the claim that the soul is a person on the assumption of the numerical identity of the self. Our aim is to study the Kantian position on personal identity and the thinking self from the point of view of the conflict between nature and freedom. We consider that the relation to this conflict involves two aspects: On the one hand, the question whether the discourse of the third paralogism situates the thinking self in an order other than the natural mechanical one; and, on the other hand, whether this discourse contributes to the concept of person. Based on this approach, we will not only look at what Kant criticizes (*pars destruens*) but also at what he admits.

**Keywords:** Self-consciousness; Identity; Freedom; Nature; Paralogism; Person.

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## Persona y Yo pensante en el tercer Paralogismo: entre Naturaleza y Libertad

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza el tercer paralogismo de la Dialéctica trascendental de la *Crítica de la razón* pura, titulado «de la personalidad». En él Kant critica el modo de razonar de la psicología racional, que basa la afirmación de que el alma es persona en el supuesto de la identidad numérica del yo. Nuestro objetivo es estudiar la posición kantiana sobre la identidad personal y el yo pensante desde el punto de vista del conflicto entre naturaleza y libertad. Consideramos que la relación con este conflicto involucra dos aspectos: por un lado, la cuestión de si el discurso del tercer paralogismo sitúa al yo pensante en un orden distinto del natural mecánico; y, por otro lado, si dicho discurso supone una contribución al concepto de persona. Partiendo de este planteamiento, no atenderemos solo a lo que Kant critica (*pars destruens*) sino también a lo que admite.

**Palabras clave:** Autoconciencia; Identidad; Libertad; Naturaleza; Paralogismo; Persona.

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### 1. Introduction

There are many motifs in Kantian philosophy worthy of consideration in this tercentenary commemoration, but the motifs related to the conflict between nature and freedom constitute one of the main ones, for it is precisely this problem that gave rise to the critical philosophy (*To Christian Garve*, 1798: 552) and is the great problem considered throughout all three *Critiques*. And as can be seen in the same letter, what the problem of nature and freedom concerns is the problem of man's self-understanding. That is to say, the question at stake is whether freedom in man exists or whether everything in us is natural necessity. This orientation towards the problem of man is also apparent in the third antinomy of the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Here, in the Thesis

and Antithesis of the antinomy and in the Proofs of both positions, the conflict between nature and freedom is initially posed in cosmological terms but is immediately oriented towards the problem of man. The importance of the passages of the third antinomy and their potential to provide clues about freedom in current contexts, such as the developments in neurosciences or the irruption of artificial intelligence, are remarkable<sup>2</sup>.

As is well known, in the third antinomy Kant resolves the conflict between natural causality and freedom by separating worlds, that is, by situating the transcendental faculty of freedom outside the series of phenomena. The location of freedom in an intelligible order of things is the line followed by Kantian practical philosophy, from the third chapter of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and throughout the *Critique of Practice*. However, this is not Kant's only solution to the problem of freedom. The separation of the two worlds is the Kantian solution to the problem of freedom from the point of view of its substantiation; but it is not the solution to the problem when one moves from the level of substantiation to the level of the realization of freedom in the sensible world. This other plane of freedom is openly posed in the *Critique of Judgement*. And, as I have tried to show in several papers<sup>3</sup>, this other plane of freedom demands a new way of thinking about sensible legality, namely, a way of thinking about the sensible that is not necessarily associated with mechanical legality. But this broader approach looks fundamentally at man as a sentient being or being in sentient nature.

This question of a broader scope of the concept of nature in Kant is still very much alive. In the framework of the tercentenary anniversary, in the monograph dedicated to Kant in the journal *Cuadernos salmantinos de filosofía*, the question is raised by Teruel, 2024. But it is not to this broadening of the concept of sensible nature that I will refer in this article.

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<sup>2</sup> I have taken these keys into account, as far as the first of these two contexts is concerned, in Andaluz, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Among which, Andaluz, 2005, 2007, 2013a, 2013b, 2015a, 2015b, 2016.

The point I intend to address here is that of the relation of the thinking self and the person or personal identity, as they are treated in the third paralogism of the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, with the question of conflict between nature and freedom.

In this Paralogism Kant criticizes the reasoning of rational psychology, which bases the claim that the soul is a person on the assumption of the numerical identity of the soul. However, despite the critique, the question is not trivial for transcendental philosophy, for the thinking self constitutes one of the problematics in which the great Kantian issue -of whether the only order to which we can adhere is the order of nature- is at stake. Indeed, that this conflict involves the question of our «thinking self» is made clear, for example, in a text of the Transcendental Dialectic on Antinomies, in which Kant relates the ideas of reason to the ultimate ends of men; thus, among the questions he raises is the following: «[...] whether there is anywhere, perhaps in my thinking self, an indivisible and indestructible unity, or whether is nothing but that which is divisible and perishable» (KrV A 463/B4). This is one of the two aspects in which the connection of the third paralogism with the conflict between nature and freedom is highlighted. In this first aspect, the question is whether or not the third paralogism's discourse on the thinking self places the thinking self in an order other than the mechanical natural order.

However, the third paralogism is articulable in Kantian philosophy of freedom in another aspect, too, which is most directly addressed in the Kantian text; I am referring to the question of person. Usually, when one speaks of the concept of person in Kant, one refers to the notion formulated in his practical philosophy, where person alludes to the universal legislative capacity of human beings with respect to their existence; *a priori* legislation that situates us in an intelligible order of things, independent of the natural mechanical order of mere things, against which we mark ourselves as ends in themselves (KpV, AA 05:87, 162; GMS, AA 04: 438).

Even so, it is also worth asking whether, in addition, and before practical philosophy, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* there is not a concept of person.

After all, the question of person involves the question of the *self*; indeed, according to a passage in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, person refers to my «invisible self» (*Selbst*) (KpV, AA 05, 162). On the other hand, in *Anthropology in the pragmatic sense*, we find a concept of person that alludes to man's capacity to represent himself, to represent his «I» (*Ich*); here, person refers to the issue of personal identity; for we are told that thanks to «the unity of consciousness amidst all the changes that can affect it, it is one and the same person», features that place it above all other beings on earth and distinguish it, «by its rank and dignity, from *things*» (Anth, AA 07: 127). Now, this sense of the notion of person seems to link up with Kant's discourse in the third paralogism, so that the Kantian concept of person could also include its power to represent itself as self or consciousness of its identity.

Starting from this approach, we will try to trace not only what Kant criticizes (*pars destruens*), but also what he admits.

## **2. Person and numerical identity of soul. The third paralogism**

What is at stake in the third paralogism, entitled “of personality”, is the assertion of rational psychology that the soul is a person.

Rational psychology bases this assertion on the conscience of the «numerical identity of its Self» in different times<sup>4</sup>.

One of the most striking aspects of the third paralogism is Kant's use of the term «soul», when throughout the *Critique* he simply refers to the «I». For this reason, it is worth taking a moment to consider what Kant means by soul.

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<sup>4</sup> «What is conscious of the numerical identity of its Self at different times, is a person (*Person*).

Now, the soul is etc.

Thus, it is a person» (KrV, A361).

Regarding the first premise, Matías Oroño highlights the similarity with Locke's concept of person, as set out in Book II of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oroño, 2017: 112). Cf. Locke, 1998, XXVII, 10: 247ff.; on Locke's personal identity, also see Murillo, 2023: 144-147.

At the beginning of the *Paralogisms*, the soul is understood as the «I, as a thinking being», as opposed to the body: «*I (Ich)*, as thinking, am an object of the inner sense, and am called “soul” (*Seele*). That which is the object of the outer sense is called “body” (*Körper*)» (KrV, A342 / B400).

This «*I*» is the so-called «*I-think*», which «serves only to introduce all thinking as belonging to consciousness» (KrV, A 341-342 / B 399-400).

The I, thus understood, «as a thinking being», constitutes the «object of a psychology», which can be defined as a «rational doctrine of the soul» (KrV, A342 / B 400). It is designated «rational» in the sense that it claims to derive all knowledge about the soul from the *self*, independently of all experience: «“I think (*Ich denke*)” is thus the sole text of rational psychology, from which it is to develop its entire wisdom» (KrV, A 343 / B 401).

The ground of this doctrine is the representation «I» (KrV, A345 / B 404), devoid of content, «of which we cannot even say that it is a concept, but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept» (KrV, A346 / B404).

Note in the following text Kant’s connection with, but, at the same time, distinction between the *thinking I* and the *thoughts*:

Through this I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = x, which is recognized only through the thoughts that are its predicates, and about which, in abstraction, we can never have even the least concept (KrV, A346 / B404).

As we say, from the «I think», rational psychology claims to deduce all its knowledge about the soul. Now, among this knowledge, there is precisely that which refers to personal identity.

According to the third paralogism, as we have already noted, the soul is a person, a statement or conclusion that has its ground in the (minor) premise that the soul is conscious of the numerical identity of itself at different times.

The first thing to notice in the first edition's version is that Kant directs his analysis towards the notion of the «numerical identity» of the self or subject.

In his analysis, he begins by considering our knowledge «the numerical identity of an external object through experience» (KrV, A 361). He says that in order to know this numerical identity, we have to attend to the *permanence* of this object, to which, as a subject, the other determinations refer, and to observe the identity of this object in time, while its determinations change (KrV, A 362). The numerical identity of this object, therefore, refers to the fact that it remains the same object through time. According to the Kantian conception of substance, what is permanent in the object is substance<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, this does not apply to the numerical identity of the self at different times<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> In the first analogy of experience, the connection between substance and identity can be viewed regarding relation to external objects: «[...] which persist, in relation to which alone all temporal relations of appearances can be determined, is substance in the appearance, i.e., the real (*Reale*) in the appearance, which as the substratum of all change al remains the same» (KrV, A182 / B 225).

<sup>6</sup> Based on these passages, Kant's text does not seem to fit with Strawson's interpretation, which claims criteria of empirical identity for the concept of a numerically identical subject, such as the body (Strawson, 1966: 163-164; 166-170). Kant explicitly rejects, as we have seen, any reference to the human body. Although it is true, as Strawson argues, that there is a text in the first *Critique* (in the version of the Paralogisms of the second edition) in which Kant writes: «the persistence of the soul, merely as an object of the inner sense, remains unproved, and even unprovable, although its persistence in life, where the thinking being (as a human being) is at the same time an object of outer sense, is clear of itself» (KrV, B415). But this is not the permanence referred to in rational psychology, which aims to argue for a persistence of the soul independent of the body, i.e., «beyond life» (KrV, B415). The same could be said of the interpretation offered by Rodríguez Hernández, 2023; following Strawson, he argues for the contribution of the body to personal identity. I do not deny that these approaches are not admissible as developments based on Kant; but I do not see that it fits with Kant's discourse to assign a role to the body in favor of the permanence of the soul, as the ground of personal identity, which is what the third paralogism is about.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that in this step, in which Kant differentiates the numerical identity of external objects from the numerical identity of the self (or in other words, in which he does not reduce the numerical identity of the self to the numerical identity of an external object), we get a hint of what constitutes one of the characteristic features of his notion of personhood: namely, its distinction from *mere things*.

### 3. *Self-identity and Consciousness*

First, Kant begins by affirming the numerical identity of the self. But the question is how this numerical identity is to be understood. To do so, let us consider the following fragment of the third paralogism:

But now I am an object of inner sense, and all time is merely the form of inner sense. Consequently, I relate each and every one of my successive determinations to the *numerically identical Self*<sup>7</sup> in all time, i.e., in the form of the inner intuition of myself (KrV, A 362).

In my opinion, this passage may be interpreted as follows: Insofar as the different representations or intuitions of objects are determinations of my inner sense and the form of this is time (so that these representations have the form of successive determinations or different determinations of time)<sup>8</sup>, I become aware of myself (I internally intuit myself) as that identical thing, to which all my successive determinations refer.

Now, it is in this «inner intuition of myself», in this self-consciousness or self-awareness, as the unity to which the various successive determinations refer, that the numerical identity of the I in different times consists<sup>9</sup>. Kant goes so far as to write:

[...] the personality of the soul must be regarded not as inferred but rather as a completely identical proposition of self-consciousness in time [...] it really says no more than that in the whole time in which I am conscious of myself, I am conscious of this

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<sup>7</sup> The italics are mine.

<sup>8</sup> On this, also see KrV, A 98-A 99; A 101.

<sup>9</sup> This association of personal identity with conscience is already found in Locke. See Daros, 2009: 6. According to Locke, «Consciousness makes personal identity» (Locke, 1998: 241).



time as belonging to the unity of my Self, and it is all the same whether I say that this whole time is in Me, as an individual unity, or that I am to be found with numerical identity, in all of this time (KrV, A 362).

The central idea is that the personal identity or numerical identity of the self at different times is resolved in *consciousness*. Kant expressly states: «The identity of the person is therefore inevitably to be encountered in my own consciousness» (KrV, A 362). This identity consists of the consciousness of ourselves in different times, where we could say that time and consciousness are not foreign to each other.

We said above that I am the object of the internal sense. Let us now place ourselves in the point of view of an *external observer*, so that I am the object of his external intuition. This observer, in so far as I am the object of his external intuition (and as it corresponds to the objects of our external intuitions), will also begin by situating me in time; but this time is not that of *my* sensibility, but of his. Therefore, he cannot be aware of my identity (KrV, A 362-363).

In other words, the identity of the self is not the object of external intuition; an external observer cannot be aware of my identity, which is also another way of expressing Kant's very close connection between my identity and my own consciousness.

At this point, it is also worth mentioning the irreducibility of the person to a thing, to which we alluded earlier; one might even think, with this emphasis on identity as self-consciousness, that Kant is pointing to the transition from the *what* to the *who* in the notion of person; so that the person is not a *what*, but a *who*<sup>10</sup>.

Another step (a fundamental step in Kantian argumentation) consists of affirming that this identity linked to the consciousness of myself in different times is only a *logical* identity, which Kant distinguishes from identity understood in the sense of «objective permanence of one's own self» (KrV, A 363), and which he also takes up with the expression «numerical

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<sup>10</sup> On this difference, see González Fernández, 2022.

identity of my subject». In the following, we will focus on these distinctions.

#### 4. *The identity of the self as a logical identity and its development in Analytics*

According to the third paralogism, the identity that Kant admits is a *logical* identity of the I, according to which the I is the condition of possibility of the connection between my representations. However, from this logical identity, understood as consciousness of myself in different times and in the indicated sense, that is, as the condition of possibility of the connection between my thoughts or my representations<sup>11</sup>, the «numerical identity of my subject» (KrV, A 363) does not follow.

In other words, Kant distinguishes between the logical identity of the self (or «numerically identical self» through all my successive determinations), which he interprets as self-consciousness at different times, and which is the condition of possibility of the connection between representations, on the one hand, and «the numerical identity of my subject» or «objective permanence of the self», which cannot be demonstrated based on the logical identity.

Before advancing to the Kantian critique of the concept of identity as «numerical identity of my subject» or as «objective permanence of the self», as it appears in the third paralogism, we will allude to the Kantian treatment of identity in paragraph 16 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, belonging to the «Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding», of the second edition of the KrV, which we will complement with some parallel texts of the version of the first edition. In doing so, I will try to show that the idea of a logical identity, as it appears in the third

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<sup>11</sup> It could be said that, at a theoretical level, the identity of the self is dependent on the different determinations of the self; for without them it would not be aware of its identity; in this sense, it could be said as did Rivera de Rosales, that, in contrast to solipsism, in Kant, there is no self without the world (Rivera de Rosales, 1994: 6). Following this, a demarcation of the Kantian position with respect to the Cartesian model, the fourth paralogism and, before that, his refutation of idealism, are fundamental. In this respect, also see Lazos, 1998: 35ff.

paralogism, has its foundation and finds its development in these places of the transcendental analytic.

In paragraph 15, belonging to the same section, Kant deals with the subject of the «possibility of a combination (*Verbindung*) in general» (KrV, &15, B 129).

The combination of a variety cannot be given by the senses, nor can it be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; it is not given by objects but can only be realized by the subject. Such a combination is an act of the spontaneity of understanding, an act which Kant names synthesis (KrV, B.& 15, 129-130), which as we know is carried out according to rules of unity which are the *a priori* concepts of understanding (KrV, A 106, 110, 112). But, on the other hand, the concept of combination does not imply only the concept of a variety and that of its synthesis. The concept of combination also entails the concept of «unity of this diversity. To combine means to represent the synthetic unity of the diverse» (KrV, &15, B130-131).

This sentence («To combine means to represent to oneself the synthetic unity of the diverse») is decisive for the issue at hand, for Kant maintains that «the representation of such a unity» does not arise from the combination of the given representations, but that it is the combination that makes this unity possible; and he adds that this unity refers to a higher ground<sup>12</sup>.

What is this higher ground? This higher ground is, according to paragraph 16, pure apperception, which, as we shall see, precisely means the consciousness or representation of an *identical self*. Let us have a look.

Paragraph 16 is entitled «On the original-synthetic unity of apperception». The starting point of human knowledge is the representations of

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<sup>12</sup> «We must [...] seek this unity (as qualitative unity, &12) someplace higher, namely in that which itself contains the ground of unity of different concepts in judgements, and hence of the possibility of understanding, even in its logical use» (KrV, &16, B131).

sensible intuition. But the condition for object-knowledge to arise from them is their relation to «the I think» (KrV, & 16, B132)<sup>13</sup>.

Now, this «I think» is understood by Kant as an *identical* subject, for he states: «Thus all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the *I think* in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered» (KrV, & 16, B 132), where what must be emphasized is the idea of the «same» subject.

Kant calls «pure» or «original» apperception (to distinguish it from the «empirical») the representation or consciousness of the self as an *identical* self to which the diverse representations of intuition bear a necessary relation (or, in other words, the representation of the common belonging of the diversity of the representations of intuition to *one and the same* consciousness). And despite the necessary relationship with representations, such consciousness is not reduced to these, but is «an act of spontaneity», i.e., «it cannot be considered as belonging to sensibility» (KrV, &16, B132).

It is important to highlight the fact that Kant considers this self-consciousness an «act of spontaneity»; for Kant, everything that passes through the filter of sensibility «belongs to the realm of natural necessity» (Arana, 2007). Instead, this identical self is prior to experience, as shown below.

According to the first edition's version, this «pure, original» apperception, which he interprets as a «numerically identical» self, is in fact distinguished from a merely empirical consciousness, which is changeable; Kant goes so far as to use the expression «fixed (or stable) and permanent self» (*stehendes oder bleibendes Selbst*) to indicate what cannot be supplied by empirical consciousness (KrV, A107). This same contrast is noted in the version of the second edition: «the empirical consciousness that accompanies diverse representations is, in itself, dispersed and has no relation to the identity of the subject» (KrV, &16, B 133).

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<sup>13</sup> Bonaccini interprets the Kantian idea that the «I-think must be able to accompany all my representations» in the sense that I have to be aware of them (Bonaccini, 2009: 49).

Now, it is this necessary relation of the diversity of representations to the same subject or common belonging of the diversity of representations to this identical self that makes the combination of representations, and thus knowledge, possible; in this sense, Kant speaks of «transcendental unity of self-consciousness» or «transcendental apperception» (KrV, &16, B132)<sup>14</sup>.

In the first edition's version, Kant introduces the expression «transcendental affinity» to refer to the ground that facilitates the connection of the diverse according to laws. This ground is none other than the original apperception or «numerical identity» of «self-consciousness» (of which Kant states that «it is certain *a priori*»). To it, everything diverse must belong as to constitute knowledge; that is to say, thanks to the common belonging of the diverse of representations to the identity of consciousness, the connection of the diverse, and hence knowledge, is possible (KrV, A 114).

So far it seems that the identity of self-consciousness or the identical self of the Analytic is situated in an order that is not reducible to the mechanical natural one; it belongs to spontaneity; it is situated above the combination of representations, making it possible.

But things take on a different aspect if we notice that, conversely and at the same time, both in paragraph 16 and in the parallel texts of the version of the first edition, Kant establishes a relationship of *interdependence* between awareness of the subject's identity and the possibility of synthesis<sup>15</sup>.

On the one hand, consciousness of the identity of the self is only possible as consciousness of synthesis:

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<sup>14</sup> Also see the version of the first edition, KrV, A107.

<sup>15</sup> Along these lines, in the second edition's version, Kant distinguishes between «*analytic* unity of apperception», which consists of the representation of the identity of my consciousness within the representations, and «*synthetic* unity of apperception», which refers to the fact that I can combine the diversity of the representations in a self-consciousness (KrV, &16, B133-134). Analytic unity and synthetic unity are mutually implied (KrV, &17, B138).

the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time the consciousness of an equally necessary unity of synthesis of all appearances in accordance with concepts (KrV, A 108).

This means we arrive at the thought of the identity of the self because of our awareness that in it, we can combine a diversity of representations given in intuition:

this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis of representations and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis (KrV, & 16, B 133).

At the same time however, the synthesis or synthetic unity of the diversity of the given representations is only possible through their common belonging to an *identical* self, to the *same* consciousness (KrV, &16, B134).

Becoming aware of the possibility of the synthesis of representations is equivalent to becoming aware of my identical self; I become aware of my identical self as the condition of possibility of the connection between representations. And, reciprocally, it is this identity of the I, which accompanies all my representations, that makes the combination or synthesis possible<sup>16</sup>.

Kant calls the «*a priori* consciousness» of a synthesis of representations the «original *synthetic* unity of apperception» (KrV, B 135-136). This «original *synthetic* unity of apperception» is the ground of every possible use of the intellect, for without a combination nothing can be thought or known (KrV, & 17, B 136-137). But, at the same time, representations are combinable only through their unification in one and the *same* consciousness or *identical* self (KrV, & 17, B 137).

In short (and this is what we have tried to show in this section), it is undeniable that in the Analytic Kant affirms the identity of the self. But

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<sup>16</sup> Without «a synthesis of the manifold given in an intuition» the «thoroughgoing identity of self-consciousness could not be thought [...] I am [...] conscious of the identical self in regard to the manifold of the representations that are given to me in an intuition because I call them all together *my* representations, which constitute *one*» (KrV, &16, B135).

it is an identity of the self or of consciousness, of a *logical* character, which is what Kant admits again in the third paralogism, as we have already seen.

### 5. *Critique of identity as objective permanence of the self*

As we indicated above, from this logical identity, which Kant sets forth in the Analytic, the «numerical identity of my subject» does not follow:

The identity of the consciousness of Myself in different times is therefore only a formal condition of my thoughts and their connection (*Zusammenhanges*), but it does not prove at all the *numerical identity of my subject*<sup>17</sup> (*Subjekts*), in which –despite the logical identity of the I– a change can go on that does not allow it to keep its identity; and this even though all the while the identical sounding «I» is assigned to it, which in every other state, even in the replacement of the subject, still keeps in view the thought of the previous subject, and thus could also pass it along to the following one” (KrV, A 363)<sup>18</sup>.

In the following text, it can be seen that Kant understands by «numerical identity of my subject» the idea of the self as something permanent, distinct from the consciousness we have of the identity of the self that accompanies our representations:

we cannot judge even from our own consciousness whether as soul we are persisting or not, because we ascribe to our identical Self only that of which we are conscious; and so we must necessarily judge that we are the very same in the whole of the time of which we are conscious (KrV, A 364).

According to Kant, whether I am the same also from an objective point of view or «from the standpoint of someone else», can no longer be accepted as valid, for the only permanent thing I find in my soul is the representation of the I that accompanies the representations, so that I cannot know whether the I is not something that «flows» just like the rest of them:

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<sup>17</sup> The italics are mine.

<sup>18</sup> According to Bonaccini, it is one thing to know or become aware of myself as a logical subject; it is another to realize that the logical subject that I am is identical; that is, that I am always the same subject (Bonaccini, 2009: 50).

since in the soul we encounter no persisting appearance other than the representation of «I», which accompanies and connects all of them, we can never make out whether this I (a mere thought) does not flow as well as all the other thoughts that are linked to one another through it (KrV, A364).

The key to the intelligibility of this position, (i.e. that I cannot know if the I is not something that «flows just like the rest of our thoughts») lies in the relation of interdependence that Kant establishes between the identity of the subject and the possibility of synthesis; so that the consciousness of the identity of the I is only possible as consciousness of the synthesis; in other words, it is due to the solidary connection that Kant establishes between the I and the representations; an argument that follows from the Analytic and that he will also develop in the fourth paralogism, in line with his refutation of idealism (KrV, B274-294), situated in the Transcendental Analytic, after the «postulates of empirical thinking» (KrV, A226 / B274ff.)<sup>19</sup>.

But, in addition, in the critique of the «numerical identity of my subject» in the third paralogism, there is another, more explicit foundation, which comes from the Paralogism of Substantiality (first paralogism).

In this regard, it must be said that one thing is the (logical) identity of the self and another is the *substantiality* of the self<sup>20</sup>, i.e., the concept of the self as a permanent *object*. According to the version of the third paralogism in the second edition, the «identity of the subject, of which I can

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<sup>19</sup> Here are some authors who insist on the inseparability between self-consciousness and representations as one of the characteristics of the Kantian approach. For example, Klemme, commenting on §25 of the “Deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding”, in which §16 is taken up, writes: «[...] if nothing is given to me for thinking, then I cannot be conscious of myself [...] I am conscious of myself by relating myself to something else, namely to representations that have been given to me to think» (Kremme, 2016: 118). According to Rivera de Rosales, «only because I can unite a multiplicity of given representations in consciousness, is it possible for me to represent to myself the identity of consciousness in representations» (Rivera de Rosales, 1994: 18). In other words, «a possibility of synthesis without anything to synthesize is void» (Marciales, 2008: 161). Following this, also see Lazos, 1998: 35ff.

<sup>20</sup> In this respect Kant differs notably from Leibniz. On the connection between identity and substantiality in Leibniz, see Sánchez, M. and Villanueva, N. (2011); *idem* (2012); also see Murillo, 2023: 143-153.



become conscious in all representations» is only an «analytic proposition», based on «a mere analysis of the proposition I-think», which is not sufficient «to prove» «the identity of the person, by which we would understand the consciousness of the identity of its own substance as a thinking being in all changes of state» (KrV, B407-408).

Thus, in the Kantian perspective, the idea of the self as a permanent object is equivalent to the idea of the self as substance, the object of criticism in the first paralogism, which, in turn, contains a direct relation to the conditions of objective significance of the concept of substance, as established by the Transcendental Analytic. For lack of space, I cannot elaborate on this argument here<sup>21</sup>.

I shall limit myself to pointing out that in the critique of the first paralogism, Kant shows that it is not epistemologically justified to assert that the soul is a substance, if by substance we mean an object or a permanent substratum of our thoughts; although Kant introduces this specification: We can admit the proposition «the soul is substance», provided we do not interpret the concept of substance in the sense of a real substance and derive from it such consequences as durability through change and even immortality, as rational psychology intends (KrV, A350-351).

In short, by way of substance, it is not valid to affirm that the soul is a person, meaning «the consciousness of the identity of its own substance as a thinking being in all changes of state» (KrV, B408). Although Kant introduces a precision analogous to that introduced in the Paralogism of Substantiality: We can continue with the concept of personality, insofar as this concept merely indicates «a unity of the subject which is otherwise unknown to us, but in whose determinations there is a thoroughgoing connection of apperception» (KrV, A 365).

However, this does not represent an extension of our «self-knowledge» (*Selbsterkenntnis*), nor does it allow us to draw conclusions about «the uninterrupted continuous duration of the subject drawn from the mere concept of the identical self» (KrV, A366), as rational psychology claims.

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<sup>21</sup> I have discussed this in Andaluz, 2023:158-162.

## 6. Conclusion

From the above analyses, we may conclude that it is one thing to be aware of the identity of the self at different times, as a condition of the possibility of cohesion between representations, and quite another to admit that this self remains the same, independently of the representations. Now, it is the latter, the objective permanence of the self, which is necessary, according to rational psychology (an assumption which Kant accepts) to affirm that the soul or thinking self is a person.

However, it may be asked -paraphrasing Strawson- whether, in fact, with the third paralogism we do not gain rather more, though not as much as rational psychology wants (Strawson, 1966: 174).

In the first place, and with regard to the first of the two aspects involved in the relation of the third paralogism to the conflict between nature and freedom, does the logical identity of the self, the only one Kant admits, not already place our Self in an order different from the natural mechanical one? I am inclined to think it does. For this consciousness of identity is not identified with the combination of representations or syntheses, but is a higher ground, which makes the synthesis itself possible. The I, which is understood on a logical level as an identical I, accompanies the representations of intuition; these must become conscious; the I thus bears a necessary relation to them. But it is not limited to these. The self-consciousness of the «I» to which the diversity of the representations of the intuition bears a necessary relation is an act of spontaneity<sup>22</sup>; it does not belong to sensibility; it is prior to experience, thus making it possible. In critical philosophy, spontaneity means an activity which is not determined, but determinant.

It is quite another matter whether the numerical identity of our subject or objective permanence may be derived from the consciousness of our logical identity; this is the derivation that cannot be made, for we only

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<sup>22</sup> I agree with P. J. Teruel's emphasis, within the framework of the philosophy of mind, on the spontaneity of self-consciousness; and not only of moral consciousness, but also of reflective consciousness (Teruel, 2008: 292-296).

become conscious of the identity of the self to the extent that we are conscious of the unity of the synthesis.

The interdependence that Kant establishes between the self-consciousness of the identity of the self and the consciousness of the unity of the synthesis cannot mean, in my opinion, the reduction of self-consciousness to the act of synthesis. What it means, as I see it, is that the act of the synthesis is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the self-consciousness of the identity of the self; just as the self-consciousness of the identity of the self which accompanies the representations of intuition is the *ratio essendi* of the synthesis; in this interdependence it is not a question of reduction, but rather of two «faces»<sup>23</sup>.

That the *a priori* components and dimensions of human knowledge are not reduced to its functional aspect but can also be conceived independently of its gnoseological exercise, is emphasized in some places in Kant's work<sup>24</sup>. But, above all, it is that Kant explicitly states in a text on the third antinomy that certain faculties of man cannot be reduced to sensibility; and not only with regard to practical reason but also to his theoretical faculty (KrV, A546-547/B574-575). It is true that this is empirically conditioned; but being conditioned is not the same as being *determined*.

Secondly, and now turning to the other aspect of the relation of the third paralogism to the conflict between nature and freedom, that is, to the question of personhood, does the logical identity of the self, the self-consciousness of its identity in the midst of its representations, really tell us nothing about its personhood? I do not quite see that the concept of personhood must necessarily be associated with that of the objective permanence of the self or substantiality of the self, an association made by rational psychology and which Kant, as we have seen, accepts.

Rather, it should be said that Kant's demarcation of the identity of the self (logical identity) from substantiality represents an indication of the Kantian separation of the concept of person from mere things, which is

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<sup>23</sup> I take this expression from Órdenes, 2024: 53.

<sup>24</sup> For example, on the categories in a note by Kant, in KrV, B166.

one of the crucial features of the notion of person in practical philosophy. In this sense, I believe that the Kantian position points towards those positions that situate personhood along the lines of a *who*, rather than considering it a *what*.

One of my questions is: Why is it that this awareness of the identity of the self (logical identity) which Kant admits in the third paralogism and which is consistent with the analyzed texts of §16 and others belonging to the «Transcendental Deduction» can *no longer* be affirmed as a person?

In my opinion, one of the great contributions of Kantian philosophy to the concept of the person lies in having situated this concept in the dimension of man's autonomy and self-isolation. This is evident in the field of practical reason, as we said in the Introduction.

But the spontaneity of the theoretical faculty also implies the capacity to legislate; in this case, however, it is not a matter of the capacity to legislate in relation to our existence (which is what the notion of personhood in the realm of practical reason properly refers to), but in relation to nature in general. And, on the other hand, it is true that our legislative capacity over nature does not necessarily position us above nature<sup>25</sup>.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the concept of person that Kant formulates in the *Anthropology in a pragmatic sense*, where, as we have already indicated in the Introduction, we are told that thanks to «the unity of consciousness amidst all the changes that can affect it, it is one and the same person, features that place it above all other beings on earth and distinguish it, «by its rank and dignity, from *things*» (Anth, AA 07: 127). Now, this sense of the notion of personhood seems to link up with Kant's discourse in the third paralogism; so that the Kantian concept of personhood could also include its power to represent itself as itself or consciousness of the identity of itself, even if this consciousness takes place in the act of synthesis.

In fact, Kant himself emphasized certain renditions of the third paralogism. Therefore, he does not end up dismissing rational psychology as

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<sup>25</sup> See on this, Andaluz, 2013: 330-340.

useless. On the contrary, he believes that rational psychology, purified by critique, is necessary to defend our thinking self from the danger of *materialism* (KrV, A383), which is directly related to transcendental idealism. Furthermore, he expressly states that the purely logical concept of «personality» «is necessary for us in view of the practical field and is sufficient for it» (KrV, A365 - 366).

In my opinion, the concept of the logical identity of the self represents a not inconsiderable link to the Kantian concept of personhood. Although it is true that the logical identity of the self, the I-think of apperception, is not yet the person of practical philosophy, and that, for Kant, the proper place to locate personal identity is practical reason<sup>26</sup>, the I-think of apperception is not reduced to the unity of the synthesis, but seems to point also to our «invisible I (Selbst)» (KpV, AA05: 162), to «our authentic I» (*unserem eigentlichen Selbst*) (GMS, AA 04: 461, 457).

In fact, in the final passages of the Paralogisms, in the version of the second edition, Kant emphasizes a distinction between the «subject of consciousness» and «thinking». «Thinking» is «the logical function»; but «by no means does it present the subject of consciousness»<sup>27</sup>. However, in addition to the order of knowing, there is the *order of being*. I agree with Strawson when he states that the I-think of apperception is not simply a connection of experiences; «it represents also the tangential point of contact between the field of noumena and the world of appearances" (Strawson, 1966: 173). In this sense, he quotes the following text from the Paralogisms: «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» (KrV, 429)<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> See on this subject a passage from the end of the Paralogisms, in the version of the second edition (KrV, 430-431).

<sup>27</sup> This «subject» is, in my opinion, the «x» which appears at the beginning of the treatment of the Paralogisms (KrV, A346/B404).

<sup>28</sup> I have also found this distinction between appearances and being in J. Arana, on the subject of consciousness, in the context of the current debate on neuroscience (Arana, 2023: 300).

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