

Kant and the bounds of psychology

Christine Lopes

Philosophy and psychology have long been neighbour disciplines. Descartes, according to whom the result of a careful examination of the grounds for our beliefs is knowledge of self, set the subject matter of this neighbourhood. The central question for philosophers since Descartes has been to demonstrate that self is an object of knowledge: is it, as Descartes himself believed, that a reflection upon the nature of the proposition 'I think' should provide us with that object? Or is it that the nature of thinking, and so of the self that we grasp in thinking, is perhaps better described in more empirical terms, as Patricia Kitcher urges us to believe, as the act of performing some basic cognitive tasks? As for Kant's own view on the matter, psychology is physiology of a subject's experience of his/her mental states. Furthermore, psychology does not add anything to a critical examination of the use of metaphysical concepts in idealistic explanations of the possibility of objective knowledge. In fact, Kant thinks of his major work, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as groundbreaking precisely in that it does not make concessions to psychology in its argument for transcendental idealism. The *Critique* is groundbreaking in that it shows that experience of objects, including thus experience of self as an object, has its possibility grounded on a logical connection between general forms that judgement about perceivable things takes and the acts of combining, reproducing, and re-cognising a manifold of intuitions in the concept of an object. This connection between certain forms of judgement and different mental acts involved in conceptualisation of a manifold of intuitions is demonstrated by a deduction of concepts without which, so Kant

argues, the concept itself of an object in general is impossible. Accordingly, the connection between forms of judgements and mental acts involved in conceptualisation is transcendental and *a priori*: transcendental in the sense that it sets conditions of possibility of experience of things as objects, and *a priori* in the sense that it applies to any representation of an object with necessity and universality. Conversely, psychology of self as well as empirical psychology would require that concepts were deduced from the content rather than from the form of judgements, that is, deduced from what is already the final product of mental processes responsible for turning affections of the senses into conceptual mental content.

Despite Kant's own judgement about what he achieves in the *Critique*, some claim that he constructs his theory of knowledge with psychological arguments and explanations. The present paper discusses this major claim about the nature of the method in the Kantian philosophy. I do not provide a history of this claim in what follows. Nevertheless, it is important to make clear where I stand in the ever-growing number of studies on Kant's possible debt to psychology in the formulation of his theory of knowledge. I defend, in general, the view that the use of *mental* (as I shall here call for want of a better term) arguments or explanations does not necessarily imply doing psychology. And I claim, in particular, that this applies to Kant's transcendental philosophy. By mental argument or explanation I mean an argument or an explanation employed in the service of understanding the process of conceptualisation in its different levels. The arguments and explanations that we find in Kant's deduction of the categories are, as I see them, example of mental arguments and explanations. By psychology, I mean an investigation on what counts distinctively as a mind's activity in its relation to bodies. This investigation can be empirical and thus descriptive of phenomena that are cognised by the mind as the embodiment of brain activity. Although this definition of psychology is the one that most people have in mind, psychology can also be an investigation that is concerned with formal conditions that must be satisfied in order for the concepts of mind and body to have objective validity. The latter describes Descartes's philosophical enterprise, and is designated by Kant 'rational psychology'.

The general philosophical claim that the present essay puts forward is this: That not every mental argument and explanation must, in order to stand, be verified by some piece of psychological knowledge. The Kantian claim that I make is that Kant's arguments and explanations concerning what happens to any manifold of intuition in perception, thinking, and judgement do not need, in order to stand, to be verified by psychological premises, that is, by some discussion of what in each of these cognitive stances counts as distinctively as mind's activity and what counts as a result of conceptualisation of sensory input. I construct my claim by considering what Kant designates 'rational psychology', or psychology of the subject of thinking, and to psychology understood as physiology or empirical psychology.

I believe that if we manage to distinguish use of mental arguments or explanations in philosophy from doing psychology in philosophy we do justice to philosophy, in general, and to Kant and his transcendental idealism, in particular. If there is an element of novelty in this essay, it certainly does not consist in trying to defend this view on a distinction between philosophical and psychological concerns. Indeed, if there is an element of novelty, it will have to lie in the fact that what has so far been tried among Kantian scholars is quite the opposite of what I set myself to do here. In a nutshell, it has been assumed that if Kant uses mental arguments or explanations then he might concede to psychology some role in the formulation of his theory of knowledge.

The works of Peter Strawson, Paul Guyer, Patricia Kitcher, and Karl Ameriks are central in the polemic about whether Kant's theory of knowledge is in debt to psychology. In the present essay, only Guyer's ideas exposed in the essay *Psychology and the Transcendental Deduction* will be given an account (Guyer 1989: pp.47-68). Guyer's aim in that essay is to show that key mental arguments and explanations found in the Transcendental Deduction (hereafter TD) cannot be considered psychological when judged in the light of empiricist criteria for psychological arguments and explanations. I defend an idea that is contrary to Guyer's: only in accordance with a Kantian criterion for psychological arguments and explanations can TD's mental arguments and explanations convincingly be proved not to entail doing psychology and to be thus non-psychological.

The present essay has the following structure. In the first part I present a general argument for holding that the use of mental argument or explanation and doing psychology do not necessarily come in the same theoretical package. In the second part, which divides into three sections, I discuss Guyer's strategy for defending TD against the charge of psychologism. In the first section, I argue that his strategy remains dubious in that it adopts empiricist criteria to show that certain key arguments and explanations in TD are not psychological. In the second section, I argue that two central claims made by Kant in TD, claims that Guyer urges us to consider psychological only in a trivial sense, can be considered trivial only if placed in the context of Kant's criticism of rational psychology. It would thus remain to be shown that TD is truly a response to empirical psychology, which is the task of the third and last section.

In the third and final part of the essay, I explicate in detail a distinction that appears in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter simply *Critique*) and that I had been working with already in the first two parts of the essay. I refer to the Kantian distinction between possibility and reality of concepts¹, which distinction Kant himself does not explicitly formulate but that I believe can clearly be seen at work throughout the *Critique*. In this third part of the essay, I argue that a Kantian criterion for psychological arguments and explanations can be drawn from that distinction. I will also argue that Kant employs the possible-real distinction in his transcendental philosophy as a methodological tool, namely in the critical examination of the extent to which the subject of thinking can cognise self and mind. So, if in the second part of the essay I will have argued that Kant criticizes both rational and empirical psychologies for using a real concept of self, while we can have only a possible concept of it, I now give a brief account of the concept of mind in the light of the possible-real distinction. I shall claim that psychology uses a real concept of mind whereas the formulation of mental arguments and explanations does not require more than a possible concept of mind.

I

It is possible to distinguish between the use of mental arguments or explanations and doing psychology. Let us take, for instance, Jerry Fodor's mental argument, confessedly inspired by Conan Doyle. It says that, since we are able to convince others simply by going with them through series of inferences, by going, as it were, from thought to thought (in 'trains of thoughts', to use Fodor's parlance), inference is a mental tool that provides thoughts with some truth-preserving property (Fodor 1990: p.21). Or take, for instance, the general mental explanation of cognitive acts as acts that are somewhat governed by the mental processes of thinking and judging. Neither Fodor's argument, nor this explanation of cognitive acts, poses the need to explain the work of the mind. In other words, their *plausibility* does not stand just as a first step towards some piece of psychological knowledge that could eventually prove them true.

I do not defend, of course, the view that this is the case for all mental arguments and explanations. Let us briefly analyse a paradigmatic mental argument that is also commonly taken to be plausible. The argument says (i) that I often find myself in the position of trying to understand actions and utterances, either of myself or of others, and (ii) that actions and utterances, either of myself or others, are often intelligible. The conclusion will be that mental states are intentional. The question now is how to justify the resultant belief that mental states are intentional. The argument certainly relies on the fact that we have some degree of awareness of human beings' psychologies.

¹ While there is not little to be discussed about the terms 'possibility', 'possible', 'real', and 'reality' in Kant's philosophy, I shall here simply restrict myself to a use of these terms in their broader sense. In their broader sense, 'possible' and 'possibility', on one side, and 'real' and 'reality', on the other side, simply mean, respectively, that which is required as a condition for empirical knowledge, and the property of cognitions for which there is available a corresponding actual perception. Accordingly, if somebody makes use of the real concept of, say, mind, that use presupposes that there is a corresponding actual perception for that concept. Conversely, if somebody makes use of the possible concept of mind, that use must fulfil certain conditions in order to be accepted as having validity beyond the structure of our intellect and imagination. I shall consider these conditions along the essay. Finally, the above explanation entitles one to take the possible-real distinction, or possibility-reality distinction, as analogous to the formal-substantial distinction.

Being aware of our own psychologies, we seem to think that we are also naturally equipped with a capacity to justify the belief in an intentional property of our mental states. In order to justify the belief in an intentional property of mental states we must be capable of knowing not only that mental states like hope and desire are directed at something, but also how it is possible for things that are not mental, such as a new pair of shoes or somebody's succeeding in the application for a much wished job, affect the mind and become mental content. So, how are truth conditions of the psychological proposition that mental states are intentional to be established? They cannot be established on the basis that we are capable of referring actions and utterances to something else as a condition of their intelligibility, that is, that we are capable of an interpretation of actions and utterances. For actions and utterances cannot be object of interpretation at all unless they are already, to a certain degree, intelligible to us – in which case, however, the question of whether mental states are intentional or not simply vanishes. The main alternative left is a naturalist one: the truth conditions of the proposition that mental states are intentional are to be established by some theory of perception based on physiological knowledge of mental processes.

On the other hand, the provision of psychological premises is not required in order to establish the truth status of Fodor's mental argument that inference is a mental tool that provides thoughts with a kind of truth-preserving property. Nor is it needed in order to establish the truth status of the explanation of cognitive acts as acts that are somewhat regulated by the mental processes of thinking and judging. Applying to our current discussion a major Kantian distinction that I will present in detail later in the essay, we must distinguish between possible and real concepts of mind. Fodor's argument as well as the explanation of cognitive acts mentioned above originate in the possible concept of mind, which is to say that they are part of an answer to the question of what conditions must be satisfied in conceptualisation. Conceptualisation must, for instance, involve mental processes that bear a truth-preserving property, so that cognitions are reproduced and arranged by cognitive faculties in different ways, again and again, in chains of inference without having their relation to events

misrepresented. By contrast, the real concept of mind is concerned with the determination of what corresponds in reality to this concept. The real concept of mind is thus the concept of a mind that is accessible to us, that is, whose activity in thinking, judging, perceiving, etc., can be examined. To read Fodor's argument and the explanation of the nature of the mental processes of thinking and judging as an argument and an explanation that use the real concept of mind is to sacrifice their legitimacy, which is based on their being simply (but not merely) plausible, and to ask how those mental processes themselves are actually possible.

So I here incidentally claim that it takes a considerable inferential step to conclude that the use of mental arguments/explanations always entails doing psychology. And what is it to conclude from one thing to the other? It is to conclude that if it is true that conceptualisation has the property of informing cognition – without which property we surely would not make any common [shared] sense of the world around us – then the content of concepts must be determined by mental processes involved in the reception of *data* that are not mental and in turning these affections into mental contents. But why cannot we believe that conceptualisation bears a property of informing cognition without having to have some understanding of mental processes to offer in support to that belief? There does not seem to be any compelling reason, either of logical or of psychological nature, to posit that conditional clause. There is no compelling psychological reason to call upon in defence of that clause. The truth of propositions about mental processes is normally established simply by more knowledge about these processes, namely empirical knowledge: to ask for the provision of knowledge of how cognition comes to assume conceptual form, and thus of the extent to which cognition preserves its objective reality in this process, actually begs the question. For a conceptual property of informing cognition has to be postulated in order for propositions, including those of empirical psychology, to bear some plausibility. Likewise, the truth of statements about logical tasks carried out by the mind is normally established by the appropriateness with which certain logical principles are deployed in reasoning.

Having shown that the use of mental arguments/explanation does not have to entail doing psychology, I want now to challenge Guyer's belief

that TD does not entail any form of psychology. I argue that in order to show that some of the key arguments and explanations with which Kant formulates TD are not psychological, it is not enough to show that they cannot be considered psychological in the light of empiricist criteria.

II

1. Guyer seeks in empiricist philosophies for criteria for psychological arguments and explanations. From Hume's philosophy, Guyer draws two criteria. The first criterion says that an argument or explanation is psychological if it claims that there is an intrinsic contingency in the way the mind combines a manifold of intuitions. The reason why empiricist philosophers argue for that contingency is that they believe that cognition in general depends on the moment in time that the mind is affected. Opposing this claim, Kant argues that time is the inner form of the subject of representation, and that, therefore, the order in which the subject of thinking combines, reproduces, and re-cognises the successively given manifold of intuitions in concepts of objects is a necessary one. Thus cognition in general does not depend, according to Kant, on the moment in time things affect the senses, whether the outer or the inner sense. So Guyer points out:

[T]he premises of a psychological argument or explanation must postulate the actual occurrence, indeed at moments that are at least in principle determinable, of specific forms of experience or inputs to the mind as well as of specific acts of mental processing or of reaction to these inputs. Thus, the Humean mechanism for causal inference cannot produce a current belief that an event of type C will be followed by another of type E unless the individual reaching this belief has actually experienced previous instances of E's following C's and actually had his tendency to vividly represent E's upon impressions of C's caused by this prior experience. (p.54)

The second criterion is also drawn from Hume's philosophy. It says that assertions on the nature of mental processes involved in the combination and reproduction of a manifold of intuitions bear contingent truth. (*idem*) Finally, the third criterion is found in Locke's, Tetens's, and, again, Hume's philosophies, according to Guyer. The third criterion claims an empirical method, namely the method of self-observation of mental states, to be adequate for an investigation into the nature of mind (p.55). Kant's answer to these psychological ideas is a transcendental deduction of concepts that determine *a priori* the synthesis, or the combination and unification of a manifold of intuitions into the concept of an object.

Once these three criteria are in place, Guyer announces that he will prove that none of them is actually satisfied by Kant's epistemological premises. He will adopt a strategy designed to respond to Professor Strawson's characterization and charge of psychologism in the *Critique*.

What I will consider...is a strategy for the deduction that does not depend upon any claim that transcendental apperception itself is synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the numerical identity of the self, but only on the more general premise that any form of knowledge (the alleged *a priori* certainty of the unity of the self here included) requires combination of a manifold. (...) My argument then will be that even though this strategy for the deduction depends upon the premise that knowledge requires the combination of a manifold, it is not psychological in the sense I have outlined. (p.57)

Guyer argues that the conclusions that Kant draws from this general premise, that knowledge requires combination of a manifold, are psychological only in a trivial sense. The first of Kant's conclusions is (a) that a manifold of intuitions must be combined in a temporal order in such a way that this manifold can be recognised in the concept of an object. The second conclusion is (b) that in order for representations to be re-cognised in the concept of an object, they must also be determined as objects of cognition in accordance with functions of thought. For a manifold of intuitions must be combined in

a temporal order in such a way that this manifold is re-cognised in the concept of an object, but time is, according to Kant, form of intuition of the subject of thoughts.

Both (a) and (b) are psychological in a trivial sense because, according to Guyer, the basic premises adopted here by Kant cannot in themselves provide material for arguments or explanations concerning the constitution of human beings' minds. In support of this claim, Guyer calls upon a comparison between the work of the mind and the work of computers:

In Kant's deduction the postulation of even the actual occurrence of an act embodying the synthesis of recognition is only the conclusion of an argument, the premises of which – the successive input of manifold of intuition and the need for an interpretative reproduction of it – are not themselves psychological. Thus Kant's deduction may even have a psychological conclusion without being a psychological argument. Somewhat more strongly, we might put this point thus: while the essential steps in Kant's argument – that the manifold must be successively experienced and subsequently interpreted – may be matters of fact, these are facts of life rather than facts of psychology. After all, computers, too, must subsequently process the data that have been antecedently and successively entered into them – and they need some rules to do this. We certainly should not give a nominal answer to the question whether computers can think by calling this a psychological fact. (p.67)

I am not sure, however, that the comparison between the work of the human mind and the work of computers can do for Guyer what he wants it to do. The analogy is false in that Guyer deploys the term 'formal' in a sense that does not apply to Kant's transcendental logic. Indeed, it is a key notion of Kant's transcendental logic that what is formal (subjective) in cognition, albeit determinant of the matter of cognitions, is itself deduced from the nature of the act of judgement and must therefore keep, in the case of judgements that have a sensible content or that refer to sensible *data* – which are the ones that suits Guyer's analogy – the validity of its application limited to contingent *data*.

On the other hand, it is certainly true that Kant's conception of time, so central in Kant's explanation of the possibility of experience and knowledge of objects, is very important in a dispute with empiricist views on the task of psychology. Indeed, Kant's argument for a transcendental deduction of concepts (categories) that determine *a priori* a synthesis of intuitions is possible only after he explains how synthesis of a manifold of intuitions is possible in the first place. Kant explains the possibility of this synthesis in connection with time as form of inner sense:

That which determines the inner sense is the understanding and its original faculty of combining the manifold of intuition, *i.e.*, of bringing it under an apperception (as that on which its very possibility rests). Now since in us humans the understanding is not itself a faculty of intuitions, and even if these were given in sensibility cannot take them up *into itself*, in order as it were to combine the manifold of *its own* intuition, thus its synthesis, considered in itself alone, is nothing other than the unity of the action of which it is conscious as such even without sensibility, but through which it is capable of itself determining sensibility internally with regard to the manifold that may be given to it in accordance with the form of its intuition. Under the designation of a *transcendental synthesis of the imagination*, it therefore exercises that action on the *passive* subject, whose *faculty* it is, about which we rightly say that the inner sense is thereby affected. Apperception and its synthetic unity is so far from being the same as the inner sense that the former, rather, as the source of all combination, applies to all sensible intuition of objects in general, to the manifold of *intuitions in general*, under the name of the categories; inner sense, on the contrary, contains the mere *form* of intuition, but without combination of the manifold in it, and thus it does not yet contain any *determinate* intuition at all... (CPR B153-4)

The transcendental deduction of *a priori* concepts of the understanding depends, ultimately, upon the validity of Kant's claim that time is form of inner sense. For although what is presented in the inner sense is

not yet a determinate intuition, and therefore (i) it needs to be first intuitively represented in space [in the outer sense], and (ii) the resultant spatial-temporal manifold [as succession] cannot be determined unless the subject of thinking (or the understanding, as Kant also says) combines and synthesizes it through categorization of it – the subject of thinking is subject to inner sense as a limiting condition ‘which can make that combination intuitable only in accordance with temporal relations that lie entirely outside of the concepts of the understanding proper.’ (CPR B158-9)

The importance of time as form of inner sense in the transcendental deduction becomes clear as we verify, with Guyer, that none of the criteria drawn from an empiricist conception of time can be satisfied by Kant’s transcendental argument.

As we saw earlier, the first empiricist criterion says that a manifold of intuitions is combined in a contingent way. Opposing this claim, Kant argues that time is the form of inner sense of the subject of representation, and that, therefore, the temporal order in which the subject of thinking combines and reproduces the successively given into concepts of objects is a necessary one. Thus cognition in general does not depend on the moment in time things affect the senses, whether the outer or the inner sense. As for the second and third empiricist criteria, it can be shown that they cannot be satisfied by Kant’s transcendental argument for a single reason. The second criterion says that our assertions on the nature of the mental acts of combining and unifying a manifold of intuitions bear contingent truth. The third criterion says that self-observation of mental states, *i.e.*, introspection, is the basis for a method of knowing how the mind works. Kant’s answer to both ideas is a transcendental deduction of concepts that determine *a priori* the synthesis, or the combination and unification of a manifold of intuitions into the concept of an object.

Apparently, the Kantian conception of time as the form of inner sense sets the boundaries between Kant, on one side, and Hume, Hobbes and Tetens, on the other side, at least as far as the possibility of psychology is concerned. Apparently, Guyer is correct in urging us to realize that those premises in the *Critique* that support claims on the nature of the subject of

representation in general, and the subject of thinking in particular, do not satisfy the empiricist criteria for characterising an argument or an explanation as psychological.

I wonder whether Guyer achieves enough in this line of defence of Kant. One needs first agree with Kant, for whom time is not only the form of inner sense, but also, crucially, a *priori* form of representations. Clearly, Hume, Hobbes and Tetens could not agree with this conception of time as a *priori* form of representations. However, to draw from their philosophies criteria for psychological argument or explanation and note, as Guyer does, that Kant, not agreeing with their conception of time, would not apply that criteria to his own concern, seems to simply beg the question.

2. The basic premise for a transcendental deduction of *a priori* concepts of the understanding is, according to Guyer, that knowledge requires combination of a manifold. Guyer argues that we can derive two conclusions from that premise, both psychological only in a trivial sense: (a) A manifold of intuitions must be combined in a temporal order in such a way that this manifold can be re-cognised in the concept of an object, and (b) In order for representations to be re-cognised in the concept of an object, they must also be determined as objects of cognition in accordance with functions of thought. I believe (a) and (b) can be regarded as trivially psychological only if they are considered in the context of Kant’s criticism of rational psychology: there is nothing in (a) or in (b) that makes them assertions about the nature of the subject of thinking. Against rational psychology, Kant famously claims that consciousness of self in thinking does not entail cognition of self as an object by the subject of thinking. The subject of thinking cannot cognise herself as an object in thinking only, but she also needs some intuition of herself, which intuition is to be subjectively determined as an object with reference to the unity of consciousness. According to Kant, thinking is this very determining activity. In order for the subject of thinking to cognise herself in self-consciousness, she would have to be conscious of an intuition of herself to undergo that determining process. Accordingly, self-consciousness in thinking only does not present self, so Kant claims, as a possible object of cognition.

To begin with, the following general remarks can sharpen our attentiveness to this mode of inference. I do not cognise any object merely by the fact that I think, but rather I can cognise any object only by determining a given intuition with regard to the unity of consciousness, in which all thinking consists. Thus I cognise myself not by being conscious of myself as thinking, but only if I am conscious to myself of the intuition of myself as determined in regard to the function of thought [*in regard, that is, to one of the a priori concepts discovered in a transcendental deduction* (italics are mine)]. All *modi* of self-consciousness in thinking are therefore not yet themselves concepts of the understanding of objects (categories), but mere functions, which provide thought with no object at all, and hence also do not present my self as an object to be cognised. It is not the consciousness of the **determining** self, but only that of the **determinable** self, *i.e.*, of my inner intuition (insofar as its manifold can be combined in accord with the universal condition of the unity of apperception in thinking), that is the object.' (CPR B406-7)

The primary condition for an object to be cognised is, according to Kant, that we have an intuition of it and that the object is thus cognised in relation to the unity of consciousness. Consciousness, for Kant, is a mental state that gives different representations a unified appearance: any manifold of intuitions, either intuitive or conceptual, is combined and unified in accordance with some concepts claimed by Kant to be essential for judgement of objects. When Kant applies the above respective definitions of possible objects of cognition and of consciousness to explicate self-consciousness, the result is that the criticism that he addresses to rational psychology follows the principles laid by TD in the first sections of the *Analytic of Concepts*.

Self-consciousness does not produce cognition of any objective property of the subject of thinking: in Kant's famous parlance, propositions about the objective nature of this subject are eminently analytical. Propositions about the nature of the subject of thinking only explicate predicates. Predicates that are explicated are those whose attribution to the grammatical subject of the proposition requires that the subject of

representations thinks, or has consciousness of the representations of those predicates. In the proposition 'I think', which is, according to Kant, 'the sole text of rational psychology' (CPR A343/B401), the subject of thinking is subject of attribution of predicates, as in any other proposition and judgement, but, differently from any other proposition and judgement, it has itself as grammatical subject. The point that Kant makes about rational psychology is that the overlap of thinking and grammatical functions [in self-consciousness] does not mean cognition of self as an object.

In other words, the fact that the basic structure of propositional cognition is ultimately reducible, according to Kant, to the predicative form, where the subject of thinking takes the grammatical subject to be only formally existent as object of predication, does not imply that in the proposition 'I think', or in thinking only, the subject of attribution or thinking is capable of determining its mode of existence as a soul, such as those of substantiality and personhood. So, the propositions of rational psychology, which state different modes of existence of the subject of thinking, simply explicate those predicates that are essential for a possible, never a real conception of the subject of thinking. In accordance with a transcendental logic, in self-consciousness one is but conscious of oneself as that which is required for a synthetic unity of representations into the concept of an object in general (an 'object=X', as Kant puts it).

The analytic-synthetic distinction itself, used by Kant in his criticism of rational psychology, is in fact subordinate to a more fundamental distinction at work in this section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, 'On the Paralogisms of Pure Reason'. I have above indicated this more fundamental distinction: we must distinguish between possible and real concept of 'I' in the proposition 'I think', *i.e.*, between, in general, the presumed reference of concepts to something existing, and the determination of this reference, which determination also demands, according to Kant, spatial-temporal input in the form of intuition. Propositions of rational psychology are, according to Kant, synthetic and *a priori*: they attribute substantiality, personhood, and other attributes of a soul, to the subject of thinking. Now, these propositions are founded, so Kant argues, on a paralogism where the reference of the concept

of 'I' to something existing is taken to entail some determination by the subject of thinking of this reference whereby some object would be cognised. One of the conditions for the determination by the subject of thinking of this reference to take place is, according to Kant, time as *a priori* form of intuition under which the subject of thinking has access to her mental states. The other, crucial condition is, as we have seen, that some space-temporal intuition is given of an object. So, in the case of a determination by this subject of a reference of the 'I' to something existing, the result would have to be a grasping of her self as something that exists as substance, that is, as something that persists in time whether it does or does not take a spatial intuitive form. In other words, rational psychology is the psychology of the subject of thinking on the mere grounds of the temporal condition that characterizes thinking. Hence the following paralogism, as Kant puts it:

What cannot be thought otherwise than as subject does not exist otherwise than as subject, and is therefore substance.

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

Therefore it also exists only as such a thing, *i.e.*, as substance.

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. Thus the conclusion is drawn *per Sophisma figurae dictionis*, hence by means of a deceptive inference. (CPR B410-11)

I have shown in this section that Guyer's use of empiricist criteria to classify as psychological some of Kant's arguments and explanations in TD is problematic for Guyer's ends. Guyer wants to show that the arguments and explanations found in TD are not psychological because, if we read them through empiricist criteria for psychological arguments and explanations, none of Kant's arguments and explanations in TD can be characterized as

psychological. However, as I have tried to show in this section, Kant's arguments and explanations in TD heavily rely on Kant's distinctive conception of time, which conception is not found in typical empiricist philosophies. It is therefore not Hume's, Locke's or Tetens's fault if Kant has a different conception of time. And it is not particularly striking if we cannot designate psychological arguments and explanations in TD.

Also problematic in Guyer's defence of Kant's transcendental philosophy against the charge of psychologism by means of showing that the central mental ideas in that philosophy do not match a typical empiricist conception of psychology is this: that the Kantian central mental ideas in TD can be considered psychological in a trivial sense only if placed in the context of Kant's criticism of rational psychology, and not, as one would expect, in the context of empirical psychology.

I thus finish here my brief consideration of Guyer's ideas about Kant's possible debt to psychology in TD, and will now look at the method of introspection of mental states, as this is the typical method adopted in empirical psychology. That will give us the opportunity to see how TD is an objection to it.

3. While the *Critique* carries out a criticism of some metaphysical concepts deployed beyond certain conditions of possibility of experience and knowledge of objects, the *Anthropology* reflects upon what could be properly admitted as a true 'science of man'. However distinct are the subjects of each of these two works by Kant, they converge on a key idea: neither forms of knowledge of objects in general, nor particular knowledge of man's nature, rests on self-observation of mental states. I start by recalling this idea as it appears in the *Anthropology*, where Kant offers an account of what is the subject of psychology.

A systematic doctrine containing our knowledge of man (anthropology) [which] can either be given from a physiological or a pragmatic point of view (...) Physiological knowledge of man aims at the investigation of what Nature makes of man, whereas pragmatic knowledge of man aims at what man makes, can, or should make of himself as a freely acting being. (*Introduction*; AA p.119 / p.3)

As different Kantian scholars have already stressed, by 'physiological knowledge' Kant means psychology. Empirical psychology is thus the only form of psychology that Kant acknowledges validity for. Also, according to Kant the results of psychology are to be taken as part of a 'science of man', but they play this role in a restrictive way. For the philosopher, a true 'science of man' is to be built more decisively with what he calls pragmatic knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge differs from physiological knowledge or psychology in that it is not acquired through self-observation or introspection of mental states.

Kant does not deny the very possibility of introspection; what he denies is that self-observation of mental states can be the ground for a better understanding of the nature of man. The concept of a capacity to scrutinize our own mental states has no validity without the presumption that an objective knowledge of self is possible. However, as we have seen in the previous section, Kant strongly denies that self-knowledge on grounds of merely thinking of ourselves as the subjects of thinking or of conceptual representation is possible. But introspection of our own mental states can be defined as a conceptual activity in that it requires recognition of mental contents and thus involves reproductive rather than productive imagination.

Where introspection is considered a legitimate way to obtain knowledge, it rests, according to Kant, on a misunderstanding of the limits of our cognitive capacities: '...the only perception we have of ourselves by means of the inner sense is of how we *appear* to ourselves...the condition [of inner perception] is time, which is merely a subjective condition.' (*On The Cognitive Capacities*, AA p.142/p.27) As he also puts it, in less gentle terms though: 'To wish to play the spy upon one's self (...), this desire for self-investigation is either already a disease of the mind (hypochondria), or will lead to such a disease and ultimately to the madhouse. He who has a great deal to tell of inner experiences (for example, of grace, of temptations, etc.) may, in the course of his voyage to self-discovery, have made his first landing only at Anticyra [*a Greek city, famous source of hellebore, a substance regarded in classical times as a cure for insanity*]. (*idem*, p.133-4/p.17)

If introspection does not provide us with objective knowledge, and if we are subjects of thinking with the distinctive mental capacities to think and judge, then introspection does not provide us with objective knowledge of these capacities. Also, since introspection does not provide us with objective knowledge of the work of cognitive capacities, it cannot be the methodological ground for a 'science of man'. A 'science of man' has therefore to rest on a characterization of thinking and judging as mental processes that are somewhat spontaneous and govern, in man, the very possibility of cognition of things as objects for us. In this sense, the capacities to think and judge are not, strictly speaking, epistemological capacities but rather regulative capacities, that is, they rule, by spontaneous means, without any grounds or reasons other than those that would describe the nature of human beings' intellect, the very possibility of experience and knowledge. Now, the demonstration of this logical fact about the nature of understanding and judgement is, indeed, broadly speaking, the very result obtained by Kant with the transcendental deduction of the categories.

For Kant, psychology cannot relate to knowledge of 'the work of the mind' *unless* by this expression we understand a set of cognitive capacities necessarily governed by principles that rule *a priori* experience and knowledge. Laws of nature themselves are nothing but necessary inferences held by means of such principles. If we are to have objective knowledge of our cognitive capacities as natural beings in a 'science of man', the form of this knowledge has, in any event, to be that of natural laws. It also follows that the very possibility of introspection of mental states is to be explicated only *under laws of nature*. In other words, it remains for psychology to be physiology, to give explanation for the mental capacity to scrutinise mental states or to have "inner experience". As Kant puts it, in a rather oracular manner,

...psychology (a summary of all inner perceptions under the laws of nature). Psychology is the foundation of inner experience. (AA p.141/p.25)

III

I want now to exhibit the grounds for the Kantian distinction between possible and real conceptualisation, with which distinction I have been working throughout the essay.

The first thing to say about this distinction, before I examine it in detail, is that there is a propositional model to which this distinction is supposed to apply more immediately. The propositional model is the predicative one, and is thoroughly discussed by Kant in the 'Paralogisms of Pure Reason' and in 'On the Impossibility of an Ontological Proof of the Existence of God'. I suggest, however, that we take the distinction beyond its place of birth in the *Critique* and see it as the essential tool in Kant's critical method itself. I suggest that what Kant does in the *Critique* in particular, and in the critical philosophy in general, is to establish what it is for a certain concept deployed in claims of rational knowledge to be possible and what it is for this concept to be real.

This distinction between possible and real conceptualisation is relatively simple. It distinguishes, respectively, between the conditions that are satisfied when we merely (formally) think of a reference of concepts to something existing, and the conditions that need to be satisfied in order for the determination of this reference to take place. This determination requires, according to Kant, besides the thinking of a reference of concepts to something existing, also spatial-temporal input in the form of intuition (*i.e.*, sensible *data* must be given to the mind). On the other hand, the conditions that are satisfied when we think of that reference are (a) that we become conscious of representations as ours, and (b) that we then become conscious of ourselves as primary source of unification of representations into the concept of some object.

In the continuation of the section in the *Critique* where Kant explains the content of the paralogism at the centre of rational psychology, concerning the purely intellectual representation of the 'I' as substance – as, that is, 'the concept of a thing that can exist for itself as subject but not as mere predicate –, we find an instance of the distinction between possible and real conceptualisation:

(...) if that concept, by means of the term "substance", is to indicate an object that can be given, and if it is to become a cognition, then it must be grounded on a persisting intuition as the indispensable condition of the objective reality of a concept, namely, that through which alone an object is given. But now we have in inner intuition nothing at all that persists, for the I is only the consciousness of my thinking; thus if we stay merely with thinking, we also lack the necessary condition for applying the concept of substance, *i.e.*, of a subject subsisting for itself, to itself as a thinking being; (...) (CPR B412-13)

Another way of putting the distinction between possible and real conceptualisation is this: the mere thought of a reference of concepts to something existent cannot alone provide this reference with objective reality – under the form, that is, of a relation of concepts to intuitions. In another section of the Transcendental Dialectic, where we find Kant arguing for the impossibility of an ontological proof of the existence of God, we find an instance of the distinction that concerns us here. Kant puts it first in metaphorical terms, and then goes to explain it in detail (CPR A599-601 / B627-629). I apologize for the length of the quotation.

...when I think this object as given absolutely (through the expression "it is") nothing is thereby added to the concept, which expresses merely its possibility. Thus the actual [*das Wirkliche*] contains no more than the merely possible [*das bloß Mögliche*]. A hundred actual dollars do not contain the least bit more than a hundred possible ones. For since the latter signifies the concept and the former its object and its positing in itself, then, in case the former contained more than the latter, my concept would not express the entire object and thus would not be the suitable concept of it. But in my financial position there is more with a hundred actual dollars than with the mere concept of them (*i.e.*, their possibility). For with actually the object is not merely included in my concept analytically, but adds synthetically to my concept (which is a determination of my state); yet the hundred dollars themselves that I am thinking of are not in the least increased through this being outside my concept.

When I think a thing, through whichever and however many predicates I like (even in its thoroughgoing determination), not the least bit gets added to the thing when I posit in addition that this thing is. For otherwise what would exist would not be the same as what I had thought in my concept, but more than that, and I could not say that the very object of my concept exists. (...)

Thus whatever and however much our concept of an object may contain, we have to go out beyond it in order to provide it with existence. With objects of sense this happens through the connection with some perception of mine in accordance with empirical laws; but for objects of pure thinking there is no means whatever for cognising their existence, because it would have to be cognised entirely *a priori*, but our consciousness of all existence (whether immediately through perception or through inferences connecting something with perception) belongs entirely and without exception to the unity of experience, and though an existence outside this field cannot be declared absolutely impossible, it is a presupposition that we cannot justify through anything.

The content of the Kantian distinction between actual/real and possible conceptualisation is greatly clarified when separated from Kant's analytic-synthetic distinction. In the passage offered above the distinctions appear side by side. Distinctions that appear side by side in an argument can often seem to function as conditions of each other's validity. However, one might simply be an implication of the other, and, besides, not the only possible implication. This seems to be the case for the analytic-synthetic distinction in relation to the distinction of possible and real conceptualisation.

In order to see that as well as how the analytic-synthetic distinction is of a second-order type in relation to the distinction between real and possible conceptualization, I suggest an instance of the monetary example offered by Kant in the quotation above. This instance would go as following. Under economical inflation conditions, the real concept of hundred dollars might be that of the price of a second-hand silver watch. However, the possible

concept of hundred dollars remains simply the concept of material hundred dollars with which one can buy "something". This instance of Kant's monetary example advances our understanding of the Kantian actual or real, and possible conceptualisation distinction as follows. According to Kant, empirical concepts are possible only as concepts of material existing things: whether we can or cannot justify the reference of a particular concept to some material existing thing, there is, according to him, a transcendental principle that establishes that empirical concepts are formed on the basis of a necessary and universal reference to material existing things.

Even if we know nothing of the demonstrative, deductive procedure that Kant adopts in order to produce and justify the above claim, the claim presents itself to us as justified even if then only intuitively. Suppose we think of the existence of an object of which we should be able to have some sensory experience, say, a certain kind of rare strawberry that grows only on the seawall of Norwegian cliffs. The thought of the existence of that rare kind of strawberry, although in itself not determinant of the actuality or reality of its concept – in which concept I think of many qualia for that strawberry, such as redness, sharpness in taste, smaller than the ones that I buy from my local greengrocer, etc. – somewhat posits the representation of an object in the context of a possible experience. I believe that Kant refers to this positing of the representation of an object in the context of a possible experience in his conception of *a priori* attribution of existence to objects of empirical concepts. More importantly, he distinguishes the *synthetic* act of judgement that takes place as such positing in the case of objects of empirical concepts, and the merely *analytic* act of judgement that takes place in the case of attribution of existential properties to objects of which we cannot have an empirical concept.

God is an example of object of which we cannot have an empirical concept. According to Kant, the conception of existential properties for God does not posit this representation of an object in the context of a possible experience. In order for concepts to posit the representation of an object in the context of a possible experience, it is required from that representation that it is followed by consciousness of some intuitive cognition. Furthermore, this consciousness of some intuitive cognition describes some form of *a priori*

knowledge of an object. For, according to Kant, the consciousness of some spatial-temporal cognition describes the application of the categories to a manifold of intuitions by the imagination, but application of the categories by the imagination must take place *a priori* or prior to any possible experience – in fact, as condition of possibility of experience of objects in general – for otherwise we would have to admit, so Kant argues, the possibility that the concept of an object might represent either more or less than what its object is in reality.

Kant defends his conception of *a priori* attribution of existence to objects of empirical concepts on the grounds that, according to him, the subject of cognition is the bearer of the conditions that must be satisfied in order for experience of objects to take place, namely that whatever is conceived as existent must in order to be real be represented in space rather than in time only [or subjectively only], and it must be so represented through combination and synthesis of the resultant spatial-temporal representational manifold recognised into the concept of an object. As for the attribution of *a priori* existence to objects whose concepts cannot in principle be grounded on perception, such as God, Kant argues for a logical inappropriateness involved in such attribution.

If the issue were an object of sense, then I could not confuse the existence of the thing with the mere concept of the thing. For through its concept, the object would be thought only as in agreement with the universal conditions of a possible empirical cognition in general, but through its existence it would be thought as contained in the context of the entirety of experience; thus through connection with the content of the entire experience the concept of the object is not in the least increased, but our thinking receives more through it, namely possible perception. If, on the contrary, we tried to think existence through the pure category alone, then it is no wonder that we cannot assign mark distinguishing it from mere possibility. (CRP A600-601 / B628-29)

According to Kant, empirical concepts are those that represent properties of an object, which properties require for their conception the intellectual deployment of concepts that describe the materiality of those properties in different levels. Classical examples in the Kantian transcendental philosophy of these different levels of materiality for properties of objects of empirical objects are causality and dependence between objects, here included the body of the subject of cognition and things that exist in space along with this subject's body; temporal persistence or substantiality, which is a property necessary for the attribution of existence without the mind to something.

Conversely, the actual or real instance of empirical concepts is determined as long as there is some intuition to which to apply our concepts. That is to say that the *possibility* of a concept depends on a capacity of our minds to construct *a priori* the concept of matter. That is also to say that the actuality or reality of a concept – under the form of an object that corresponds to it – must always be some particular instance of the universal concept of matter. I shall not go further on this issue in this essay, but I hope it is now clear the point where Kant's analytic-synthetic distinction is secondary in relation to the Kantian distinction between real and possible conceptualisation. The point is this, that the idea of a reference of concepts to existing things does not belong in the *Critique* in the analytic-synthetic distinction but in the distinction between possible and real conceptualisation. The analytic-synthetic distinction refers to two essential modes through which, according to Kant, the subject of thinking determines this reference of concepts to existing things².

2 I believe that I offer here, incidentally, a reason for why one could dispense with Kant's analytic-synthetic distinction and still maintain a commitment to the idea of a reference of concepts to existing things. The reason is this, that the idea of this reference cannot be separated from the basic, indisputable characterization of the subject of thinking as that which is capable of self-consciousness – capable, consequently, of having inner experience – and whose existence is thus the basic condition for conceptualisation of intuitions into the concept of an object. So one can partly argue with Quine, and by no means opposing some of Kant's basic metaphysical premises, that analytic propositions are merely the relating of synonymous terms – as in 'all bachelors are non-married' – ; that, that is, the reference of the concept of bachelor to some state of affairs cannot possibly lie in a relation of this concept to the merely synonymous predicate concept 'non-married'.

Conclusion

I claimed that there is a criterion to be found in the Kantian philosophy for characterising arguments and explanations as psychological. The criterion is given, as I argued, by the distinction, found in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, between possible and real conceptualisation.

The possible-real distinction has to do with two modes of thinking the relation between object and properties: when an object is thought as existent, we are also conscious of what might or might not in principle count as its property (possible conceptualisation), and we are thus conscious as long as we grasp these potential properties of an object through the reference of its concept to some spatial-temporal intuition (real conceptualisation). Real conceptualisation is thus a condition for possible conceptualisation.

I also argued that the analytic-synthetic distinction, on the other hand, has to do with the way in which concepts relate to each other in judgements about objects. I have suggested that the possible-real distinction should be understood as a methodological tool for Kant, by means of which he will apply the famous synthetic-analytic distinction in order to criticize claims of rational knowledge of objects of which no objective experience is possible. Among these claims of rational knowledge, claims of psychology.

The central aim of the essay was to consider whether TD is formed by psychological arguments and explanations. My aim was, more specifically, to see whether what could perhaps be considered as simply mental arguments and explanations in TD amounted in fact to psychological arguments and explanations. I have focused on the concept of self in the second part of the essay and showed that Kant holds that the only reality that the concept of self can bear is a subjective one, that is, one that is given by its possibility only. In other words, the only reality that can be ascribed to the concept of self is given by the capacity that the subject of thinking has to combine and unify, or synthesize a manifold of intuitions into the concept of an object *a priori* in a consciousness of herself. Conversely, according to Kant, rational and empirical psychologies take the concept of self in its mere subjective reality while mistakenly claiming objective reality for it. The other crucial concept

for psychology is the concept of mind. What is for Kant the possible concept of mind and what is for him the real concept of mind?

Again, I believe that Kant takes the concept of mind in the *Critique* in its possibility only. The concept of mind that I consider is that of a set of cognitive capacities necessary in order for experience to take place. The possible concept of mind is the concept of mental processes required in order for a manifold of intuition to be combined, reproduced, and re-cognised in the concept of an object. In the real concept of mind, which I believe is at work in psychology as a discipline, we assume that we have an access to our minds either through introspection or through a reflection upon what is necessary in order for a mind to be a mind, which reflection usually requires some empirical evidence.

Kant's theory of knowledge does not result either in physiological laws about the work of cognitive capacities, or in propositions about the nature of the subject of thinking. It results in propositions that make sense only if *thinking* and *judging* are considered, as Kant himself urges us to do in different places in TD, mental capacities whose function cannot be separated from the possible concept of mind, and that put them, therefore, out of reach of psychological scrutiny.

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Resumo

Diversos especialistas na filosofia kantiana vêm há muito discutindo o possível débito de certas idéias desenvolvidas na Dedução Transcendental para com princípios psicológicos. Eu analiso a defesa da Dedução Transcendental proposta pelo Professor Paul Guyer, e sugiro uma estratégia diferente. Enquanto o Professor Guyer utiliza-se de critérios empiricistas, eu opero com uma distinção kantiana entre conceitualização possível e conceitualização real, e mostro que com base nesta distinção podemos estabelecer um critério propriamente kantiano para caracterizar argumentos e explicações como psicológicos. Meu objetivo é demonstrar que na Dedução Transcendental nós encontramos apenas argumentos e explicações mentalistas, e não psicológicos.

Abstract

Different Kantian scholars have discussed Kant's possible debt to psychology in the formulation of the Transcendental Deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I analyse Professor Paul Guyer's defence of the Transcendental Deduction against the charge of psychologism and suggest a different strategy. While Professor Guyer makes use of empiricist criteria, I operate with a Kantian distinction between possible and real conceptualisation and show that on the grounds of this distinction we can establish a criterion for characterizing arguments and explanations as psychological. My aim is to demonstrate that in the Transcendental Deduction we find only mental, as opposed to psychological, arguments and explanations.