

Banality of Evil and Metaphysical Fallacy: A Preliminary Study on Arendt's Dismantling of Metaphysics

Kazue KOISHIKAWA

Thoughtlessness and Question on Thinking

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) had been working on a book manuscript dealing with three human mental activities, viz., thinking, willing, and judgment. What would have been consisted in the third part—Judgment—was never written and thus her final project was left unfinished due to her untimely death. The first two parts—Thinking and Willing—were put together and published posthumously as *The Life of the Mind* (1977).¹ In order to fill the missing part, i.e., “Judgment,” a series of her lecture notes on Kant’s aesthetic judgment given at the New School in 1970 was published in 1982.² Nevertheless, it must be said that Arendt’s last project on those three human mental activities has been largely neglected by among Arendt scholars comparing from her earlier works such as *The Origin of Totalitarianism* (1952), *The Human Condition* (1958), *Between Past and Future* (1961).³ Indeed with a few exceptions, there are questioned never raised seriously: “Where Arendt’s last works on those mental activities should be positioned within her oeuvre?” “Is there any theoretical continuity between her earlier works and those belong to her unfinished project, and if so on what account?” Or, “What was Arendt’s intention to tackle with exploring those mental activities for the first place?” It seems that those questions are particularly relevant when it comes to Arendt’s exploration on the “thinking” in *LM* I for two reasons: 1) Unlike “willing” and “judgment,” in which direct thematic relatedness can be detected with Arendt’s earlier writings concerning to “action,” whereas “thinking” seems not to have such connectedness to “action” but rather gives an impression that there are some distances in terms of its thematic continuity with “action.”

One thing is clear that it was her encounter with Adolf Eichmann at his trial in Jerusalem that made her take up the topic: “What is thinking?”⁴ That encounter and her subsequent report on him would fuel much controversy due to her use of the phrase “the banality of evil,” caused her to reflect upon the relation between “thinking” and “judgment.” Eichmann was

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, ed. Mary McCarthy, One-volume edition (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publisher, 1977). Hereafter abbreviated as *LM*: I.

² Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner, (The University of Chicago Press, 1982). Hereafter abbreviated as *LKPP*.

³ Hannah Arendt, *The Origin of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966); *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); *Between Past and Future*, (New York: Viking Press, 1961)

⁴ *LM*:I, 3-6.

not stupid but “thoughtless.”⁵ Arendt thinks that his thoughtlessness, or, the “absence of thinking,” enabled him to follow the order to transport Jews as efficiently as possible to the extermination camps without ever feeling guilty or responsible for their fate.⁶

Based on her observation of Eichmann at his trial, Arendt wonders if there is a correlation between thinking and moral judgment: She wondered if thinking is one of the conditions for us to make a moral judgment.⁷ However, it is the least to say that any readers of the work would be puzzled that if the link between thinking and moral judgment is actually at stake with respect to the thematic development in the work. Though Arendt’s thesis seems to be clear; reexamining our faculty of thinking, yet neither her method nor her true purpose of it is somewhat hidden in *LM: I*. It is almost at the end of the last section—section 20—finally Arendt alludes what she has done in that work was “dismantling of metaphysics.”⁸

The purpose of this paper is to point out that when Arendt says “dismantling of metaphysics,” what she has in her mind is to deconstruct Heidegger’s fundamental ontology in order for her to lay the ethical moral ground in thinking based on human plurality. Since to uncover the whole structure of Arendt’s “dismantling” is by far beyond the scope of this paper, the paper withholds itself merely sketching out some of the key components. The paper consists of four sections. First, it analyzes how Arendt gives an account of perception as intersubjectivity based on plurality, which has its root in phenomenological legacy. The second section provides a close analysis of the origin of what Arendt calls “metaphysical fallacy” in the 6th section of *LM: I* where Kant’s account of the “thinking ego” is criticized by Arendt. The analysis makes it clear that Arendt takes a position that the “thinking ego” is not same as the “self,” in which we can detect her aim of “dismantling of metaphysics.” The third section provides further analysis on the “metaphysical fallacy” in the 18th section of *LM: I*. It exhibits that the true target of Arendt’s criticism aims not on Kant’s account of the “thinking ego” but Heidegger’s account of the “self.” Lastly, the fourth section suggests that it is in Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s transcendental imagination in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929) where the key to understand what Arendt intends to articulate the issue of the “metaphysical fallacy” in terms of finding positive linkage between thinking and judgment.

I. Being is Appearing: Arendt’s account of perception

There is a twofold thesis in *LM:I*, which is expressed explicitly as follows: first, Arendt claims the “absolute primacy of the world of appearances” over and against the traditional

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Penguin Books, 1963), 25.

⁷ *LM:I*, 4-5.

⁸ Arendt wrote, “I have clearly joined the ranks of those who for some time now have been attempting to dismantle metaphysics, and philosophy with all its categories, as we have known them from their beginning in Greece until today.” *Ibid.*, 212.

metaphysical two-worlds theory, which views appearance as the mere semblance of Being; she calls the latter the “metaphysical fallacy.”⁹ In contrast, Arendt proclaims that “Being and Appearing coincide.”¹⁰ Second, Arendt posits that the origin of this “metaphysical fallacy” by and large arises when philosophers demand the “kind of results and apply the kind of criteria for certainty and evidence that are the results and the criteria of cognition” to reason.¹¹ It means that the origin of “metaphysical fallacy” is the interpretation of thinking activity through the application to it of the model of perception. Or, more precisely, those who commit a “metaphysical fallacy” tend to forget that thinking is, really, “after-thought,” arising once perception ceases.¹² Instead, they often treat thinking and knowing (perception) as being the same, which leads to the giving of a superior ontological status to the idea (the thought object) as the substratum of appearance. As a result, the dichotomy of Being and being is introduced. Arendt points out that this is due to the distinction between reason (*Vernunft*) and intellect (*Verstand*) introduced by Kant, which made a decisive impact on subsequent philosophy, particularly on German Idealism. In short, Arendt notes the origin of the “metaphysical fallacy” in the speculative thinking by professional thinkers who interpret the experience of the thinking ego on the cognitive model and apply it to reason.¹³

Let us start with the first point. Arendt posits the absolute primacy of the world of appearances over and against metaphysical world order where appearance is taken as mere semblance of Being. Arendt objects the idea of Being as the substratum of appearance but rather insists that in the world of appearance “Being and Appearing coincide.”¹⁴ However, if we pay attention closely, we notice the issue that Arendt raises in the text is much more complicated and goes deeper. The issue at stake is Arendt’s account of the relation between appearance and human *existence*. To make this point clear, first we need to give close attention to the relation between appearance and plurality.

In this world which we enter, appearing from a nowhere, and from which we disappear into a nowhere, Being and Appearing coincide.—Nothing and nobody exists in this world whose very being does not presuppose a spectator. In other words, nothing that is, insofar as it appears, exists in the singular; everything that is is meant to be perceived by somebody. Not Man but men inhabit this planet. Plurality is the law of the earth.¹⁵

⁹ *LM*:I, 12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹² *Ibid.*, 87.

¹³ We have to note that it is Kant who introduced the distinction between *reason* and *intellect* and “made room for thought.” According to Arendt, as a result, he opens the door for the “metaphysical fallacy.” At first glance, Arendt’s criticism for “metaphysical fallacy” seems to be addressed to Kant. However, as we shall demonstrate in the last section of this paper, the real target of her criticism is not Kant but Heidegger, or, more precisely, Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant, *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19. Emphasis added.

To appear presupposes that there is at least a spectator to perceive her appearing.¹⁶ Without this spectator, there is no appearance. When someone appears, this implies that her appearing is to appear to the eyes of another. *To be, particularly for us, as human beings in our context, is same as to appear, and to appear is to exist.* And since every appearance already presupposes a spectator, human *existence* is always embedded in plurality. It is in this sense that “plurality is the law of the earth,” for it is the very condition of appearance. And it is in her proclamation, “Being and Appearing coincide,” that we can first detect that her explicit twofold thesis embraces her implicit thesis in the text, i.e., the issue of human *existence*. If “Being and Appearing coincide” in the world of appearances and “to appear” means “to *exist*” for us as she claims, the objective reality of our perception rests in human plurality. We are *not just in the world but of the world* and as such we are both subjects and objects—“perceiving and being perceived”—at the same time.¹⁷ It is in this relation between perception and human *existence* that we can point out that not only Arendt’s account of appearance is perception, but such account suggests her theoretical understanding of perception is fundamentally intersubjective.

In fact, our suggestion seems to be supported when Arendt refers to Husserl’s concept of intentionality for explaining her account of appearance.

Husserl’s basic and greatest discovery takes up in exhaustive detail the intentionality of all acts of consciousness, that is the fact that no subjective act is ever without an object(.) Objectivity is built into the very subjectivity of consciousness by virtue of intentionality. Conversely and with the same justness, one may speak of the intentionality of appearances and their built-in subjectivity. All objects because they appear indicate a subject, and, just as every subjective act has its intentional object, so every appearing object has its intentional subject.—Whatever appears is meant for a perceiver, a potential subject no less inherent in all objectivity than a potential object is inherent in the subjectivity of every intentional act.—[O]ur certainty that what we perceive has an *existence* independent of the act of perceiving, depends entirely on the object’s also appearing as such to others and being acknowledged by them. Without this tacit acknowledgment by others we would not even be able to put faith in the way we appear to ourselves.¹⁸

Arendt agrees with Husserl that “objectivity is built into the very subjectivity of consciousness by virtue of intentionality.” So, what appears indicates a perceiving subject, which means that every appearing object has its intentional subject and every intending subject has intended object. In other words, in the phenomenon of appearance, the fact that something appears means that, in its appearance, both a “potential subject” and a “potential object” are inherent. However, the certainty of the perceived object, viz., its *existence*, depends on the acknowledgement of others. That is, the very object I perceive is also perceived by them.

Arendt’s contention is to point out that the certainty of *existence*—both of subject and

¹⁶ Though here Arendt says “a spectator” in the third line in the quotation, we should remember that the spectator is plural for Arendt. See *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 20, emphasis added.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 46, emphasis added.

object, cannot be derived from the intentionality of the act of consciousness as long as the relation between *intentio* and *intantum* is separated from acknowledgement of others, since the relation between the two in the act of consciousness, which is put in a bracket, is not a cognitive activity but is derived from a thinking reflection about the cognitive activity. For that reason, her objection goes beyond Husserl and is extended to Descartes.

“[I]t never occurred to him [Descartes] that no *cogitatio* and no *cogito me cogitare*, no consciousness of an acting self that had suspended all faith in the reality of its intentional objects, would ever have been able to convince him of his own reality had he actually been born in a desert, without a body and its senses to perceive ‘material’ things and without fellow-creatures to assure him that what he perceived was perceived by them too.”¹⁹

My thinking may be real and so as the I as the thinking ego in the I-think is presupposed in that activity, yet thought can “neither prove nor disprove it.”²⁰ In other words, in the solipsistic thinking, certainty of thinking cannot provide the certainty of *existence*.

Against the philosophical view to take certainty of thinking as that of *existence*, which Arendt posits as a fallacy, she claims that the reality of the world of appearances consists of the mode of the “it-seems-to-me,” or, *dokei moi*.²¹ That “seeming” reflects the fact that everyone sees things from different places where they stand, just like different spectators see the actor on the stage from different seats.²² She writes: “Seeming corresponds to the fact that every appearance, its identity notwithstanding, is perceived by a plurality of spectators.”²³ Because each one of us dwells in a particular place in the world, each perspective alone merely expresses “it-seems-to-me.” The objectivity of things that I see from my perspective gains its objectivity when others acknowledge by responding, “Yes, it-seems-to-me too.” Naturally, then, the more people who acknowledge to me what I see, the more reality my perception gains. Our sense of reality depends on the plurality of perspectives whose other name is “the world of appearances”. “The subjectivity of the it-seems-to-me is remedied by the fact that the same object also appears to others though its mode of appearance may be different.”²⁴

II. The origin of metaphysical fallacy

Now, let us go over the second thesis; the issue of the “metaphysical fallacy.” Arendt finds that the liberation of reason from cognition is the origin of metaphysical fallacies. More specifically, Arendt considers that the metaphysical fallacies are derived from those professional

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²² “To appear always means to seem to others, and this seeming varies according to the standpoint and the perspective of the spectators.” *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

thinkers' interpretation of reason from the viewpoint of the experience of the thinking ego. That is, those fallacies arise through applying the "kind of criteria and certainty and evidence that are results and the criteria of cognition" to the activity of reason, viz., thinking.²⁵

Arendt finds the origin of the "metaphysical fallacy" in Kant's distinction between reason (*Vernunft*) and intellect (*Verstand*) introduced by Kant. Arendt claims that these two concepts refer to "altogether different mental activities."²⁶ While reason is the activity of thinking, intellect is that of knowing.²⁷ The former is concerned with meaning, whereas the latter is concerned with cognition. Kant himself thinks that, while we cannot know of God, freedom and immortality, we also cannot help thinking about them, and thus he "justified reason's need to think beyond the limits of what can be known."²⁸ Though Kant thinks that in doing so he makes room for faith, Arendt points out what he does is only to separate knowledge from thinking and thus to make room for thought instead.²⁹ Arendt's core claim is that meaning and truth are not the same and neither are their designated mental activities. The "metaphysical fallacy" arises when professional thinkers who follow Kant want to find the basis of certainty in the activity of thinking itself. The basic fallacy, taking precedence over all specific metaphysical fallacies, is to interpret meaning on the model of truth."³⁰

According to Arendt, "[c]ognition, whose highest criterion is truth, derives that criterion from the world of appearances in which we take our bearings through sense perceptions, whose testimony is self-evident," whereas that is not the case for meaning and its faculty, viz., reason.³¹ Reason is unconcerned about the *existence* of the object, for object is always taken for granted. Rather, it is concerned with what it means for that object to be.³² The desire to know by intellect is always answerable by "common-sense experience and common-sense reasoning"; while these may make errors, like perception, it can be corrected for the same reason. However, the desire for the "quest for meaning," is endless, for the question raised by reason is unanswerable. To illustrate her point, Arendt quotes a verse from W.H. Auden:

Unpredictably, decades ago, You arrived
Among that unending cascade of creatures spewed from Nature's maw.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.* Arendt continues to point out that that distinction has an "extraordinary liberating effect on German philosophy, touching off the rise of German idealism" which makes room for "speculative thought." For our purposes, it should be specifically emphasized that Arendt mentions Heidegger in this regard that he starts out "by raising anew the question of the meaning" of Being in *Being and Time*, and also in his later interpretation of his own initial question he explicitly says, "Meaning and Being" and "Truth and Being" are the same. See, *Ibid.*, 15.

³¹ *Ibid.* 57, emphasis added.

³² *Ibid.*

A random event, says Science.

Random my bottom! A true miracle, say I,

For who is not certain that he was meant to be?³³

The birth of someone is just a random event in nature, as seen from the viewpoint of science. Yet, it is felt by that person that his *existence* is real and he was “meant to be.” However, Arendt comments that that “being ‘meant to be’ is not a truth” but “a highly meaningful proposition.”³⁴ There is no way to know if he was “meant to be,” and thus to ask this question is not the role of intellect but that of the reason of what it means for him to be. In asking and answering that question, the person would think about the meaning of his life either for himself or for nature as a whole, or for both. What is clear regardless is that there is no clear and fixed answer to that question. Arendt says, “To expect truth to come from thinking signifies that we mistake the need to think with the urge to know.”³⁵ Even though “the proposition that everybody who is ‘was meant to be’ can easily refuted,” the reason why the certainty of the I “was meant to be” survives such refutation is that the “feeling of certainty” that the I-am is “inherent in every thinking reflection,” according to Arendt.³⁶ On the contrary, from the viewpoint of common sense and what she calls “common-sense reasoning,” the quest for meaning is “meaningless,” because “it is the six sense’s function to fit us into the world of appearances and make us at home in the world given by our five senses; there we are and no questions asked.”³⁷ It is another way to describe that we human beings are beings *of* the world of appearances in which our *existence* is determined. In other words, the “quest for meaning” is said to be “meaningless” raised by reason, for human *existence* means that we are always already being *of* a part of the meaningful *context*. The context is already given thereby or, our *existence* is already contextualized. If the “quest for meaning” is “meaningful,” that is so only when the “meaning” is sought within that context, *not* apart from it. But that is not how the “quest of meaning” is pursued by the philosophers, and that is precisely what Arendt is trying to point out here. “Thinking can and must be employed in the attempt to know, but in the exercise of this function it is never itself; it is but the handmaiden of an altogether different enterprise.”³⁸ That “all together different enterprise” is metaphysics.

Arendt emphasizes repeatedly that *truth* and *meaning* are not the same.³⁹ However it does not mean that Arendt denies the close affinity between *reason* and *intellect*. Quite the contrary: She presumes that it is *reason*’s appetite for meaning and its desire to ask unanswer-

³³ W. H. Auden, “Talking to myself,” in *Collected Poems* (Random House, 1976), 653. Appeared in *Ibid.*, 60-61.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁹ Or, we should say that the distinction between *truth* and *meaning* is derived from the distinction between *intellect* and *reason*, from Arendt’ s point of view. For Arendt, *truth* is perceptual truth and the *meaning* of such *truth* is derived from reflecting on what happened, i.e., from the historical understanding.

able questions, i.e., the most primordial sense of wonder.⁴⁰ The problem arises due to the keen affinity between the two different mental capacities, and the philosophers' tendency to apply the criterion of truth to *their own rather extraordinary business*, i.e., thinking activity.⁴¹ And it is in this sense that Kant' is no exception.⁴² In spite of that his "famous distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, between a faculty of speculative thought and the ability to know arising out of sense experience," he could not part altogether with the conviction that the final aim of thinking, as of knowledge, is truth and cognition."⁴³ That discussion is carried to *LM: I*, 6, "The thinking ego and the self: Kant." As the title of the section suggests, the overview of *LM: I*, 6 is to examine the relationship between the thinking ego and the self, which Arendt finds in Kant's "I think." Arendt launches this section by pointing out the role that Kant's notion of the "thing in itself" (transcendental object) plays in his noumena/phenomena distinction. That is, his notion of "thing in itself" allows him to treat appearance as "mere representation."⁴⁴

Let us start with the text of *LM: I* that begins toward the end of page 42 and extends to the beginning of the following page. Here, Arendt posits that "thinking is not the self," which seems to be her main contention in this chapter.⁴⁵ Arendt says,

If I reflect on the relation of me to myself obtaining in the thinking activity, it may well seem as though my thought were 'mere representations' or manifestations of an ego that itself remains forever concealed, for thoughts of course are never anything like properties that can be predicated of a self or a person.⁴⁶

According to Arendt, the "thinking ego is not the self," for neither it appears to others nor to itself as "the self of self-awareness."⁴⁷ And yet the thinking ego is "not nothing."⁴⁸ The thinking ego as "not nothing" causes a "metaphysical fallacy," for it plays a role as "thing in itself" upon which appearance is grounded and makes appearance as "mere representation."⁴⁹ Arendt points out that the thinking ego cannot be the self but is a "sheer activity" that lacks "a life" story, unlike the self.⁵⁰

We can follow where her claim comes from in the next page.

The inner sense that might let us get hold of the thinking activity in some sort of inner intuition has nothing to hold on to, according to Kant, because its manifestations are ut-

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁴² As we mentioned in n. 13 above, the real target of Arendt's criticism on this matter is Heidegger, not Kant.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 62-63. Arendt points out his use of *Vernunftserkenntnis*, "knowledge arising out of pure reason" is a contradiction in terms for him.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

terly unlike 'the appearance confronting external sense [which finds] something still and remaining...while time, the only form of inner intuition, has nothing permanent.' Hence, 'I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This representation is a thought, not an intuition.' And he adds in a footnote; 'the 'I think' expresses the act of determining my existence. Existence is already given thereby, but the mode in which I am...is not thereby given.'⁵¹

Arendt's remarks are threefold in this section. One: Though the inner sense might let us get hold of the thinking activity, the inner intuition itself does not have anything to get hold of. Two: The "I" of my consciousness, i.e., "that I am," is a "representation" of a "thought," *not* an intuition. Three: Though the "I think" is said to express "the act of determining my *existence*," that "*existence*," i.e., the "I" of the "I think," the mode how "I am" is not given in that act. Arendt seems to think that to mention these remarks is sufficient proof for her claims; namely, that the "thinking ego is not the self" (to take that ego as the self is a metaphysical fallacy) and that "the thinking ego is Kant's 'thing in itself,'" both of which are seen as "metaphysical fallacies." In order to clarify her claims and intentions we require much closer examination.

There are two clues to clarifying Arendt's claims that the "thinking ego is not the self" and "thinking ego is Kant's thing in itself." First, by criticizing Kant's notion of "thing in itself," Arendt points out that the notion not only reduces appearance to mere representation, but that it also contradicts his own thesis in the first *Critique*: "We assert that the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and that for this reason they have objective validity in a synthetic a priori judgment."⁵² Second, Arendt claims that his notion of "thing in itself" is derived from the *reflection* on one's thinking activity, i.e., the "not-at-all ordinary experience of the thinking ego."⁵³ It is on these two points that Arendt claims that taking the thinking ego as the self is a "metaphysical fallacy" or, "semblance of reason" must be clarified.⁵⁴

Now, Kant's notion of the "I think" is another name for intellect. As Arendt points out, intellect as the act of thought is said to express the "act of determining my *existence*" according to Kant.⁵⁵ However, Arendt also suggests that the "I" of that "I think," viz., "my *existence*," which lies in my consciousness as "the unity of the I think" is not an intuition but a *representation of thought*. When Arendt denounces that the "thinking ego is not the self," she casts doubt on identifying the "I" of the "I think" as my "*existence*."⁵⁶ Our task is thus to analyze why Arendt claims that "*existence*" cannot be conceived as the "self," and what she intends to establish by claiming this.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S Pluhar & Patricia Kitcher (Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), B 158. n. 296, emphasis added; hereafter abbreviated *CPR*.

Kant's synthetic a priori judgment can claim its objective validity because in it "the conditions of the possibility of experience in general" and "the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience" are unified; the conditions that make it possible for the object to appear. Though it is the pure concepts (categories) that combine the given manifold in judgment that makes the object presentable to us, without sensibility the pure concept is empty. We cannot cognize anything by pure concepts alone. Our knowledge relies on sensible intuition. In other words, in synthetic a priori judgment, the manifold given in intuition is combined with the concept (category), so that the apprehension of the representation of the object is possible.

Now, though the "I think" forms the synthetic unity between the concept and intuition, the "I think" itself is a representation of the transcendental unity of apperception, or, self-consciousness.⁵⁷ It is that self-consciousness—the unity of the "I"—that makes the unity of the manifold given in intuition prior to its combination with thought.

The crucial point in all of this is that Kant considers the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions to be the "basis of the identity itself of apperception."⁵⁸ This means that, without a synthesis of the manifold given in intuition, no judgment is possible, and since the synthesis of manifold given in intuition cannot be thought without one identical consciousness, the "I" as the unity, which makes up such consciousness, must "exist," if thinking takes place. Thus Kant posits, "I am, then conscious of the self as identical, as regards the manifold of the presentations given to me in an intuition, because I call them one and all my (re)presentations that make up one (re)presentation."⁵⁹ Consequently, I can combine the given manifold with a concept. That is why Kant says that the "I think" must be "capable of accompanying all my (re) presentations."⁶⁰ Thus, when the "I think" is said to be a representation, which is synonymous with an act of spontaneity, it is in the self-consciousness that the "I" of the "I think" lies. And it is solely on this point, from which Arendt's contention that the "I" cannot be identified with the "self" but should be regarded as "thing in itself," is derived. Thus, we have to look into the nature of that "I" as a thought representation next.

Kant says about the "I" of the "I think" as following:

[T]he proposition I think precedes the experience that is to determine the object of perception through the category in regard to time; and the existence is here not yet a category. The category of *existence* has reference not to an indeterminate given object, but

⁵⁶ Kant writes, "We saw that in order for me to cognize an object different from myself, I not only require the thinking (which I have in the category) of an object as such, but do also require an intuition whereby I determine that universal concept. In the same way, in order to cognize myself too, I not only require the consciousness of myself or the fact that I think myself but require also an intuition of the manifold in me whereby I determine this thought. And I exist as an intelligence. This intelligence is conscious solely of its power of combination." *CPR*, B 158-159. Emphasis added.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, B 132.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, B 134.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, B 135, emphasis added.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, B.132.

only to an object of which one has a concept and concerning which one wants to know whether or not it is posited also outside of this concept. An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real that has been given—and given only for thought as such, and hence not as appearance nor as thing in itself (noumenon) but as something that in fact exists and is marked as such in the proposition I think. For we must note that, when I called the proposition I think and an empirical proposition, I did not mean that the I in this proposition is an empirical (re)presentation. Rather, this (re)presentation is purely intellectual, because it belongs to thought as such.⁶¹

As we have seen that the “I think” as the act of spontaneity, which is the understanding makes the synthesis between sensibility and the concept possible, it requires the manifold given in intuition for its act. That is why Kant says that the “I think” is an “empirical proposition.” However, as we also have seen, the “I think,” is impossible without the unity of apperception within which the one and the same “I” lies. Though the proposition “I think” is an empirical one, the “I” of the “I think” itself is *not* an empirical representation but “purely intellectual” representation.⁶² It means that the “I” cannot be thought through the “category of *existence*,” for the “category of *existence*” is not a real predicate but the “copula of a judgment.”⁶³ By this concept “nothing further can be added” but it is only referring to the subject.⁶⁴ In other words, the subject must be determined, if something is judged through the “category of *existence*.” It is used for a judgment when we have a “determinate concept and wish to determine whether there is an actual object answering to that concept.”⁶⁵ But the “I” here is an “indeterminate given object” or, an “indeterminate perception.” Furthermore, to think through categories means that the (thinking) subject—the “I” of the “I think”—must also be regarded as the object of categories. However, the “I think” as judgment can use categories only if the manifold is given in sensible intuition, and such judgment is possible only where apperception—self-consciousness—unifies the “I” as the same one thinking subject. This means that the “I” is already presupposed in the “I think” as judgment. In other words, without such presupposition of the *existence* of the thinking subject, the “I think” cannot function, though it is impossible to think the “*existence*” of the “I” of the “I think” through categories. It means that the “I” of the “I think,” this “*existence*” never appears. More precisely, it can be thought but cannot be cognized.

Henry Allison comments on the “I” of the “I think” which echoes with Arendt’s claim. His point is that since the “I” cannot be thought through the “category of *existence*,” it is not able to be assigned to an individual thinker, and thus the “I think” cannot “issue in a genuine existential judgment.”⁶⁶ The “I” of the “I think” never appears and remains anonymous, can-

⁶¹ Kant, *CPR*, B 423, emphasis added.

⁶² Or as Arendt quotes from *CPR*, B 157, “I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This representation is a thought, not an intuition.” See *LM*: I, 43.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, B 598.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (Yale University Press, 1983), 281.

not be an “individual thinker,” and thus it is “without a life story” as Arendt points out. The “I” is nobody, yet it is “not nothing.”⁶⁷ The very anonymity of the thinking subject is what Arendt calls the “thinking ego.”

Based on our analysis on the “I” of the “I think,” we need to turn now to our second question. That is, we answer the question of determining what Arendt is trying to establish in claiming that “the thinking ego (*existence*) is not the self.” From our analyses so far, what remains is an “indeterminate perception,” which is “something real—given only for thought as such” or, what Arendt calls “not nothing.”

Allison’s interpretation of the thinking ego as the “indeterminate perception” provides us a helpful insight as to what Arendt is trying to articulate. He says that that “something real,” “something in general x”—the “indeterminate perception”—is the “transcendental subject of the thought.”⁶⁸ He suggests two reasons why the “indeterminate perception” as the thinking subject can be understood as the “transcendental subject. The first point is one that we have already discussed. That is, as the subject of apperception it cannot grasp itself as an object, for such attempt negates its character as a subject. It is his second remark that is helpful for our inquiry. He notes that “[A]s that through which alone there can be objects (whether of mere thought or of experience), it must be thought as already on the scene, doing the conceptualizing.”⁶⁹ Allison’s remarks capture the nature of the “I” in the “I think” as the nameless or anonymous knowing subject. It cannot be known as the object of its own activity, yet it is already there in the thinking activity “doing the conceptualizing” while without that conceptualizing activity it cannot be aware of itself. He suggests Wittgenstein’s analogy to explain that relation between the thinking ego and its activity: “[J]ust as the eye cannot see itself because it is not part of its own visible field, so the subject of apperception cannot think itself as object because it is not itself part of its ‘conceptual field.’”⁷⁰ The “I” of the “I think” taken as the “self” though it is actually the thinking ego, is the very activity of “conceptualizing.” Without the eye there is no “field of vision” in which the objects appear, but it is the act of seeing by the eye that forms that field. Likewise, the thinking ego as the activity of conceptualizing forms the field of conceptualization.

It is in this sense that Arendt is right to suggest that the thinking ego is Kant’s “thing in itself,” for through the viewpoint of that ego, thought does indeed look as if it were “mere representation” of the thinking ego, viz., the concept as the product of the activity of conceptualizing. However, precisely because of that, the “thing in itself” is said to be one of the “metaphysical fallacies” according to Arendt, for the thinking ego is “sheer activity” and not “self.”⁷¹ Or, to take the thinking ego as the “self” is a “semblance of reason.”⁷²

It is in this respect that Arendt’s claim, that Kant’s distinction between *Vernunft* (reason)

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Arendt. *LM:I*, 43.

⁶⁸ Allison. *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 292.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 292-293.

and *Verstand* (intellect) makes room not for faith but for thought, takes shape in the introduction of *LM: I*.⁷³ We need to recall that Arendt indicated that the origin of the “metaphysical fallacies” is derived from equating the “meaning,” which is the quest of reason, with the model of “truth,” bequest of intellect.⁷⁴ Arendt's claim there was that Kant and his successors paid no attention to “thinking as an activity and even less to the experiences of thinking ego.”⁷⁵ Arendt's claim in the section 6 of *LM: I*, the “thinking ego is not the self,” then, is her actual demonstration of what she has claimed at the very beginning of the same text. That is, the “metaphysical fallacy” arises when philosophers demand the kind of certainty that we experience in our cognition from reason and the activity of thinking. Arendt reveals why the “certainty” experienced *in thinking* activity is different of that of cognition. Since the “I” itself is not an object of (determinative) judgment, the certainty of my *existence* is not derived from perception but from thinking activity. To put it more strongly, what Arendt is doing here is to cast doubt on the basis of the validity derived from the certainty experienced by the thinking ego, or, “*existence*” as “purely intellectual representation.”

Now let us recall the conditions that make possible the claim of the objective validity of Kant's synthetic a priori judgment. The objective validity of the synthetic a priori judgment can be claimed due to the conformity between the “conditions of the possibility of experience in general” and the “conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience” according to Kant.⁷⁶ The conformity of those conditions is particularly important in understanding Arendt's contention here, for her contention challenges the conditions regarding to the nature of the “I.” That is, since the objective validity of the synthetic a priori judgment is derived from the conformity between the “conditions of the possibility of experience in general” and the “conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience” for Kant, and since that synthesis is possible due to the unity of the “I” (one self-consciousness), the judgment, which confirms the existence of the apprehended (or perceived) object, also must refer back to the “*existence*” of the judging agent, viz., the thinking ego.⁷⁷ Needless to say, the crucial point is that the conditions, which make it possible for us to cognize, are also the conditions that make the object appear to us. It means that the way we know of the existence of the object prescribes how things are to be. In other words, if our way of cognizing the object allows us to know that the

⁷¹ Arendt. *LM: I*, 44.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Kant. *CPR.*, B.197.

⁷⁷ “Understanding—speaking generally—is the power of cognitions. Cognitions consist in determinate reference of given (re)presentations to an object. And an object is that in whose concept the manifold of a given intuition is united. But all unification of (re)presentations requires that there be unity of consciousness in the synthesis of them. Consequently the reference of (re)presentations to an object consists solely in this unity of consciousness, and hence so does their objective validity and consequently their becoming cognitions. On this unity, consequently, rests the very possibility of the understanding.” *Ibid.*, B 137.

object exists, the same conditions should allow us to know our *existence* as well. However, as we have argued above, “*existence*” (thinking ego) is an unknowable, non-appearing, anonymous “indeterminate perception.” It means that there is a discrepancy between the criterion of the certainty of the “*existence*” of the thinking subject (ego) and that of the existence of the object. Yet, as we have seen in Kant, the certainty of the “*existence*” (thinking ego) solely depends on the manifold given in intuition, even though that “*existence*” itself is unknowable. *Consequently, it means either the objective validity of the synthetic a priori judgment is invalid or the account of the “existence” as knowing subject is invalid.* Denouncing the “I” of the “I think” as *not* being the “self” raises the question as to *who* is that judging agent to whom the *existence* of the apprehended object is supposed to *refer back*. Putting it differently, by pointing out the “I” of the “I think”—the “I” lying in self-consciousness—is a “thought representation,” and by suggesting that Kant contradicts himself about the objective validity of the synthetic *a priori* judgment, Arendt questions the modern philosophical account of human *existence*, which is derived from reflection on the thinking activity.

III. Dismantling of metaphysics and Heidegger in *LM I*:§18

After going through a rather lengthy exposition of Arendt’s discussion in *LM*: I, 6 in the previous section, it is all the more striking when we take into consideration what we have learned about Arendt’s claims such as “Being and Appearing coincide” and appearance determines the “whole *existence*.” On the one hand, by pointing out that to follow Kant in taking the “thinking ego as the self” is to commit a “metaphysical fallacy,” Arendt challenges the account of human *existence* given in the modern philosophical tradition by professional thinkers whose concern is primarily thinking. At the same time, this denunciation contains her implicit intention to propose an alternative account of human *existence* based on her understanding of appearances.

It is in Arendt’s discussion on the thinking dialogue in *LM*:I, 18, “The two-in-one,” that her intention becomes clearer in this regard. It is in this section where we can find further evidence that Arendt’s dismantling of metaphysics is her attempt at dismantling thinking reflection and the “feeling of certainty” aroused in that reflection as the basis of the self. Such dismantling is carried by contrasting the self (human *existence*) as an appearance.

In *LM*: I, 18, “The two-in-one,” Arendt again takes up her analysis of thinking activity. Here, Arendt asks what the harmony that Socrates insisted on keeping within himself suggests; her answer is that the harmony has been understood as a model of conscience in the philosophical tradition. The harmony—the thinking dialogue between me and myself—is the reflection held in the thinking activity, which is the thinking ego analyzed previously. Following this claim, our immediate concern is to trace further her accounts of both the origin of the “metaphysical fallacy” and of the “self” based on appearances in her explanations of the nature of the thinking dialogue, viz., the “two-in-one.”

At the same time, there is an equally important, if not greater, theme in this section that we must suggest. This will help us to articulate Arendt’s overall intention of *LM*: I and its rela-

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tion to *LKPP*, noted at the beginning of this paper, namely, the issue that attending Eichmann's provoked in her: determining the relation between the ability to think and to make a judgment.

Let us first inquire into Arendt's introduction of the issue of the harmony she found in Socrates. Arendt quotes two examples from the dialogue, *Gorgias*. First, "[i]t is better to be wronged than to do wrong."⁷⁸ Second, "[i]t would be better for me that my lyre or a chorus I directed should be out of tune and loud with discord, and that multitudes of men should disagree with me rather than that I, being one, should be out of harmony with myself and contradict me."⁷⁹ Arendt argues that the first is a "subjective proposition." That is, what at stake here is not about being against the law of the city but being against for myself.⁸⁰ Socrates' position is not that of citizen but a person who is "chiefly devoted to thinking."⁸¹ "If you are in love with wisdom and philosophizing," then harmony between me and myself is required.⁸² If you do have harmonious relationship between you and yourself, then you prefer to suffer from someone's wrong-doing than commit a wrong-doing by yourself. It seems that a moral proposition arose "out of the thinking experience as such."⁸³ The "seeming" is one of our clues to analyze what Arendt is trying to accomplish in this chapter. To reformulate it, the question is this: Is it really the case that the moral precept is based on thinking; or, in what sense can we say that thinking is a pre-requisite for moral feeling?

In order to answer this question, Arendt sheds light on the nature of "being one" in the second proposition. The "being one," which indicates the harmonious relation between "me" and "myself," is not merely one, but is constituted by two, for "nothing that is identical with itself, truly and absolutely one, as A is A, can be either in or out of harmony with itself."⁸⁴ It suggests that in the thinking dialogue the "I" is split into two, by which "difference" is introduced in my Oneness. The phrase "being one" means I am myself and for myself, and thus I am with myself, i.e., "a difference is inserted into my Oneness."⁸⁵ For Arendt, the decisive point lies the relation between "myself" and "for myself," which is considered to form a "unity" in the thinking dialogue. In order for us to say that the "I," who is conscious of "myself," and "for myself" are the "being one" forming a unity, we have to be able to say that the "I" and "for myself" are the same and different at the same time. Thus, the nature of a difference "inserted into my Oneness" plays a key role in understanding the "I" as a unity, viz., "being one." The two-in-one, the unity of the I in "being one" is what we call consciousness.⁸⁶ The question is

⁷⁸ Arendt. *LM*: I, 181.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 181-182. From the viewpoint of the common world, whether you commit a wrong-doing or you suffer from someone's wrong-doing does not make any difference, according to Arendt. "What counts is that the wrong had been done(.)"

⁸¹ *Ibid.*,182.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*,183.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

where that inserted difference comes from, or if what is inserted is “difference” at all. It is on those points that Arendt further proceeds to examine the relation between the self and thinking activity.

We should pay close attention to the fact that in order for her to carry out her examination of the relation between the self and thinking activity, Arendt looks to Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato’s *Sophist*.⁸⁷

The Stranger in the dialogue states that of two things—for instance, rest and motion—‘each one is different [from the other], but itself for itself the same’ (*hekaston heautô tauton*). In interpreting the sentence, Heidegger puts the emphasis on the dative, *heautô*, for Plato does not say, as we would expect, *hekaston auto tauton*, ‘each one itself [taken out of context] is the same,’ in the sense of the tautological A is A, where difference arises out of the plurality of things. According to Heidegger, this dative means that ‘each thing itself is returned to itself, each itself is the same for itself [because it is] with itself···Sameness implies the relation of ‘with,’ that is a mediation, a connection, a synthesis; the unification into a unity.⁸⁸

Arendt explains that Heidegger’s interpretation comes from the part where he is examining Plato’s notion of the “community” of the Ideas, particularly that of Difference and Identity.⁸⁹ The opposite Ideas, e.g. “rest” and “motion,” are not different from each other in comparison of each other. Rather each Idea is in itself and at the same time for itself by partaking the Idea of Difference insofar as they “refer back” to itself.⁹⁰ The point Arendt tries to make in analyzing Heidegger’s interpretation is that the “difference” does not come from outside (of itself) “but is inherent in every entity in the form of duality, from which comes unity as unification.”⁹¹ In saying this, Arendt objects to Heidegger’s interpretation of the “difference.”

What is her objection? When I reflect on my own thinking activity, my thought becomes the object of my thinking, i.e., it becomes for me. Even though Arendt herself does not differentiate the terms, what she means is that when I reflect on my own knowing (cognitive) activity, my apprehension of the object, viz., the concept, becomes the object of my thinking activity. Her own example is the work of art. A chair and the painting of that chair are not the same. Van Gogh’s apprehension of the chair he had in his room allows him to grasp the object as a chair, whereas his painting of the same chair doesn’t merely represent Van Gogh’s chair but has been transformed to reveal the “meaning” of the painting. The work of art is the result of thought’s transformation, whose end is the meaning, i.e., a “thought thing.”⁹² The word “for”

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ The text Arendt mentions here is Heidegger’s *Identity and Difference* (Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh [The University of Chicago Press, 1969]).

⁸⁸ *LM*: I., 183-184, emphasis added.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁹² *Ibid.*

suggests that the object of cognition has gone through a transformation to prepare a “thought object,” so that the thinking activity can think about the meaning. In other words, thinking has taken possession of what was represented in the cognitive activity.⁹³ Arendt writes, “[W]hat is being transformed here is the experience of the thinking ego to things themselves.”⁹⁴

Arendt explains how thinking “takes possession” of the cognitive activity through the power of re-presentation, i.e., *imagination*. The “thought object” is prepared by the twofold transformation of the *imagination*. *Imagination* de-senses the given object, thus creates the “image” (or, representation) from which the thinking “goes even further” to prepare the “thought object” (or, concept). The “thought object” is always physically “absent” and is “never present to sense experience.” It comes into being “only when the mind actively and deliberately remembers, recollects and selects from the storehouse of memory whatever arouses its interest sufficiently to induce concentration.”⁹⁵ From the viewpoint of the thinking ego, this experience of engaging with the “thought object” is as if the invisible Being, which had been concealing, had come forward revealing itself “only to the mind.”⁹⁶ Of course, that is an illusion or, a “metaphysical fallacy” according to Arendt, for even what is called “productive” *imagination* is entirely depend on the “reproductive” *imagination*.

It is at this point that we can trace what Arendt has dealt with in *LM*: I, 6 is now re-introduced in the discussion of *LM*: I, 18 (“The two-in-one”) and forms a thematic unity. As we have demonstrated through our analyses of *LM*: I, 6, Arendt’s contention there was the issue of taking the thinking ego as the “self.” The thinking ego—the “I” of the “I think,” the non-appearing purely intellectual representation—is considered to be the “*existence*” of the “self” or, the thinking subject, which is presupposed to reside in consciousness. Without this presupposition, synthetic a priori judgment is impossible, since the “*existence*” of the “I” in consciousness is the sole reason why all representations are brought to me as *my* representations, which is the pre-requisite for the synthetic a priori judgment for Kant. The “I” (the “*existence*” of myself) is the activity of “conceptualizing” without being itself conceptualized, thus it is the “I” that is the basis of all synthesis. As the conceptualizing activity, the “I” is considered to be the concealed source of the forming field of conceptualization. What Heidegger’s interpretation of the relation between the identity and difference in the *Sophist* offers is an explanation how the relation between the “self” (“*existence*”) and the concept forms a unity. It is in this relation between the “I” (“self”) and the concept that thinking is considered to form the synthesis between “myself” and “for myself.” Arendt explicitly challenges such an understanding of the “I” in *LM*: I, 18 by suggesting that not only is the thinking ego not the self but also the “thought object” cannot be identified with that ego. “[I]t is not the thinking activity that constitutes the unity, unifies the two-in-one; on the contrary, the two-in-one become One again when the outside world intrudes upon the thinker and cuts short the thinking process. Then, when he is called by his name

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

back into the world of appearances, where he is always One, it is as though the two into which the thinking process had split him clapped together again.”⁹⁷ Arendt’s contention is that the thinking activity does not constitute the unity of the “self”, but, instead, the appearance of the particular individual person constitutes that unity.

The “I” or the “self,” which makes conceptualization possible is actually a “sheer activity,” and that “sheer activity” is not the “self” but is the “thinking ego” according to Arendt. Taking the sheer activity as the abiding “self” allows one to claim that the thinking activity forms the unity, for the unity, which the thinking offers, is derived from an illusory duality. The duality, which is believed to form the unity in the thinking reflection, does not point out the synthetic unity between the concept and the intuition, which makes it possible for a person to perceive the object. Rather, it points out the relation between the purely intellectual representation and the concept (“thought object”), i.e., the relation to something it is “not,” viz., the transcendental object or, according to Allison’s interpretation, the transcendental subject. It is in that relation that the Idea of God is said to be “for us.”

In other words, what this duality does is to create a space in which the ego alone can *exist*.⁹⁸ Even the duality, which can be termed as a “space,” is only a *metaphor*, since there is nothing permanent in the thinking ego as a sheer activity, and since the ego never appears in space nor is knowable as an object. Thus, Arendt insists that taking the pure intellectual representation as the “*existence*” of the (knowing) “self” is a “metaphysical fallacy,” for it contradicts the very conditions by which the objective validity of Kant’s synthetic a priori judgment is derived. It seems that by interpreting the “I” lying in consciousness as the “*existence*” of the “self,” it becomes possible to claim that it is thinking activity that ultimately provides the basis for cognition and its objective validity. But self-consciousness, in which the “I” is presupposed to “exist” as the abiding “self,” and by which alone Kant’s “I think” can function and claim its objective validity, merely points out the reflexive nature of thinking activity. Arendt’s true intention regarding to dealing with thinking ego and the “self” in *LM*: I, 6 and 18 will become clear when we pay attention to Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of Kant’s epistemology.

IV. Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant and Arendt’s critical response

The aim of the following is to offer a brief sketch of Arendt’s criticism of the claim that thinking activity forms a synthesis can be read as her critical response to Heidegger. More precisely, what we have seen as Arendt’s “dismantling of metaphysics” in the section III of this paper can be understood as her criticism of Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of Kant’s transcendental imagination as manifested in his work, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In this final section, we will further articulate on this point. As such, our purpose in this section

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 187. “[T]his ego—the I-am-I—experienced difference in identity precisely when it is not related to the things that appear but only related to itself.”

is to demonstrate that Arendt's dismantling of thinking activity in the *LM*: I is her implicit criticism of Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's transcendental imagination as productive imagination in the Schematism.

In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger interprets Kant's first *Critique* as the laying the ground for metaphysics, or, what he means by a fundamental ontology.⁹⁹ Heidegger's main contention is that what are transcendental (*a priori*) conditions for Kant's epistemology in *CPR* can be read as ontological knowledge. Kant provides a theory of *a priori* conditions, which prescribe how the knowing subject and the object known are related to each other, and upon which the objective validity of human knowledge is revealed, along with its limitations. In short, Kant rests the objective validity of his transcendental epistemology on the agreement of a set of conditions. That is, "The conditions for the possibility of experience in general are *at the same time* conditions for the possibility of the objects of experience."¹⁰⁰ Heidegger, in his ontological interpretation on Kant's epistemology, pays attention to the same set of conditions but specifically focuses on the "at the same time."¹⁰¹ He suggests that, in order for us as finite beings to know something, the object must appear to us, or, *be* for us. What makes the act of experiencing possible is what *at the same time* makes the object able to be encountered by us possible, viz., it makes the object "experienceable."¹⁰² It means that, since our way of knowing allows us to encounter the object, it is in our knowing activity that the condition of the *be-ing* of the object is revealed. As finite beings, our knowledge depends on the object that we did not create and the way in which we encounter that object. In other words, Heidegger interprets the conditions of human knowledge as a way to form self-consciousness as the horizon of experience, and as such he proposes viewing self-consciousness as the *Being* of the self. Ontological knowledge is not the knowledge of the object as such; rather, what Heidegger means is that self-consciousness, by which an object becomes experienceable for us, can be understood not only as knowing activity but also as the activity of the self, viz., the *Being* of the self. In this context, knowing, for Heidegger, primarily means *Being* and what Kant means by "knowing" is mere thinking.¹⁰³ In other words, for Heidegger "pure thinking" is ontological knowing, viz., ontological knowledge.¹⁰⁴ And it is at this moment that Heidegger reverses Kant's epistemology into ontological knowledge. Thus, a pure synthesis means the formation of the horizon in which the correlation between the *Being* of the being and our way of knowing as finite beings is revealed.¹⁰⁵ Heidegger calls this revelation "transcendence."

⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Indiana University Press, 1991), 1, hereafter abbreviated as *KPM*.

¹⁰⁰ *CPR*. B 197, emphasis added.

¹⁰¹ *KPM*, 84.

¹⁰² "[W]hat makes an experiencing possible at the same time makes possible the experienceable, or rather experiencing [an experienceable] as such. This means: transcendence makes the being in itself accessible to a finite creature." *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 81.

He transforms transcendental knowledge, which ascribes what we can know, into ontological knowledge, which reveals how these two sets of conditions are synthesized in a pure synthesis, and consequently how such a synthesis reveals the Being of the self.

At this point, we need to examine if there are parallels between Arendt's "dismantling of metaphysics," which we have dealt with in our previous section, and Heidegger's ontological interpretation of Kant. The first parallel that we can trace is between her understanding of the origin of the "metaphysical fallacy" and Heidegger's account of knowing. Arendt posits that the "metaphysical fallacy" arises by interpreting *reason* through the lens of the cognitive model (intellect). It is derived from philosophers who blur the boundary between thinking (*reason*) and knowing (*intellect*) by "demanding the kind of results and applying the kind of criteria for certainty and evidence that are the results and the criteria of cognition" of thinking.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, as mentioned above, through his interpretation Heidegger proposes that a pure synthesis forms the horizon of ontological knowledge. It is in his ontological interpretation that Heidegger redefines what the knowing activity is. For that reason, Heidegger posits that *truth* is twofold: "the unveilingness of Being" and "the openness [*Offenbarkeit*] of beings."¹⁰⁷ Thus, he claims that "[i]f ontological knowledge unveils the horizon, then its *truth* lies precisely in [the act of] letting the beings be encountered within the horizon."¹⁰⁸ In other words, *truth* lies in "the act of" knowing, which means in the Being of the self, for Heidegger. It is not difficult to trace Heidegger's account of *truth* and knowing in Arendt's criticism on "metaphysical fallacy" in *LM: I*, for Heidegger's knowing is really *thinking*.

It is here that we can suggest that the first parallelism lies between Heidegger's account of knowing and *truth* and Arendt's criticism of the "metaphysical fallacy" in her claim that it originates in equating the thinking activity (*reason*) with the cognitive activity (*intellect*). What this all means is that if in fact Arendt's "dismantling of metaphysics" is aimed at Heidegger's ontology, evidence to support such a view must be traced in her discussions and remarks on the "metaphysical fallacy," which can be understood as her criticism of Heidegger's identification of *truth* with Being.

This leads us the second parallelism, which contrasts Heidegger's account of the "self" in *KPM* to Arendt's insistence that the thinking ego cannot be conceived as the "self" in *LM: I*. As mentioned in the first parallelism, what marks Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's epistemology is the analysis of the ontological implication of forming the horizon. The crucial point for us is that Heidegger interprets the forming of the horizon as being an activity of thinking,

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 102. Heidegger's ontological interpretation of Kant's epistemology thus aims at revealing "ontological knowledge," in which "knowing" (Kant) is taken as "thinking." Therefore, in the following analyses/discussions, this paper displaces what Heidegger writes "knowing" to "thinking" in order for us to see that point within the context of Heidegger's ontological interpretation.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰⁶ *LM: I*, 13.

¹⁰⁷ *KPM*, 87.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

which is equal to the Being of the self. Before getting into detailed analysis, let us overview the locus of the issue in the second parallelism.

Heidegger's claim is that the synthesis of the transcendental imagination, viz., the synthetic *a priori* judgment, which takes place in the Schematism, forms the horizon where a set of conditions for the objective validity of knowledge coincide. Heidegger understands the forming horizon to be the integration of time in self-consciousness, in which an object is grasped as the determination of time. It is in the synthesis of the transcendental imagination (i.e., in the activity of forming the horizon through the "I think") that the "I" of the self is "necessarily apparent," according to Heidegger.¹⁰⁹ He claims that both the "I think" and the "I" lie "in 'pure self-consciousness,'" which "can only be elucidated based on the Being of the self."¹¹⁰

As an aside at this point, Arendt's criticism – that taking the thinking ego to be the "self" is a "metaphysical fallacy" – can be understood as raising the question of *whose activity is Heidegger's thinking, really?* It asks that, if forming the horizon fulfills a set of conditions for establishing objective validity, then can we really say that that activity manifests the "I," as Heidegger claims? In short, Arendt's criticism of taking the thinking ego to be the "self," addressed against Heidegger's account of the "self," is tantamount to asking *who is Heidegger's "self?"*

Returning to Heidegger, the pivotal point for his ontological interpretation is his equating Kant's transcendental imagination with time, by seeing it as the common root of both understanding and intuition. Ontological knowledge is a pure synthesis that forms the horizon and occurs in the Schematism in which intuition and understanding are unified. Heidegger's "self" is the horizon that integrates different tenses into one continuous time succession, viz., "Self"-consciousness. What makes it possible for Heidegger to claim that this account of the "self" is valid is derived from his interpretation of Kant's transcendental imagination as *productive*, as is articulated in § 33 of *KPM*: The Inner Temporal Character of the Transcendental Power of Imagination. Here, he articulates three different tenses—present, past, and future—as the three different modes of the pure synthesis of the *imagination*. The first synthesis is "pure apprehension," by which he means the pure synthesis of the manifold as an immediate grasp of the now or, "this-here."¹¹¹ It "produces—the immediate look of the now as such."¹¹² The second one is "pure reproduction," which designates the formation of the past; "it brings the horizon of the earlier into view and holds it open as such in advance."¹¹³ The third one is "pure recognition," which designates the future.

All of this plays a central role for our current discussion. Heidegger claims that "pure recognition" as a mode of synthesis of transcendental imagination is the synthesis of the "sameness" ahead of the previous two modes of synthesis, and thus is the ground for them.¹¹⁴ The

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *KPM*, 125.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 126.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 127.

“sameness” is derived from the concept, or more precisely from the synthesis “in concept, for the concept is indeed the representing of the unity which as selfsame ‘applies to many.’”¹¹⁵ It is this mode of the pure synthesis of imagination (“pure recognition”) that allows the unity of “one consciousness,” since it is the synthesis in concept that “*unifies* the manifold.”¹¹⁶

The third mode of the synthesis of transcendental imagination (“pure recognition”) has crucial importance here. Heidegger’s position is that this synthesis is a synthesis in concept that is characterized by its “sameness” (i.e., universality). Even though the first synthesis enables us to grasp the immediate presentation in intuition, without the aid of the concept it is a sheer mass of indeterminate impressions. The key point is that the synthesis in concept comes *ahead of* the given manifold. Pure concept as the articulation of the same is “already oriented *in advance* toward the being.”¹¹⁷ Heidegger interprets the characteristic of the third mode of synthesis as future-oriented: “It explores in advance and is ‘watching out for’ what must be *held before us in advance* as the same in order that the apprehending and reproducing synthesis in general can find a closed, circumscribed field of beings within which they can attach to what they bring forth and encounter, so to speak, and take them in stride as beings.”¹¹⁸ In other words, because of the third mode of synthesis of the transcendental imagination, the present and the past are *unified* into the one selfsame “self”-consciousness as one continuous time succession. More importantly, though, this synthesis carries the sameness *in advance*, so that the *returning* synthesis of reproduction can attach to the *same* consciousness, which allows the apprehension.¹¹⁹

From the viewpoint of the object, it means that the object becomes experienceable on that horizon, since the pure synthesis integrates the different modes of time into one continuous time sequence, i.e., the object that is to *be* for us. However, from the viewpoint of subject, it means that through such a synthesis the unified “self” as “self-consciousness” is formed. This, in turn, allows him to claim that the horizon is the “ground of the selfhood.”¹²⁰

Now, we need to examine the nature of the “self,” which is described as the Being of the “self” or “self”-consciousness by Heidegger in order for us to demonstrate that Arendt’s criticism of taking the thinking ego to be the “self” is aimed at Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of Kant. The issue at stake is the relation between Heidegger’s equation of the “I” and the “I think” with respect to forming the horizon.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

¹¹⁹ That is his answer for the question he raised: “[W]hen the mind again returns from its going-back into the past, when it returns again to the directly present being in order to set the former in unity with the latter, who then tells it that this being which is now present is the same as that which is previously abandoned, so to speak, with the fulfillment of the visualization?” *Ibid.*, 129.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 134.

As we have seen in § 33 of *KPM*, to interpret the transcendental imagination as productive plays a pivotal role for Heidegger. It is particularly important for our purposes that Heidegger assigns the synthesis in concept as exploring the horizon *in advance* by representing the sameness.¹²¹ That representing the sameness is the “I think,” which Heidegger understands as the regulative representation. It proposes the “represented unities” in advance. It means that Heidegger interprets the “I think” as a “pre-forming of the horizon of unity which represents ‘*from out of itself*.’”¹²² The “I think,” as a rule-giving representation, provides a framework for how the horizon should be formed. The key here is that Heidegger says that rule-giving is “*from out of itself*,” and as such it is understood as “self-orienting toward....” He writes,

In such an orienting-toward..., or rather in the “self” which was ‘thrown out’ with it, *the “I” of this “self” is necessarily apparent*. In this way, the “I propose” “accompanies” all representing.—The “I” “goes with” in the pure self-orienting. To the extent that it is itself only what it is in this “I think,” the essence of pure thinking as well as that of the I lies in “pure self-consciousness.” This “consciousness” of the self, however, can only be elucidated based on the Being of the self(.)¹²³

Forming the horizon as integrating the different tenses into one time is equal to forming “self-consciousness, according to Heidegger. Through the “I think,” the rule of how the horizon should be formed is given. Yet, “self-consciousness’ relation to the rule is not passive, since the rule is given within itself or, “*from out of itself*.” The very act, the “I think” itself, is considered to be the representation of the rule. Whatever the “I” is, the “I” is taken as the origin of the rule whose representation is the “I think.”

Nonetheless, Heidegger does not suggest that the “I think” is a mere *representation* of the “I.” Rather, what he is suggesting is more like the *split* of the “I” that brings about the “I think.” More precisely, he suggests that the “I” and the “I think” form an *identity*, and it is in that identity that “self-consciousness is formed. Thus, when he claims that “self-consciousness must be understood as the “Being of the self,” he means that the “self” as *thinking activity per se* is understood as forming the identity out of the relation between the “I” and the “I think.” In other words, Heidegger’s account of the “self” is established in the relation *with* itself. He derives his understanding of “self-consciousness as the relation of the “I” *with* the “I think” from two different sources, though he claims that, in the end, they are the same: *time* and *reason*.

Heidegger claims that both *reason* and *time* can be understood as “self-affection.”¹²⁴ Insofar as they are taken as coming out of the “self” and affecting the “self, the essential components of Heidegger’s account of the “self,” they should be recognized as being the same. Both of them provide the theoretical explanation why forming the horizon is the Being of the “self.” The difference between the two lies in the fact that Heidegger’s reading of *reason* claims that

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 106, emphasis added.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 105, emphasis added.

¹²⁴ For reason, see *KPM*, 111. For time, see *KPM*, 133.

forming of the horizon (thinking) is the action (Being) of human being. In its essence *reason* is the very foundation of human freedom for Heidegger.

In Chapter 30 of *KPM*, Heidegger lays out “what and how” the “self,” which lies in the “self”-consciousness or the Being of the “self,” “manifest[s] itself by explicating the structure of the practical *reason*.”¹²⁵ Heidegger posits that the moral I is the “authentic self.”¹²⁶ The core of his argument for our purposes is that Heidegger pays attention to respect as the *moral feeling*, which functions as a “way of Being-self-conscious.”¹²⁷ According to him, feeling is a “self-feeling of that which feels: “The manner in which self-feeling from time to time makes the self manifest, i.e., the manner in which it lets it be, will always be codetermined essentially through the character of that for which the feeling [being], in the self-feeling, has a feeling.”¹²⁸ In other words, Heidegger asserts that feeling is a way we feel ourselves, and thus that which “makes the self-manifest.”¹²⁹ Following Kant, Heidegger says that respect is the *moral feeling*. Since feeling is “self-feeling of that which feels,” having a *moral feeling* suggests that feeling makes the law manifest.¹³⁰ It in turn means that my having a feeling of respect for the law manifests the way I *am*. Since “[e]verything which is possible through freedom is practical,” and “insofar as freedom belongs to the possibility of theoretical reason,” my having a moral feeling suggests that it manifests both myself and the law as the ground for my freedom, viz., action.¹³¹ Thus, not only in my *moral feeling* as the ground of my action (freedom) do the law and *reason* coincide, but myself and *reason* coincide. It means that submitting myself to the law is the “self-affection” that is found in my feeling: “The submitting, self-projecting onto the entire basic possibility of what authentically *exists*, which the law gives, is the essence of the acting Being-itself, i.e., of practical reason.”¹³² The important point is that, by identifying *reason* as the foundation of authentic *existence*, the way one should *be*, Heidegger prepares his theoretical account as to why forming the horizon can be understood as “self”-consciousness, i.e., the Being of the self. It means that by finding the coincidence between *reason* and the “self” in the *moral feeling*, Heidegger is able to provide his theoretical explanation as to why the “I think” as regulative representing is the rule-giving out of itself, and thus why forming the horizon is equal to forming the “self”-consciousness. In other words, for Heidegger, forming the horizon as the activity of thinking is the “manifestation of the self” through its action.

We should, at this point, recall our analysis of *LM*: I. 6, Thinking ego and the self: Kant from the third section of this paper. There, our analysis was that the “I” of the “I think” was a thought representation, a pure intellectual representation, or, to use Arendt’s phrase, an

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 109, emphasis added.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹³² *Ibid.*

“indeterminate perception.” We mentioned there that Henry Allison understands this “indeterminate perception” to be Kant’s transcendental object, without which there is no object to be experienced doing the conceptualizing thought itself that is not the object of such a conceptualization. It is like the eye of the field of vision. We argued there that Arendt’s contention was that the “I” was not the “self” but a sheer activity, i.e., the thinking ego, since the “I” never appears and remains nameless, ageless, and anonymous, lacking a life story. Most importantly, we need to recall Arendt’s insistence that taking the thinking ego to be the “self” contradicts the fulfillment of a set of conditions for objective validity in Kantian epistemology.

It is clear that these points, as outlined in our analysis of Arendt’s criticism of taking the thinking ego to be the “self,” go *against* to Heidegger’s account of the “self.” We have demonstrated that, for Heidegger, forming the horizon is to make an object experienceable, and at the same time it can be understood as the activity of the “self” or, the Being of the “self.” He derives this ontological interpretation of the synthesis from Kant’s conditions for objective validity. For Heidegger, the activity of thinking is possible not only when the “I” splits into the “I think,” but also in the two forms of *identity*. It is the identity formed between the “I” and the “I think.” It is the “I” that provides a specific standpoint ahead of which the horizon is formed. The “I” goes with the “I think”; in that way it is proposing, “self-orienting toward...” But that “I” itself never appears in the way that objects do in the horizon, since the “I” lies in pure “self”-consciousness, or, in the movement of forming the horizon. In other words, the “I” becomes apparent in the way that Heidegger claims only because the “I think” gives the framework of the horizon through its being a regulative representing. But the only way to trace “self-orienting toward...” is when some object actually appears on the horizon, i.e., when that object is conceptualized. It is through the conceptualization of the object that the “I think” makes the “I” apparent, but becoming *apparent is not same as appearing*. So when Heidegger claims that the “I” of the “self” is necessarily apparent in the “I think,” what he really means is that the “I” is apparent to *the eye of the mind*, since he understands the “self” as an activity, not as a being. If the “I” of the “self” as activity or, more precisely as that of knowing becomes apparent in the “I think,” that is so because of a mental inspection of such activity, viz., thinking.

Thus, when Arendt points out that the thinking ego is a “sheer activity” in *LM*: I. 6, what she means is not the knowing activity (i.e., judgment), but thinking activity. It is in this suggestion that we can see an implicit criticism toward Heidegger’s “self” as the Being of the “self.” Furthermore, in her claim that the thinking ego *exists* only in a duality created in the thinking reflection, we can recognize the relation between the “I” and the “I think” in Heidegger’s account of the “self.” These points lead us of her discussion of the origin of conscience in self-consciousness in *LM*: I. 18, “the two-in-one,” in which she takes up Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato’s *Sophist*.

Let us recall that the issue at stake for Arendt in Heidegger’s reading of *Sophist* is his claim that thinking forms the unity, or, synthesis. Arendt inquires into how Heidegger comes up with the notion of identity.

The Stranger in the dialogue states that of two things—for instance, rest and motion—

‘each one is different [from the other], but itself *for itself* the same’ (*hekaston heautô tauton*). In interpreting the sentence, Heidegger puts the emphasis on the dative, *heautô*, for Plato does not say, as we would expect, *hekaston auto tauton*, ‘each one itself [taken out of context] is the same,’ in the sense of the tautological A is A, where difference arises out of the plurality of things. According to Heidegger, this dative means that ‘each thing itself is returned to itself, each itself is the same for itself [because it is] with itself...Sameness implies the relation of ‘with,’ that is a mediation, a connection, a synthesis; the unification into a unity.¹³³

With his emphasis on “with,” Heidegger claims an identity is established between the itself and “for itself.” Yet, Arendt finds Heidegger’s reading erroneous, for there is no “difference” in the relation between itself and “for itself,” as he claims. Rather, she points out, what Heidegger claims as being an “identity” between the two is actually a “relation to something it is *not*.”¹³⁴ The “not” signifies the thinking ego’s relation to itself, according to Arendt.¹³⁵ Our concern here is to ask by pointing out that the “not” signifies the thinking ego, what Arendt really means. If we pay close attention, the issue at stake for Arendt is Heidegger’s interpretation of the horizon as “self”-consciousness, or more precisely as *correlatum*.¹³⁶

Horizon is understood as *correlatum*, since it correlates subject and object as the horizon of experience, and as such horizon is *not* something or, *not* a being according to Heidegger. Rather, Heidegger identifies the *correlatum* or horizon, with object in general x, viz., Kant’s transcendental object, since though it is not a being without it there is no experience possible for us and at the same time there is no object experienceable. It is the thinking activity itself, which as we’ve seen, is the Being of the “self” for Heidegger. Heidegger also calls this *correlatum*, “nothing.”¹³⁷ Meanwhile, the transcendental object immediately reminds us of the fact that Arendt claims that Kant’s thinking ego is the transcendental object as a purely intellectual representation, the non-appearing I engaging in conceptualizing, whose characteristic we traced in the role of the “I” in forming the horizon in Heidegger. As far as Arendt’s criticism on Heidegger’s account of *identity* is concerned, we can see that what she is arguing here is indeed the relation between the “I” and the “I think” in Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s transcendental deduction. Heidegger understands “self”-consciousness as horizon or, *correlatum*, which he identifies with transcendental object. For him, transcendental object is the Being of the “self,” the thinking activity as such in ontological sense. Whereas Arendt criticizes such interpretation that what Heidegger takes as “self”-activity—knowing—is actually thinking activity. Thinking activity cannot be taken as the self but is thinking ego, since it does not appear at all.

In her criticism on Heidegger’s reading of *Sophist* regarding to his account of “identity,”

¹³³ *LM*: I, 183-184, emphasis added.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹³⁶ *KPM*, 86.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

we can see that Arendt is challenging his understanding of “self”-consciousness as the horizon for experienceability of object and the Being of the “self.” In response to his claim, Arendt argues to the contrary, that “consciousness is not the same as thinking,” for the act of consciousness is “intentional” and thus “*cognitive act*” whereas thinking activity is “dialectical.”¹³⁸ According to Arendt, Heidegger’s way to claim *identity* is erroneous and invalid, since it merely suggests the relation between the “I” and the “I think,” or, *reason* and application of rules as regulative representing are the *same*. That is to say with Arendt’s words, in such a relation, “that is, in its identity, reveal no difference, no otherness; *along with its relation to something it is not, it loses its reality.*”

We must recall that in her discussion of the intentionality of appearances, Arendt reaffirms that the nature of intentionality is that “[w]hatever appears is meant to for a perceiver, a potential subject no less inherent in all objectivity than a potential object is inherent in the subjectivity of every intentional act.”¹³⁹ She simply means that in the intentional act both subjectivity and objectivity are built-in. The crucial point is that she claims that the certainty of one’s perceptions rests upon others’ acknowledgement that the same object is also perceived by them, it becomes clear that her position does indeed differ greatly from his.¹⁴⁰

Her remark suggests that in order for us to understand an object, it is not enough to apply universality or the concept to it. Putting it differently, Arendt suggests that, if perception means to apprehend an object, this apprehension is not derived from deduction. It in turn means that she objects to Heidegger’s interpretation of the Schematism as forming a schema-image. A schema-image is produced by a look that sees from a specific standpoint. But what determines that standpoint is the rules, what Heidegger calls pure understanding. As long as a look originates from the same universal viewpoint, intentionality as perception does not require others’ acknowledgement, as Arendt points out. In other words, Heidegger’s understanding of “intention” and consequently his account of the apprehension of object leaves no room for the *existence* of others. But if that is the case, how we know who we are, or even if we exist? Thus, Arendt insists that without acknowledgement by others, “we would not even be able to put faith in the way we appear to ourselves.”¹⁴¹

Based on our series of analyses on the two major parallelisms between Arendt and Heidegger comparing Arendt’s *LM: I* and Heidegger’s *KPM*, it is now clear that the issue at stake for Arendt was Heidegger’s account of the “self,” which is so enclosed in its activity, viz., thinking. As we have delineated its characteristics, the unity of the “self” in Heidegger is derived from the “self-affective” movement of the thinking activity; the split of the “thinking ego” (the D) and the “I think” whose *existence* neither appears nor is a part of the world of appearances through the eyes of Arendt. When Heidegger interprets Kant’s epistemology ontologically, he commits a “metaphysical fallacy.” Heidegger’s account of the “self” and its *existence* are

¹³⁸ Arendt. *LM: I*, 187.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

entirely singular. For Arendt, it is hardly possible to lay the ground of morality, which is conditioned by such understanding of thinking as to Heidegger. In the end, there is not a human being but human beings *exist* on this earth. The infinite plurality is “the law on the earth.”¹⁴²

Now, it is clear why Arendt needs to dismantle metaphysics, which in turn really means to confront with Heidegger’s account of human *existence* and thinking. In her process of such deconstruction, Arendt seeks to articulate the moral/ethical ground in thinking which reflects the fact that human *existence* is fundamentally embedded in plurality.

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¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 187.

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(筑波大学人文学類 非常勤講師 (哲学) / 東洋大学客員研究員)