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KANT 300 YEARS LATER

edited by
Antonio Lamarra and Paola Rumore

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ANTONIO LAMARRA, PAOLA RUMORE

Kant 300 Years Later: Presentazione

Nel 2024 cade il tricentenario della nascita di Immanuel Kant. Si è quindi pensato di dedicare un fascicolo speciale di *Lexicon Philosophicum* alla celebrazione di questa importante ricorrenza, invitando studiosi italiani e stranieri, voci importanti della ricerca internazionale, a contribuire – ognuno a modo proprio – a delineare un ritratto della filosofia kantiana, sempre saldamente ancorato ai testi e al linguaggio dell'autore. Affrontando diversi aspetti del suo pensiero – dalla scienza alla metafisica e all'estetica, dall'etica alla politica e alla religione – i contributi di questo volume si interrogano non soltanto sulle sue radici storiche, ma anche sulle sue ricezioni e reinterpretazioni in contesti più o meno contemporanei. Evitando di presupporre una visione monolitica e unitaria della filosofia kantiana, si è cercato di farne piuttosto emergere la fecondità che scaturisce dalle sue intrinseche tensioni e difficoltà e che si riflette nella varietà delle interpretazioni che l'hanno accompagnata nel corso dei secoli. Emerge così un'immagine composita della filosofia critica, all'interno della quale trovano spazio i molti ambiti in cui la celebre "rivoluzione nel modo di pensare" ha segnato un punto di svolta difficilmente sottovalutabile nella storia del pensiero occidentale.

La filosofia di Kant, innegabilmente figlia del suo tempo, ha dato mostra di una straordinaria capacità di rinnovarsi e di adattarsi alle esigenze delle diverse epoche. Il fascicolo che segue intende rendere omaggio a questa sua grandezza, esplorando i temi in cui si condensa l'eredità di Kant per la nostra epoca e riflettendo sulla loro immutata rilevanza per il nostro tempo. Ancor oggi oggetto di intensi confronti nel mondo accademico, ma capace di suscitare interessi che muovono ben oltre i confini delle competenze specialistiche, la filosofia kantiana parla al nostro tempo: la questione dei fondamenti della conoscenza, dell'etica universale, del rapporto tra morale e religione, della pace e della giustizia globale, del diritto e delle libertà civili sono questioni che, parafrasando Kant, non possono e non potranno mai trovarci indifferenti. Le risposte kantiane non sono soltanto intramontabili punti di riferimento del dibattito filosofico; esse hanno piuttosto stabilito termini e questioni che, più o meno consapevolmente, ci troviamo a impiegare nella nostra maniera di concepire il mondo e di guardare alle nostre esistenze. Insistendo su questa profonda compenetrazione delle riflessioni kantiane con le insopprimibili esigenze della ragione umana, se ne è voluto pensare il tricentenario non solo come una commemorazione storica, ma come un'occasione per ripensare le questioni filosofiche fondamentali che, proprio a partire da Kant e al di là delle epoche, si sono imposte come punti cardinali nell'orientamento del pensiero.

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Nell'avviare il fascicolo alla pubblicazione, desideriamo ringraziare sentitamente i colleghi e gli amici che hanno accolto il nostro invito a partecipare a questo numero speciale della rivista con contributi sempre originali e di grande interesse, non meno che le colleghe dell'ufficio editoriale del CNR-ILIESI. La competenza e l'abnegazione di Maria Cristina Dalfino e di Pamela Barletta sono state decisive per la puntuale e rigorosa messa in pagina del fascicolo. A tutte e tutti loro va la nostra sincera gratitudine.

Antonio Lamarra
CNR-ILIESI, Roma
antonio.lamarra@cnr.it

Paola Rumore
Università degli Studi di Torino
ORCID: 0000-0003-0079-5280
paola.rumore@unito.it

LEXICON PHILOSOPHICUM
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CLEMENS SCHWAIGER

Die Begriffspaare von Urbild und Abbild, von Verstandeswelt und Sinnenwelt

Baumgarten als Vermittler platonischer Einflüsse an Kant

ABSTRACT: A number of Platonic motifs that play a significant role in Kant's thought already appear in Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, the decades-long guide to his lectures on this main philosophical discipline. This paper is the first to undertake a detailed analysis of the presumed sources of such Platonically-influenced key paragraphs from this work. According to §866, God's complete self-knowledge forms the unsurpassed model for a theology practised by finite beings. The classical distinction between 'mundus sensibilis' and 'mundus intelligibilis' takes on a decidedly practical flavour in §869, when God is conceived of as the scrutinizer of hearts. In situating these two pieces of teaching historically, it becomes apparent that Baumgarten on the one hand draws on the conceptual pair of 'theologia archetypa' and 'theologia ectypa' common in the early modern period, and on the other hand on the final ethical-theological section of Leibniz's *Monadologie* with its ideal conception of a moral world made possible by God.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Eine Reihe platonischer Motive, die in Kants Denken eine erhebliche Rolle spielen, begegnen bereits in der *Metaphysica* von Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, dem jahrzehntelangen Leitfaden für seine Vorlesungen über diese philosophische Hauptdisziplin. Der vorliegende Beitrag unternimmt erstmals eine genaue Analyse der mutmaßlichen Quellen von solchen platonisch geprägten Schlüsselparagraphen aus diesem Werk. Laut §866 bildet Gottes vollständige Selbsterkenntnis das unübertroffene Muster für eine von Seiten endlicher Wesen betriebene Theologie. Die klassische Unterscheidung von ‚mundus sensibilis' und ‚mundus intelligibilis' gewinnt in §869 eine betont praktische Note, wenn Gott als Herzensprüfer begriffen wird. Bei der geschichtlichen Verortung dieser beiden Lehrstücke zeigt sich, dass Baumgarten einerseits auf das in der Frühen Neuzeit geläufige Begriffspaar von ‚theologia archetypa' und ‚theologia ectypa' zurückgreift, andererseits auf den ethisch-theologischen Schlussabschnitt von Leibniz' *Monadologie* mit der Idealvorstellung einer von Gott ermöglichten moralischen Welt.

KEYWORDS: Baumgarten; Platonism; Archetypal Theology; Sensible World; Intelligible World

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1. EINLEITUNG: SCHLAGLICHTER AUF PLATONISCHE MOMENTE BEI BAUMGARTEN

Kants Beziehung zu Platon und die Rezeption platonischer Motive in seinem Denken sind seit längerem schon Gegenstand der Forschung.[1] Da Kant nach allgemeiner Einschätzung die Dialoge Platons kaum im griechischen Original studiert haben dürfte, wurde sein Verständnis des Platonismus wesentlich durch die zeitgenössische Philosophie geprägt. Einige platonische Reminiszenzen tauchen unvermutet auch in der *Metaphysica* von Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten auf, Kants Hauptbezugstext für Vorlesungen auf diesem Gebiet. Bezeichnende Beispiele dafür sind etwa die Lehre von einem exemplarischen Zusammenhang zwischen Archetypus und Ektypus und die darin begründete Unterscheidung zwischen Urbild- und Abbildtheologie sowie ferner der Gegensatz zwischen Sinneswelt und Verstandeswelt und das damit verknüpfte Ideal einer moralischen Welt. Diese platonisch gefärbten Einsprengsel sind als solche von der einschlägigen Forschung bislang jedoch wenig beachtet worden, obwohl der Verfasser des jahrzehntelang benutzten Kompendiums damit als Stichwortgeber für Kants Befassung mit typisch platonischen Themen fungierte.

Im vorliegenden Aufsatz sollen derartige platonisch anmutende Theorieelemente in ihrem seinerzeitigen Kontext, d. h. vor allem den Philosophien von Leibniz und Wolff, näher analysiert werden. Da Christian Wolff selbst, obgleich Begründer einer vielköpfigen Schulrichtung, insgesamt keine besondere Affinität zum Platonismus gezeigt hat,[2] wird nach der spezifischen Herkunft solcher platonischen Gedankenbausteine in der *Metaphysica* zu fragen sein. Hat Baumgarten vielleicht da und dort direkt philosophische Anregungen des letzten großen christlichen Platonikers Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz übernommen? Lässt sich darüber hinaus möglicherweise ein Einfluss des genuinen Leibnizianers und Plato-Enthusiasten Michael Gottlieb Hansch nachweisen? Gibt es weitere Autoren und Denkströmungen, die bei der konkreten Ausformung der oben genannten Lehrstücke eine maßgebliche Rolle gespielt haben könnten?

Um bei der Beantwortung dieser historisch komplexen Fragestellungen voranzukommen, empfiehlt sich die Beschränkung auf eine überschaubare textliche Ausgangsbasis. Gerade zu Beginn eines längeren Abschnittes über den Verstand Gottes in der ‚Theologia naturalis' der *Metaphysica* (§§863-889) lässt sich ein gehäuftes Auftreten platonisch klingender Terminologie feststellen. Ausgehend von der Überlegung, dass Gott als vollkommener Geist sich selbst so vollständig erkennt, wie es nur möglich ist, wird der Begriff einer ‚theologia archetypa' oder ‚theologia exemplaris' eingeführt. Unter dieser Theologie im weiteren Sinne versteht Baumgarten die Theologie, in der Gott sich selbst erkennt; endliche Wesen wie der Mensch sollten eine ihr ähnliche Theologie anstreben (vgl. §866). Zur Vertiefung dieses Schlüsselparagraphen verweist

1. Vgl. für eine erste, aktuelle Übersicht etwa Fröhlich 2015; Baum 2019a.

2. Einige Beispiele zu Arbeitsinstrumenten der Wolff-Forschung mögen dies belegen: École 1985: 122-123 bringt zum Stichwort ‚Plato' nur relativ wenige, meist nicht sonderlich aussagekräftige Einträge. Biller 2004: 137 und 241 führt lediglich eine einzige vergleichende Studie zu Platon und Wolff an (Nr. 828). Bei Theis & Aichele 2018: 514-519 findet sich im Personen- wie im Sachregister überhaupt kein Eintrag zu ‚Platon' oder zum ‚Platonismus'.

Baumgarten zurück auf §346 in der Ontologie, wo er im Rahmen der Ursachenlehre die Begriffe Muster (*exemplar*), Urbild (*archetypon*) und Kopie (*ectypon*) geklärt hatte.

Gott erkennt jedoch nicht nur sich selbst auf vollkommene Weise, sondern er stellt sich auch alle möglichen Welten aufs deutlichste vor. So schließt sich als nächste Begriffsbestimmung die Grundunterscheidung von Verstandeswelt (*mundus intelligibilis*) und Sinnenwelt (*mundus sensibilis*) in §869 an. Die Lehre von den beiden Welten hat für Baumgarten eine unmittelbare ethische Implikation, wird doch Gott noch im selben Paragraphen als Herzensprüfer (*scrutator cordium*) charakterisiert. Auch hier liegt ein Rückverweis nahe, denn laut §403 ist die geistige, intellektuelle Welt zugleich als moralische Welt (*mundus moralis*) anzusehen.

2. BAUMGARTENS AUFFASSUNG DER BEGRIFFE MUSTER, LOPIE UND ARCHETYP

Baumgartens eigentümliches Verständnis der Selbsterkenntnis Gottes als einer exemplarischen Theologie wird, wie bereits erwähnt, ontologisch grundgelegt im Lehrstück von Muster und Archetyp, das daher zunächst knapp darzustellen ist. Als Muster (*exemplar*) oder exemplarische Ursache (*causa exemplaris*) gilt „dasjenige, zu dem etwas Ähnliches zu machen beabsichtigt wird“.[3] Wenn dieses Muster kein anderes mehr über sich hat, ist es ein Archetyp (*archetypon*). Das von einem Muster Verursachte heißt Abdruck oder Kopie (lat. ‚exemplatum‘, griech. ‚ectypon‘). Zwischen beiden besteht ein typischer, exemplarischer Zusammenhang.[4]

Diese kurz gefasste Lehre vom Muster oder der Exemplarursache ist gegenüber Christian Wolff eine Neuerung; sie kennt weder in dessen *Deutscher Metaphysik* noch in seiner lateinischen *Ontologia* ein Gegenstück. Auch in den entsprechenden Handbüchern anderer früher Wolffianer wie etwa Georg Bernhard Bilfinger, Ludwig Philipp Thümmig oder Johann Christoph Gottsched taucht sie nicht auf. Auf der Suche nach einer möglichen Vorlage wird man jedoch bei dem Jenaer Wolffianer Johann Peter Reusch fündig, der mit seinem *Systema metaphysicum* bekanntlich zu Baumgartens philosophischen Hauptgewährsleuten zählt. Reusch definiert nicht nur das auffällige Wortpaar von ‚exemplar‘ und ‚exemplatum‘, sondern verweist hier auch expressis verbis auf die Idee im Sinne Platons, an der sich ein Künstler bei seinem Schaffen orientiere.[5] Nach einer weiteren Definition des Begriffs Archetyp als allererstes Muster benennt

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3. Baumgarten 2011: §346; nach dieser historisch-kritischen Edition von Günter Gawlick und Lothar Kreimendahl, die auf der Basis der vierten Auflage von 1757 erstellt worden ist, wird gewöhnlich zitiert, sofern nicht davon abweichende frühere Auflagen (1739^1; 1743^2; 1750^3) ergänzend herangezogen werden.

4. Vgl. ebd. – Baumgartens Vorzugsschüler Georg Friedrich Meier spricht in seiner erweiterten deutschen Bearbeitung der *Metaphysica* zudem von der ‚Nachahmung‘ eines ‚Vorbildes‘ im ‚Nachbild‘ (Meier 1755: §272).

5. Vgl. Reusch 1735: §292: „*Exemplar*, seu *caussa exemplaris*, est illud, cui agens conformat effectum, seu ad cuius imitationem agens producit effectum. […] Plato […] exemplar […] *ideam* vocat: hoc est enim, ad quod respiciens artifex, id quod destinabat, efficit. Effectus ille ad exemplar conformatus vocatur *exemplatum*” (Hervorhebungen im Original).

er schließlich als dessen Hauptanwendung die Unterscheidung von ‚theologia archetypa' und ‚theologia ectypa', von göttlicher Selbsterkenntnis und geschöpflicher Gotteserkenntnis.[6]

3. Die Unterscheidung von ‚theologia archetypa' und ‚theologia ectypa' und ihre historischen Wurzeln

Kant hat den platonischen Gegensatz von Urbild und Nachbild und genauer noch den Kontrast zwischen einem göttlichen ‚intellectus archetypus' und einem menschlichen ‚intellectus ectypus' bekanntermaßen öfters in seiner kritischen Philosophie aufgegriffen. Um zu klären, aus welchen Quellen er diese Denkmuster geschöpft haben könnte, bedarf es eines gründlicheren Studiums, bei welchen Autoren die Anwendung des Schemas von Archetypus und Ektypus zur Charakterisierung zweier unterschiedlicher Weisen von Theologie zuvor schon üblich war. Im spannungsreichen Übergangsfeld von der Theologie zur Philosophie angesiedelt, hat das Begriffspaar von ‚theologia archetypa' und ‚theologia ectypa' bislang in der ideengeschichtlichen Forschung eine bloß sporadische Aufmerksamkeit erfahren.

Was Wolffs großangelegte *Theologia naturalis* (1736/1737) betrifft, herrscht diesbezüglich nach Ausweis der Register Fehlanzeige. Unter den theologischen Anhängern Wolffs macht jedoch just in dieser Zeit Jakob Carpov, der von Gegnern aus dem pietistischen Lager von Jena nach Weimar vertrieben wurde, Gottes vollkommene Selbsterkenntnis zum Archetyp jeglicher Theologie überhaupt. Die archetypische Theologie sei die Erkenntnis, die Gott von sich selbst und den göttlichen Dingen habe, die ektypische Theologie dagegen diejenige, die in vernünftigen Geschöpfen anzutreffen sei.[7] Die für den jungen Baumgarten nachhaltig prägenden Jenaer Wolffianer Reusch und Carpov sind allerdings in diesem Punkt gar nicht sonderlich originell, sondern setzen hierbei lediglich eine an der Alma Mater Jenensis schon seit Jahrzehnten bestehende Lehrtradition fort. Bereits Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts hatte der dortige Ordinarius für Moralphilosophie Johann Paul Hebenstreit die genannte Unterscheidung der beiden Theologien im Anschluss an den platonischen *Timaios* breit dargelegt und gegen Einwände verteidigt. Gott habe in uns Menschen die natürliche Theologie in Nachahmung der Erkenntnis hervorgebracht, die er – wie eine exemplarische Ursache – von sich selbst habe.[8] Hebenstreit verweist seinerseits auf seinen theologischen Lehrer Johannes Musäus, der die archetypische Theologie im Sinne der göttlichen Selbsterkenntnis ebenfalls bereits als Muster oder exemplarische Ursache der sie nachahmenden ektypischen Theologie vernünftiger Geschöpfe begriffen hatte.[9]

Als frühneuzeitlicher Begründer dieser Typenunterscheidung und damit der Ansicht, dass menschliche Theologie gewissermaßen nur als Nachvollzug einer göttlichen

6. Vgl. Reusch 1735: §294.
7. Vgl. Carpov 1737: §359.
8. Vgl. Hebenstreit 1697: 437-447 (besonders 438-439); ein eigenes Kapitel ist zudem der Lehre von der ‚causa exemplaris' gewidmet (855-878); s.a. Hebenstreit 1696: 307-321.
9. Vgl. Musäus 1678: 4-5. Dieses Vorgängerwerk ist erwähnt in Hebenstreit 1697: 858.

Ur-Theologie möglich sei, wird heute gewöhnlich der reformierte Theologe Franciscus Junius der Ältere angesehen. In seinem Hauptwerk *De theologia vera* von 1594 versteht er unter der archetypischen Theologie die Weisheit Gottes, die nur angebetet und nicht erforscht werden könne, unter der ektypischen Theologie die Weisheit der göttlichen Dinge, die von Gott selbst aus diesem Archetyp gebildet, durch Gnade vermittelt und zu seiner Ehre mitgeteilt werde.[10] Übernommen und weiter entfaltet wird Junius' Zweiteilung der Theologie zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts dann von dem berühmten Enzyklopädisten Johann Heinrich Alsted, der den Archetyp der Theologie Gottes als allererstes Muster versteht; dementsprechend darf Gott der beste, vollkommenste Theologe geheißen werden.[11] Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts ist dieses Schema einer archetypischen Erkenntnis der göttlichen Dinge einerseits und einer ektypischen Erkenntnis andererseits in der theologischen Dogmatik nach wie vor in Verwendung, stößt aber gelegentlich weiter auf Vorbehalte. In Jena ist es der prominente Theologieprofessor Johann Franz Budde, der unter Theologie im eigentlichen Sinne eine unabdingbar menschliche Wissensform versteht. Er definiert sie als ein Wissen von den göttlichen Dingen, die dem sündigen Menschen zur Erlangung des Heils zu erkennen notwendig sei.[12]

Baumgarten war das besagte Einteilungsraster im Kontext christlicher Theologie durchaus geläufig; das belegt unzweideutig seine Frankfurter Vorlesung über Dogmatik, die er zeitweise gewissermaßen als Theologe im Nebenberuf für lutherische Studierende angeboten hat. Seine dortigen Ausführungen zum Theologiebegriff setzen ein mit der Unterteilung der Gotteserkenntnis in eine archetypische, wie sie Gott selbst auf allervollkommenste Weise habe, und eine ektypische, wie sie der Mensch und andere Geistwesen in gestufter Vollkommenheit besäßen.[13] Innerhalb der *Metaphysica* bevorzugt er freilich seit der dritten Auflage von 1750 die lateinische Benennung ‚theologia exemplaris', während er zunächst noch die Bezeichnung ‚theologia archetypa' gebraucht hatte.[14]

10. Vgl. Junius 1594: 32 und 38; zu ihm s.a. Sarx 2007: 220-223. Pannenberg 1988: 11-13 nimmt diese Tradition einer archetypischen Theologie, die auf die reformatorischen Anfänge zurückgeht, als entscheidenden geschichtlichen Beleg für seine theologische Grundüberzeugung, dass Theologie konstitutiv auf Offenbarung bezogen sei. Theologie sei nicht nur und nicht zuerst ein Produkt menschlicher Tätigkeit, da jegliches Erkennen Gottes stets durch Gott selbst ermöglicht werden müsse.

11. Vgl. Alsted 1615: 15-24 (besonders 16-17); zum Ganzen s.a. Asselt 2002.

12. Vgl. Budde 1723: §38: „Est itaque theologia, si non tam vocem, quam rem ipsam spectes, scientia rerum divinarum, homini peccatori ad salutem consequendam cognitu necessarium"; so betrachtet sei es ein ungenauer Sprachgebrauch, die Erkenntnis, die Gott von sich selbst habe, Theologie zu nennen (vgl. ebd., §39).

13. Vgl. Baumgarten 1773: §§160-161; s.a. Baumgarten 1750: §§4-6.

14. Vgl. Baumgarten 2011: §866 und §892 mit den entsprechenden Paragraphen in den vorangegangenen Auflagen.

4. DIE UNTERSCHEIDUNG VON ‚MUNDUS SENSIBILIS' UND ‚MUNDUS INTELLIGIBILIS'

4.1. Zum ‚Status quaestionis'

Die Inauguraldissertation von 1770 stellt mit ihrer titelgebenden Unterscheidung zweier Welten, aber auch mit ihrer Inanspruchnahme Platons als eine Art Vorläufer für eine tiefgreifende Neukonzeption der praktischen Philosophie zweifelsohne einen ersten großen Höhepunkt von Kants Rezeption des Platonismus dar. Zwar führt Kant seine Entgegensetzung von sensiblem und intelligiblem Bereich unbestimmt auf die ‚Schulen der Alten' zurück,[15] aber die erkenntnistheoretische Bedeutung, die die Termini ‚mundus sensibilis' und ‚mundus intelligibilis' in dieser Schrift annehmen, leitet sich unmittelbar wohl von §869 von Baumgartens *Metaphysica* her.[16]

Wegen der Schlüsselrolle, die der Zwei-Welten-Unterscheidung in Kants Denkentwicklung zukommt, läge es nahe, einmal eingehender zu untersuchen, was Baumgarten seinerseits veranlasst haben könnte, diese Distinktion im Rahmen seiner philosophischen Theologie zu verwenden. Dieses Forschungsproblem wird aber nicht selten einfach übergangen, zumindest in lexikalischen Überblicksdarstellungen.[17] In allerjüngster Zeit haben verdienstvolle Studien von Manfred Baum zum Problemfeld von Kants Platonismus hier Fortschritte erzielt.[18] Demzufolge liege ein Hauptunterschied zwischen Kant und der voraufgegangenen Schulphilosophie darin, dass sowohl Wolff als auch Baumgarten mit ‚mundus sensibilis' und ‚mundus intelligibilis' zwei Aspekte derselben Welt bezeichneten, während Kant sie als zwei verschiedene Welten verstanden habe. Baum arbeitet mit Nachdruck besonders die praktische Bedeutung der Verstandeswelt als ‚mundus moralis' heraus. Doch unternimmt er noch keine detailgenaue Rekonstruktion der Begriffs- und Problemgeschichte im Rahmen der ‚Philosophia Leibnitio-Wolffiana', die nachstehend versucht werden soll.[19]

15. Vgl. *De mundi*, §3; AA II, 392.18.

16. So Gawlick & Kreimendahl in: Baumgarten 2011: 578 (Fn. 204); vgl. ferner Kant 2022: 183-184 (Erl. 75); s.a. Probst 1995: 873: „Von Baumgarten übernimmt Kant die Unterscheidung zweier Welten in seiner Abhandlung ‹De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis›".

17. So bietet etwa das *Historische Wörterbuch der Philosophie* zwar einen höchst instruktiven Überblick zur Verwendung des Begriffspaars ‚mundus intelligibilis/sensibilis' in Antike und Mittelalter, springt aber dann von der (neu-) platonischen Tradition direkt zu Kant, ohne Leibniz, Wolff oder Baumgarten auch nur zu erwähnen (vgl. Beierwaltes 1984). Laut Stang 2015: 1619 gebraucht Kant die beiden Ausdrücke zwar in einer ganz anderen Weise als seine unmittelbaren Vorgänger, aber es fehlen leider konkrete Belegstellen für diese pauschale Behauptung aus den eben genannten drei Autoren. Kant selbst wiederum ging von einer einschneidenden Zäsur zwischen antiker und moderner Begriffsverwendung aus: „Ich finde indessen in den Schriften der Neueren einen ganz andern Gebrauch der Ausdrücke eines mundi sensibilis und intelligibilis, der von dem Sinne der Alten ganz abweicht" (*KrV* A 256-257 = B 312).

18. Vgl. Baum 2019a: 109-114; Baum 2019b: 20-27.

19. Angeknüpft wird im Folgenden außerdem an sorgfältige begriffsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen von Nakazawa 2009: 184-188 und 247-253.

4.2. Sinnenwelt und Verstandeswelt bei Wolff und Baumgarten

Mit der erstmaligen Einfügung einer generellen Kosmologie in den Kanon der metaphysischen Teildisziplinen hat Wolff gegenüber der philosophischen Tradition eine hochbedeutsame Neuerung vorgenommen. Das Studium der Welt wird nicht mehr ausschließlich den Naturwissenschaften überlassen, sondern avanciert – was keineswegs selbstverständlich ist – zu einem Kernthema der Metaphysik. Dieser philosophiegeschichtliche Befund ist in der spezialisierten Forschung zwar seit Jahrzehnten bekannt,[20] aber bislang kaum allgemeines Bildungsgut geworden.

In mehreren Anläufen unternimmt es Wolff zudem, den Begriff von Welt überhaupt zu definieren, doch stößt er damit auf nicht unberechtigte Kritik bei seinem großen theologischen Widersacher Joachim Lange. Um den vorgebrachten Einwand einer zu wenig trennscharfen Begriffsbestimmung auszuräumen, verzichtet Baumgarten dann von vornherein auf die von Lange beanstandeten Einzelelemente von Wolffs Begriffsklärung und entwickelt eine ganz neue, eigenständige Definition von Welt.[21]

Man kann sich fragen, ob diese Grundsatzdebatte im Anschluss an Wolffs Einführung einer ‚Cosmologia generalis' und seine versuchte Klärung des Begriffs ‚mundus' (oder ‚universum') nicht auch Folgen für die Konzeption des Begriffspaars ‚mundus sensibilis' und ‚mundus intelligibilis' hatte. Diese Grundunterscheidung zweier Welten konnte zwar schon auf einen langen Gebrauch seit der Antike bis zur Frühen Neuzeit zurückblicken, aber musste vor dem Hintergrund von Langes Haupteinwand eines deterministischen oder fatalistischen Weltverständnisses Wolffs neu reflektiert werden. Es fällt auf, dass der Gegensatz von Sinnen- und Verstandeswelt in der *Deutschen Metaphysik* noch keine Rolle spielt. Ebenso wenig begegnet die Zwei-Welten-Unterscheidung in den Lehrbüchern der frühen Wolffianer wie etwa Bilfinger, Thümmig oder Gottsched, die von Wolffs epochemachenden Vorgängerwerk über weite Strecken abhängig sind.

In seiner lateinischen *Cosmologia generalis*, die 1731 in erster Auflage erschien, führt Wolff sodann nach seiner allgemeinen Definition von Welt den Begriff des ‚mundus adspectabilis' ein, um die tatsächlich existierende Welt zu bezeichnen.[22] Erst in Band eins seiner 1736 erstmals publizierten *Theologia naturalis* stößt man schließlich auf die definitorische Entgegensetzung von ‚mundus sensibilis' und ‚mundus intelligibilis'. Die Sinnenwelt ist das Universum, das existiert, unter der Form betrachtet, in der es in die Sinne fällt, die Verstandeswelt ist dieses nämliche Universum unter der Form betrachtet, in der es kraft des Verstandes deutlich vorgestellt und erfasst wird. Während die Sinneswelt diese Welt ist, wie sie uns erscheint, ist die Verstandeswelt diese Welt, wie sie

20. Vgl. École 1983: 122; École 1993: 104-105; Bermes 2004: 36-37 und 48.

21. Die seinerzeitige Diskussion um Wolffs Definition der Welt und die daraus folgende Korrektur durch Baumgarten sind in minutiösen Textanalysen nachgezeichnet bei Kim 2004: 27-158. Aus Platzgründen werden deren Resultate hier nicht im Einzelnen referiert, sondern sei der Leser auf diese mustergültige Studie verwiesen (rezensiert von Sánchez Rodríguez 2010).

22. Vgl. Wolff 1737: §49: „Mundum hunc, qui existit, *Mundum adspectabilem* appellabimus." – Im Sprachgebrauch der Zeit wird der Terminus gewöhnlich mit ‚sichtbare Welt' wiedergegeben (vgl. Zedler 1747: 1762 und 1697).

in Wahrheit ist.[23] An dieser relativ langen Erklärung der Differenz beider Welten fällt auf, dass Wolff im Grunde nicht bloß eine, sondern gleich zwei Definitionen bietet: das eine Mal auf der Basis der Unterscheidung von Sinnen und Verstand, das andere mal mittels der Unterscheidung von phänomenalem Schein und wirklichem Sein. Aufschlussreich ist die zusätzliche Feststellung, dass in Gott die Idee der intelligiblen Welt vorhanden ist, während in uns Menschen nur die Idee der sensiblen Welt existiert.[24]

Obgleich Baumgarten seine Definition der beiden Welten ebenfalls im Abschnitt über den Verstand Gottes unterbringt, unterscheidet sich deren Wortlaut bei näherem Zusehen merklich von demjenigen Wolffs. Einmal mehr befleißigt er sich einer lakonischen Kürze, so dass die doppelte Begriffsbestimmung seines Vorgängers in eine einzige, wesentlich knappere verdichtet wird. „Soweit die Welt sinnlich vorgestellt wird, ist sie die *sinnliche* […] *Welt*, soweit sie deutlich erkannt wird, die *intelligible Welt*“.[25] Der Terminus ‚mundus adspectabilis‘ wird jetzt – anders als bei Wolff – als Synonym zu ‚mundus sensibilis‘ verwendet.[26]

4.3. Die Herausstellung des (neu-)platonischen Charakters der Zwei-Welten-Unterscheidung bei Hansch und Leibniz

Weder Wolff noch Baumgarten erwähnen bei ihrer Darstellung der beiden Welten ausdrücklich Platon oder den Platonismus als geistesgeschichtlichen Hintergrund. So kann man sich fragen, ob in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts überhaupt noch ein echtes Bewusstsein dafür vorhanden war, dass es sich bei diesem Lehrstück um ein typisches Element der (neu-) platonischen Tradition handelt. Klare Belege dafür, dass die Herkunft dieser grundlegenden Unterscheidung aus dem Platonismus bei den Zeitgenossen keineswegs vergessen, sondern durchaus lebendig war, finden sich indessen bei Michael Gottlieb Hansch und Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Insbesondere für Wolffs einstigen Studienkollegen und späteren Konkurrenten Hansch war die Wiedergewinnung und Systematisierung von Platons Philosophie von Beginn an ein bestimmendes Lebensthema.[27]

23. Vgl. Wolff 1739: §202: „*Mundum sensibilem* appello hoc, quod existit, universum sub ea forma spectatum, qua in sensus incurrit, aut, si mavis, mundus sensibilis dicitur hic mundus, qualis nobis apparet. Ex adverso vero *Mundum intelligibilem* dico idem hoc universum sub ea forma spectatum, qua distincte vi intellectus repraesentatum deprehenditur, aut, si mavis, mundus intelligibilis est hic mundus, qualis revera est”.

24. Vgl. *ibid*.: §205: „Idea mundi in Deo prorsus diversa est ab idea mundi in animabus nostris. […] Existit […] in Deo idea mundi intelligibilis […] non existit in nobis idea nisi mundi sensibilis“.

25. Baumgarten 2011: §869: „*Mundus*, quatenus sensitive repraesentatur, *sensibilis* (adspectabilis), quatenus distincte cognoscitur, *intelligibilis* est“ (Hervorhebung im Original durch Großbuchstaben). Die Eindeutschung, die ab der vierten Auflage von 1757 beigegeben ist und möglicherweise mehr auf Meier denn auf Baumgarten zurückgeht, lautet: „die Welt, als ein Schauspiel der Sinnlichkeit“ bzw. „die Welt, als ein Gegenstand des Verstandes“.

26. Vgl. dazu auch Meier 1759: §906: „Nun wird diese Welt die *sichtbare Welt* genent, in so ferne sie sinlich erkant wird“ (Hervorhebung im Original durch Fettdruck).

27. Einen vorzüglichen Überblick zu Leben und Werk mit einem ausgiebigen Resümee der bisherigen Forschung bietet Lorenz 2016; speziell zum spannungsgeladenen Verhältnis von Hansch und Wolff s.a. Schwaiger 2016.

Bereits in seiner allerersten Schrift, der Disputation *De enthusiasmo philosophico* von 1702, und dann erneut in erweiterter Form in einer Diatribe von 1716 zum gleichen Thema erörtert Hansch als einen Kerngedanken des Platonismus die Zweiteilung in einen höheren ‚mundus intelligibilis' und einen davon abgeleiteten ‚mundus sensibilis'. Die intelligible Welt wird auch als ‚mundus archetypus' bezeichnet, die sensible Welt als ‚mundus ectypus'. Die platonischen Ideen befinden sich als exemplarische Ursachen der geschaffenen Dinge oder als Archetyp im göttlichen Verstand und bilden eine ‚regio idearum'.[28]

Über die Interpretation Platons durch Hansch ergibt sich ein intensiver, mündlich wie brieflich geführter Austausch mit Leibniz,[29] wodurch der Hannoveraner Gelehrte zu einer umfassenden Rechenschaft über sein eigenes Verhältnis zu Platon veranlasst wird: die berühmte *Epistola ad Hanschium*, die bereits 1707 verfasst, 1716 schließlich als Vorspann zur genannten Diatribe erscheint und 1738 in der Briefausgabe von Christian Kortholt wiederabgedruckt wird. Dieses erstrangige Dokument belegt auch eine besondere Affinität von Leibniz zur neuplatonischen Weiterentwicklung Platons, bemerkt er doch, dass Plotin mit Recht einen ‚mundus intelligibilis' vom ‚mundus sensibilis' unterschieden habe.[30]

Einen Widerhall findet die platonische Vorstellung von einem ‚mundus idealis' oder ‚mundus archetypus' ferner in den *Principia philosophiae, more geometrico demonstrata*, also Hanschs systematischer Rekonstruktion von Leibniz' *Monadologie* von 1728.[31] Da auch der Philosophiehistoriker Jacob Brucker bereits 1736 mit Nachdruck auf die Nähe Leibniz' zu Platon und auf Hansch als diesbezüglichen Vermittler aufmerksam gemacht hat,[32] darf man mit Fug und Recht annehmen, dass den Zeitgenossen und nicht zuletzt Baumgarten der platonische Charakter der Zwei-Welten-Unterscheidung sehr wohl bekannt und bewusst war.[33]

5. DIE IDEE EINER MORALISCHEN WELT

5.1. Gott als Prüfer des menschlichen Herzens

Wie einleitend bereits angedeutet, verknüpft Baumgarten mit seiner Unterscheidung der beiden Welten sogleich eine praktisch-theologische Anwendung: Gott ist ein Herzensprüfer, weil er über die deutlichste Erkenntnis der menschlichen Seele verfügt. Nicht nur erkennt er diese intelligible Welt ganz deutlich, sondern er durchschaut auch die Vorstellung der sinnlichen Welt, die jede einzelne Seele hat, auf vollkommenste

28. Vgl. Groddeck 1702: §20; Hansch 1716: 64-67 und 128-130.

29. Vgl. Pelletier 2016: 475-476.

30. Vgl. Leibniz 1738: 65-66. Für eine Interpretation dieses Kardinalzeugnisses über den (Neu-)Platoniker Leibniz s. etwa Meyer 1971; Mirbach 2006; Leinkauf 2009.

31. Vgl. Hansch 1728: 108 (Theorema LXII).

32. Vgl. Brucker 1736: 402-501.

33. In Baumgartens Privatbibliothek lassen sich viele der vorstehend erwähnten Quellentexte nachweisen; vgl. *Catalogus* 1762: 98 (Nr. 7: Brucker 1736), 108 (Nr. 40: Hansch 1728), 121 (Nr. 22: Leibniz 1738).

Weise.[34] Das Attribut Gottes als ‚scrutator cordium' taucht hier anscheinend ganz unerwartet auf; doch gewinnt es deutliche Konturen, wenn man es mit anderen Leitgedanken und Kernanliegen Baumgartens in Verbindung bringt. Dem Menschen selbst bleibt der eigene Seelengrund (*fundus animae*) in einer letztlich unaufhebbaren Dunkelheit verborgen.[35] Die ethische Aufforderung zur Selbsterkenntnis und -beurteilung, so wichtig sie für eine moralische Lebensführung sein mag,[36] stößt hier unweigerlich an Grenzen. Gott allein vermag aufgrund seiner Allwissenheit die Tiefen des menschlichen Herzens zu ergründen und unparteiisch zu beurteilen.

Die Charakterisierung Gottes als ‚Herzensprüfer' ist zwar bei Wolff im Kontext der Zwei-Welten-Lehre der Sache nach schon vorbereitet, aber als prägnantes Stichwort bei Baumgarten trotzdem ein Novum. Wolff zufolge besitzt Gott eine anschauende und adäquate Erkenntnis aller möglichen Ideen der Sinneswelt in den menschlichen Seelen, ja durchschaut diese innerlicher als die Menschen sich selbst.[37] Doch erst Baumgarten bringt diese Überzeugung von der prinzipiellen gnoseologischen Überlegenheit Gottes in knappster Form auf den Punkt. Seine griffige Formel von Gott als dem Prüfer der Herzen spielt zudem auf die biblische Überlieferung an,[38] ohne sich damit aber in eine streng offenbarungstheologische Aussage zu verwandeln.[39]

5.2. Die geistige Welt als moralische Welt

Mit dem Motiv von Gott als Herzensprüfer erlangt Baumgartens Zwei-Welten-Lehre eine dezidiert praktische Bedeutung, geht es doch hier um das (sittliche) Innere des Menschen, das sich ihm selbst zwar nur bruchstückhaft erschließt, Gott aber völlig

34. Vgl. Baumgarten 2011: §869: „Distinctissima animae humanae cognitione pollens est *scrutator cordium*". Die Eindeutschung dieses Ausdrucks lautet hier seit der 4. Auflage „Hertzens-Prüfer"; Meier verdolmetscht den Terminus mit „Herzenskündiger", sowohl in der von ihm übersetzten Kurzfassung des Baumgarten'schen Kompendiums (Baumgarten 1766: §650) als auch in seinem eigenen deutschsprachigen Lehrbuch (Meier 1759: §906). Diese Wortwahl wird Kant übernehmen, so etwa in der Religionsschrift (AA VI, 67.12 und 72.36).

35. Vgl. Baumgarten 2011: §511; zur Vorgeschichte dieses bekannten Schlüsselworts von Baumgartens Psychologie s.a. Nannini 2021. Hier wird der Zusammenhang zwischen der Lehre vom Seelengrund und der Herzenserforschung im Umfeld der deutschen Frühaufklärung näher untersucht, wie er exemplarisch etwa bei dem theologischen Wolffianer Israel Gottlieb Canz begegnet (vgl. besonders 56-62).

36. Vgl. Baumgarten 1763: §§150-174 mit den beiden Abschnitten über die „Cognitio tui ipsius" und die „Diiudicatio tui ipsius".

37. Vgl. Wolff 1739: §206.

38. Eine Zusammenschau des Belegmaterials aus der Sicht der heutigen Exegese bietet Rösel 2012.

39. Das Motiv von der ‚kardiognôsia' Gottes, die nach dem Zeugnis der Heiligen Schrift allein Gott zukomme, taucht auch bei Baumgartens theologischem Lehrer Jakob Carpov auf: vgl. Carpov 1735: §1. Von einer ‚prudentia cardiognostica' spricht Heumann 1724: 55. Diese „Kunst, anderer Gemüther zu erforschen" in der Tradition der ‚politischen Klugheit' von Christian Thomasius und der ‚moralischen Semiotik' von Christian Wolff ist kein exklusiv göttliches Privileg mehr, sondern bei der Aneignung der nötigen psychologischen Kunstgriffe im Prinzip von jedem erlernbar (vgl. dazu nochmals Nannini 2021: 57 und 59 mit Hinweisen auf weitere Literatur).

durchsichtig gegeben ist. Bereits im kosmologischen Teil der *Metaphysica* klingt dieser ethische Aspekt der Weltkonzeption erstmals an, spricht Baumgarten doch dort einmal von einer ‚moralischen Welt'. Mit dieser Bezeichnung deutet er den zuvor eingeführten Grundbegriff einer ‚geistigen Welt' weiter aus, worunter er einen universalen geistigen Zusammenhang versteht.[40]

Man muss sich freilich vor Augen halten, dass Baumgarten den Terminus des ‚Moralischen' anders als in der heutigen engeren Begriffsverwendung noch in einem denkbar weiten Sinne gebraucht. Alles, was irgendwie enger mit der Freiheit verknüpft ist, fällt unter das Attribut ‚moralis', ohne dass damit schon automatisch eine positive Wertung verbunden wäre.[41] In der Rede von einer ‚moralischen Welt' kommt somit zum Ausdruck, dass Freiheit für Baumgarten kein sinnlicher Begriff ist, sondern seinen genuinen Platz in der Sphäre des Intelligiblen findet. Mit dieser Verortung der Freiheit im ‚mundus intelligibilis' dürfte Baumgarten eine für Kant später entscheidende Problemstellung bereits ein gutes Stück vorwegnehmen.

Unverkennbar greift Baumgarten mit seiner diesbezüglichen Begrifflichkeit seinerseits auf den praktisch-theologischen Schlussteil von Leibniz' *Monadologie* (§§83-90) zurück. In dieser berühmten Vermächtnisschrift des Hannoveraner Universalgelehrten heißt es am Ende nämlich, dass die Gemeinschaft aller Geister mit Gott als Monarchen eine moralische Welt innerhalb der natürlichen bilde.[42] Dieser Diskussionszusammenhang erhellt unzweideutig auch aus der Rezension der Erstauflage von Baumgartens *Metaphysica* in den *Nova Acta Eruditorum* und dessen Replik darauf im Vorwort zur zweiten Auflage seines Hauptwerks.[43]

Auch Michael Gottlieb Hansch, der sich durchgängig für eine platonische Lektüre der Leibniz'schen *Monadologie* einsetzt, unterstreicht in seiner systematischen Rekonstruktion des Werks nach mathematischer Methode dessen Bedeutung für die

40. Vgl. Baumgarten 2011: §403. Der zunächst verwendete und erläuterte Terminus war ‚mundus pneumaticus'; ab der zweiten Auflage von 1743 werden dann die Ausdrücke ‚mundus intellectualis' und ‚mundus moralis' ergänzend hinzugefügt. Meier spricht in seinem ausführlichen deutschen Metaphysikkompendium, das maßgeblich am Leitfaden von Baumgartens Vorlage erarbeitet ist, von der ‚Geisterwelt', die auch die ‚verständige und moralische Welt' genannt werde (Meier 1756: §375).

41. Vgl. Baumgarten 2011: §723: „Cum libertate proprius connexum est *morale late dictum*"; dazu s.a. Schwaiger 2021.

42. Vgl. *Monadologie*: §§85-86 (GP VI, 621-622); eine Synopse von deutscher und lateinischer Erstübersetzung mit dem französischen Original bietet Lamarra, Palaia & Pimpinella 2001: 185.

43. Vgl. Baumgarten 2011: 592-593 und 18-21. Der anonyme Rezensent nahm hier Anstoß an der von Baumgarten ebenfalls aufgegriffenen Leibniz'schen Redeweise von einem ‚moralischen Reich der Gnade'; Baumgarten verteidigt sich mit dem Argument, dass er diesen Ausdruck nur im philosophischen, nicht im theologischen Sinne verstanden wissen wolle. – Vermutlich handelt es sich bei dem unbekannten Verfasser der Besprechung um den Tübinger Philosophen Israel Gottlieb Canz (vgl. Schwaiger 2018). Für diese Vermutung spricht über die dort aufgeführten Argumente hinaus weiter die Tatsache, dass sich Canz in einer eigenen Publikation schon früh ausgiebig mit der Schlusspartie der *Monadologie* befasst hatte (vgl. Canz 1731).

praktische Philosophie. Das Reich der Gnade bilde eine moralische Welt in der natürlichen Welt.[44]

6. INHALTLICHES RESÜMEE UND REZEPTIONSGESCHICHTLICHER AUSBLICK

Am Ende des hier unternommenen Versuchs, zentrale platonische Passagen in Baumgartens *Metaphysica* im damaligen Zeitkontext zu verorten, kann nun ein philosophiegeschichtliches Fazit gezogen werden. Die Gegenüberstellung von Verstandeswelt und Sinnenwelt, die im Horizont einer Theologie von göttlichem Urbild und geschöpflichem Abbild entwickelt wird, hat von Anfang an eine wesentlich praktische Dimension. Der Allwissenheit Gottes sind beide Welten gleichermaßen zugänglich, so dass ihm selbst die entlegensten Tiefen des menschlichen Herzens nicht verborgen bleiben. Eine wesentliche Inspiration für die daraus erwachsende Konzeption einer moralischen Welt bildet der krönende Schlussteil von Leibniz' *Monadologie*. Seit ihrer ersten Publikation in einer deutschen und lateinischen Übersetzung 1720 bzw. 1721 hat dieser programmatische Entwurf einer von Gott regierten ethischen Gemeinschaft der Geister ein starkes Echo ausgelöst, so etwa bei christlichen Platonikern wie Michael Gottlieb Hansch, Israel Gottlieb Canz und Jacob Brucker, von deren einschlägigen Schriften Baumgarten allem Anschein nach eine breite Kenntnis gehabt hat.[45]

Zwar hat der Autor von Kants Metaphysiklehrbuch dieses Gedankengut lediglich in stark komprimierter Gestalt rezipiert. Doch als Kant seit Mitte der 1760er Jahre daran ging, die Metaphysik von Grund auf zu reformieren, konnten solche Gedankenkeime im Zuge einer seinerzeit einsetzenden Plato-Renaissance[46] zu ungeahnter Entfaltung und Fruchtbarkeit gebracht werden. Seine zeitgleiche kritische Auseinandersetzung mit Emanuel Swedenborgs Räsonnements über eine immaterielle Welt wird dabei zusätzlich als Katalysator gewirkt haben.[47] So ist es Baumgarten, der als ein entscheidendes, bislang zu wenig gesehenes Bindeglied zwischen der platonischen Tradition und Kant fungiert.

44. Vgl. Hansch 1728: 182 (Theorema CXXXIII).

45. Wenn Patrick Riley darauf abhebt, dass es „eine bedeutende deutsche Tradition der Beschäftigung mit Leibniz' *Monadologie* als *praktischer* Philosophie" gebe (Riley 2017: 48 [Hervorhebung im Original]), diese jedoch erst mit Kant einsetzen lässt, bedarf diese Feststellung der Ergänzung durch die frühe Rezeption seitens der eben genannten Autoren.

46. Vgl. dazu Santozki 2006: 36-39.

47. Wenn demgegenüber Gregory R. Johnson den ehrgeizigen Versuch wagt, Kants Konzeption eines ‚Reiches der Zwecke' direkt aus Swedenborgs Konzept einer geistigen Welt abzuleiten (vgl. Johnson 2009), dürfte er weit übers Ziel hinausschießen. Eine solche einseitige Herleitung übersieht die im vorstehenden Beitrag untersuchten Traditionszusammenhänge um Baumgarten und seine mutmaßlichen Quellen; sie erscheint überdies in terminologischer Hinsicht als fragwürdig, insofern Swedenborg sich offenbar niemals des Ausdrucks ‚mundus intelligibilis' bedient hat (so die auf sprachliche Exaktheit bedachte Beobachtung von Baum 2019b: 24). Dessen Verwendung in den *Träumen eines Geistersehers* (AA II, 329.34) verdankt sich somit wohl eher dem durch Baumgarten vermittelten akademischen Schulgebrauch.

ABKÜRZUNGEN

AA = I. Kant, *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. v. der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (und Nachfolgern), 29 Bde., Berlin, De Gruyter, 1900ff.

GP = G. W. Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, hrsg. v. C. I. Gerhardt, Berlin, Weidmann, 1875-1890.

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The Conceptual Pairs of Archetype and Image, of the World of Understanding and the World of the Senses. Baumgarten as a Mediator of Platonic Influences on Kant

Clemens Schwaiger
Katholische Stiftungshochschule München, Campus Benediktbeuern
schwaiger@donbosco.de

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ACHIM VESPER

Elements of Wolff and Crusius in Kant's Concept of Self-Legislation

ABSTRACT: The concept of self-legislation or autonomy is one of the outstanding innovations of Kant's ethics. Nevertheless, it should not be ignored that it also builds on previous positions. Even if Kant in the *Groundwork* classifies all other moral principles as heteronomous, it is important to recognize that Kant incorporates elements of Wolff's theory of self-legislation and Crusius' theory of obligation into his theory of autonomy. In this essay, I present the relevant themes in Wolff and Crusius and discuss how they were taken up by Kant in the mid-1780s.
KEYWORDS: Autonomy; Self-legislation; Christian August Crusius; Immanuel Kant; Christian Wolff

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the outstanding innovations of Kant's ethics is his concept of autonomy, which he explains in the *Groundwork* in these words: "Autonomy of the will is the property of the will by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition)" (GMS 4: 440). Since Kant understands the will as practical reason, he also formulates his concept of autonomy in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as follows: "Pure reason is practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call the moral law" (KpV 5: 31). In the literature, several aspects are distinguished and attributed to the concepts of autonomy and self-legislation in Kant. The self-legislation of reason is said to be responsible for (1) the existence of the moral law, (2) its content, (3) its imperative character, and (4) the motivation to follow the moral law.[1] However, whether and how self-legislation fulfills each of these roles is a matter of debate.[2]

As Kant's conception is often credited with being a significant novelty, discussions of how Kant's understanding of autonomy also builds on previous positions are

1. According to Sensen 2019: 83, Kant's view of the self-legislation of reason contains the following three theses: "reason it*self* is the source of the content of the moral law", "reason makes the law obligatory", and "reason by itself can motivate one to follow it". Sensen can be understood in such a way that the three theses cover all four points mentioned above. (1) and (2) are explicitly defended by Reath (most recently in Reath 2019) and rejected by Kleingeld & Willaschek 2019. A classic text that disputes (1) and (2) is Ameriks 2003.

2. I will not go into the question of whether the terms "self-legislation" and "autonomy" differ in their meaning in some ways. Although I think this question is worth discussing, it is not my topic in this paper.

still relatively rare.[3] Yet, as I will show below, Wolff and Crusius play a significant role here. It is undisputed that Kant's engagement with Wolff and Crusius is immensely significant for the development of his ethics, although individual assessments may vary.[4] By the time of the *Groundwork*, Kant's more intense engagement with the conflicting moral philosophies of the two authors seems to come to a first end.[5] At this time, Kant classifies the moral principles advocated by Wolff and Crusius, along with all other traditional moral principles, as heteronomous and contrasts them with the categorical imperative as the principle of an ethics of autonomy. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that Kant also approves of individual elements of the moral philosophy of Wolff and Crusius in the *Groundwork* and *Mrongovius II,* a transcript of Kant's ethics lecture from the period when he wrote the *Groundwork*.[6] Upon closer examination, it can even be seen that Kant incorporates elements of Wolff's theory of self-legislation and Crusius' theory of obligation into his own theory of self-legislation. In the following, I will discuss elements of the philosophies of Wolff and Crusius and show how they serve as points of reference for Kant. While I will not recount the development of Kant's engagement with Wolff and Crusius, I will discuss some of Kant's statements from earlier works. My focus will be on presenting the relevant themes in Wolff and Crusius and discussing how they were taken up by Kant in the mid-1780s.

2. WOLFF ON MORAL SELF-LEGISLATION

Scholars have occasionally noted that Wolff already discusses the self-legislation of reason.[7] But they differ on the question of whether Wolff and Kant agree on the content of this concept of self-legislation.[8] In the following, I will discuss several aspects of Wolff that are significant for Kant's discussion of moral perfectionism. I will look in particular at Wolff's theses that actions in themselves are good or evil (2.1), that the laws of good and evil, as well as their bindingness, are natural and do not result from the arbitrary decision of someone else (2.2), and that reason gives itself the law (2.3).

3. On the historical context of the concept of autonomy, see Bacin & Sensen 2019. A classic work is, of course, Schneewind 1998: esp. pt. IV.

4. According to Schmucker 1961: 81, "the idea of the pure formal principle of obligation" is prefigured in Crusius. This is disputed by Schwaiger 1999, who sees Kant as standing in stronger continuity with Baumgarten on this and other points (cf. also Schwaiger 2011: 145-147). According to Fricke 2018, Kant adopts the distinction between moral motivation to action and motivation from self-love and the pursuit of happiness from Crusius.

5. There are also later intensive discussions about the ethics of the two, especially in the Vigiliantius lecture.

6. *Mrongovius II* goes back to Kant's lecture in 1784/85. On *Mrongovius II* in general, see Timmermann 2015.

7. Wolff 1733: §38, 28.

8. While Schmucker 1961 and Schröer 1991 focus on similarities, especially Hüning 2018 points out differences.

2.1 The Perseity of Good and Evil

Wolff's moral philosophy provides a positive answer to the question, highly debated in the first half of the 18th century, as to whether there is an "objective morality" inherent in action itself.[9] In the German natural law tradition, this is largely disputed by Pufendorf, according to whom morality results from the commands of a powerful God. This concept of morality is rooted in Pufendorf's view that laws in general are prescriptions made by a higher authority: "However, in general, a law seems most conveniently defined as a decree by which a superior obligates a subject to conform their actions to its prescription".[10] In Pufendorf's view, laws consist in the command of a higher authority who can force those subject to the higher authority's power to comply with the law. However, the higher authority is distinguished not only by its power to sanction, but also by its benevolence in allowing those subject to the laws to receive benefits they cannot adequately provide for themselves.[11] Pufendorf's definition of law also refers to moral laws by which actions are classified as good or evil. In this regard, moral laws are distinguished from legal laws by the fact that they owe their existence not to the whims of a ruler, but to the will of God. On this basis, Pufendorf maintains that natural rights and duties, unlike positive rights and duties, exist independently of human influence, even if they equally arise from the will of a higher authority.[12]

Although Wolff does not mention Pufendorf, he clearly opposes him in the second preface of the *German Ethics*, crediting himself with the merit of having demonstrated "that the actions of humans are inherently good or evil, but by no means become good or evil only through the command or prohibition of a superior".[13] According to Wolff, actions are good if they make the state of the agent more perfect and evil if they make the state of the agent less perfect.[14] In Wolff's words, "those actions by which perfection is achieved not only in the conduct of one person, but of the whole human race together, [...] are none other than those which are good in themselves".[15] Wolff takes the opposite position of Pufendorf, claiming that an action is good or evil because of the perfection it brings about and not because of the command of another.[16]

One important source for Wolff's rejection of voluntarism is Leibniz's criticism of Pufendorf. Leibniz rejects Pufendorf's conception of morality because, according to it,

9. See Schwaiger 2021: 59-63 on Wolff's position in the debate on objective morality.

10. According to Pufendorf in *De Iure Naturae et Gentium* (Pufendorf 1998: VI, §4). See also Pufendorf 1997: ch. 2, §2.

11. This is emphasized by Pufendorf in *De officio hominis et civis iuxta legem naturalem* (see Pufendorf 1997: ch. 2, §5).

12. On Pufendorf's distinction between duties in natural law and duties in positive law see Hartung 1999: 34-37.

13. Wolff 1733: Preface to the second edition, without pagination.

14. See *ibid*.: §3, 6: "That which makes our inner as well as our outer state perfect is good; but that which makes both imperfect is evil".

15. *Ibid*.: Preface to the second edition, without pagination.

16. On Wolff's opposition to Pufendorf, see Hartung 1999: 131-134, Hüning 2004: 102-113, Klemme 2019: 16, and Schwaiger 2021.

God arbitrarily chooses the content of morality. Attention has been drawn to the fact that Wolff initially advocated for a voluntaristic conception of law and obligation at the beginning of his engagement with practical philosophy.[17] It was only after a critical letter from Leibniz that Wolff adopted the opinion that actions acquire their moral quality due to their internal properties and not because of the decree of a higher authority.[18]

The substantive core of Leibniz's criticism of Pufendorf can be deduced readily from the *Theodicy* and *New Essays*. According to the *Theodicy*, the view that God created good and evil through an arbitrary decision ("par un décret arbitraire") is unreasonable because it denies God's goodness.[19] Since God is not bound in his actions, he can establish or modify justice without further reason, which contradicts the notion that God himself is just. The arbitrariness of the decision not only calls into question the understanding of a moral God, it also contradicts the usual understanding of morality. As Leibniz emphasizes in the *New Essays*, an action can be morally good or evil at the same time, depending on the legislator, if its moral quality can be derived from a will: "But it is also true that according to this notion, the same action would be morally good and morally evil at the same time, under different legislators".[20] According to Leibniz, the argument against this view is that it is revisionist in relation to the usual understanding of moral good and evil. To remain faithful to the ordinary understanding of morality, Leibniz instead posits an immutable rule of reason from which the moral quality of an action arises, and which is merely "maintained" by God.[21] Like Wolff after him, Leibniz is of the opinion that deriving morality from a decision by God has a destructive effect on our understanding of morality.

2.2 Natural Law and Natural Obligation

A more detailed picture of Wolff's commitment to objective morality can be gained from his ethics. In the first part of his *German Ethics*, Wolff assumes that people can improve or worsen their inner or outer state through their free actions.[22] The state of a human being gains perfection when individuals harmonize their individual states with one another and bring them into harmony with human nature: "If the present state harmonizes with the preceding and the following, and if all together correspond with the essence and nature of human beings, then the state of the human being perfect, and the more perfect, the greater this harmony is".[23] One example of gaining perfection is when

17. See Schwaiger 2011: 147-149. The voluntaristic view can be found in the *Philosophia Practica Universalis* from 1703 (Wolff 1703), one of his two dissertations.

18. In the letter to Wolff from February 21, 1705 (Leibniz 1860: 16-21). Wolff was familiar with Leibniz's criticism of Pufendorf probably also from the *Monita quaedam ad Samuelis Puffendorfii Principia* (Leibniz 1972). See Schwaiger 2011: 148f.

19. Leibniz, *Essais de Théodicée* (Leibniz 1885: 2nd part, 176).

20. Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais*, II, XXVIII, A VI, 6, 250.

21. He writes: "I would rather, for myself, take as the measure of moral good and virtue the invariable rule of reason, which God has taken upon himself to maintain" (*ibid*.).

22. Wolff 1733: §2, 3.

23. *Ibid*.: §2, 5.

a person orients their diet towards the goal of maintaining their health.[24] If one assumes that the perfection of an action is decisive for its moral quality, the following argument for the objective morality of actions arises: since perfection or imperfection depend on the success of an action and the success of the action is brought about by the action through causal necessity, an action has the intrinsic property of being good or evil.[25]

Because the moral quality of an action is measured by the perfection realized through it, Wolff explains: "They [actions] are thus good or evil before and in themselves, and are not made so by GOD's will".[26] Consequently, an action does not lose its moral quality even in the hypothetical case that there is no God: "If it were therefore equally possible that there were no God, and that the present context of things could exist without him, the free actions of men would nevertheless remain good or evil".[27] As a result, the principle of perfection described by Wolff as the law for free actions – namely, "do what makes you and your or another's state more perfect; refrain from what makes it more imperfect" – applies independently of God's will.[28] According to Wolff, the perseity of good and evil is expressed in the fact that the goodness or evil of an action is due to a law that precedes the will of God.

Wolff further argues that the law for free actions must be a natural law, as it is not determined by divine or human will. As a natural law, it also has a different kind of bindingness (*Verbindlichkeit*) than divine or human laws. Unlike Pufendorf, Wolff develops a definition of the law that is not based on the command of a higher authority, but on the binding force of a rule: "A rule according to which we are bound to organize our free actions is called a *law*".[29] Wolff is of the opinion that a law is binding if there are motives for obeying the law: "To bind someone to do or not to do something is nothing other than to associate with it a motive for willing or not willing it".[30] Accordingly, a law is binding if there is also a motivation to act in accordance with it.[31] This is also the case if the state authority uses the threat of punishment to force its subjects to comply with the law.[32] In contrast to a legal law, however, under the principle of perfection we are bound by nature to perform an intrinsically good act and to refrain from an intrinsically evil one: according to Wolff, "nature has linked the motives with the inherently good and evil actions of man".[33] The moving reasons are based on the fact that man strives for perfection and gains perfection through good actions and loses perfec-

24. *Ibid.*: §2, 4.

25. See *ibid.*: §5, 6f.

26. *Ibid.*: §5, 7.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*: §12, 12.

29. *Ibid.*: §16, 15. See Wolff's definition of the law in the *Philosophia Practica Universalis*: "A law is called a rule by which we are obliged to regulate our actions" (Wolff 1738: §131). On the law of perfection, see Schwaiger 2018: 255-258, Klemme 2007, and Hüning 2004.

30. Wolff 1733: §8, 8.

31. See Schwaiger 2011: 150f., and Hüning 2004: 102.

32. Wolff 1733: §8, 8f.

33. *Ibid.*: §9, 10.

tion through evil ones. It is clear that Wolff is not focusing on the normative character of bindingness here. Instead, he is concerned with the fact that the person acting has a motivating reason to follow the law that outweighs other motivating reasons.

As Wolff makes clear, the idea that ethical laws result from the will of God also brings with it an absurd consequence. Consider the atheist. They have no reason to believe that there are moral laws if moral laws result from the divine will.[34] Under this assumption, the atheist can even absolve themselves of the idea that there are moral constraints governing their actions. Since actions are inherently good or evil regardless of whether a person believes in God or not, or what conception they have of God, according to Wolff, they must be good or evil due to a natural law. Wolff wants to dispel the misunderstanding that "something becomes good and praiseworthy because GOD has commanded it", whereas "on the contrary, GOD has commanded this and forbidden that, because the one is good and the other evil".[35] This argument has a double implication: on one hand, regardless of their religious beliefs, every person has a reason to accept moral constraints, as the bindingness of natural law does not come from God, but lies within nature. On the other hand, the natural law is characterized by the fact that it cannot be changed by the divine will but is eternally valid.[36] The natural law thus also represents a limitation on divine freedom, such that God is limited in the choice of the world he brings into existence by the natural law.[37]

2.3 Reason as the Teacher of the Law

According to Wolff, there is a parallel between God and human beings in that both are subject to the moral law – albeit in different ways – and grasp the moral law through their reason. Irrespective of their religious convictions and the customs prevailing in their social environment, all human beings are fundamentally capable of recognizing the natural law through their reason and deriving their duties from it. Since reason achieves "an insight into the connection of things," it reveals the perfection or imperfection of actions, leading Wolff to describe reason as "the teacher of the law of nature".[38] Moral knowledge results from reason, and no moral error can occur if reason is exercised correctly. Furthermore, reason is enough to motivate moral action: "Therefore, whoever arranges their actions and behavior according to reason, that is, acts rationally, lives according to the law of nature, and to the extent that one is rational, to that extent they cannot act contrary to the law of nature".[39] This is based on an intellectualist conception of the motive for action, according to which reason, in contrast to the senses, attains clear knowledge of the good and clear knowledge of the good

34. *Ibid.*: §21f., 17f.
35. *Ibid.*: Preface to the Third Edition, §4.
36. See *ibid.*: §26, 19.
37. See Aichele 2018: 279 who agrees.
38. Wolff 1733: §23, 18.
39. *Ibid.*: §24, 18.

constitutes a sufficient motive for action.[40] With a view to the role of reason for moral knowledge and the motivation for moral action, Wolff ultimately arrives at the formulation that a reasonable person is "a law unto himself [...] by means of his reason".[41] This means that human beings are able to recognize the natural law and act in accordance with it solely on the basis of their reason.

However, reason is not only the source of moral knowledge and motivation for action according to Wolff; on closer inspection, reason also provides a ground for the obligation to obey the natural law. This emerges from Wolff's comparison of the binding force of the natural law with that of the divine law. According to Wolff, the natural law exists independently of God's will, but it is affirmed by God's will, so the natural law also forms the content of a divine law.[42] Even if "God cannot give man any other law than the law of nature", he can, however, artificially link actions with motives, through which the human being is under a greater obligation to comply with the natural law.[43] God does this by often allowing "fortunes" to follow good actions and "misfortunes" to follow evil actions.[44] According to Wolff, individuals who are not guided by their reason can still be prompted to take actions in accordance with the natural law by the prospect of their own happiness and the fear of their own unhappiness.[45] Accordingly, divine obligation plays a special role because it motivates even those who do not have clear knowledge of the good to follow the law. The rational person in contrast is characterized by the fact that reason gives them the law in such a way that they do not require any further motives through rewards and punishments. The rational person is guided solely by the moral quality of the action and "does good because it is good and refrains from evil because it is evil".[46] According to Wolff, in this respect, they even become similar to God, because like God, they are only prompted to follow the natural law through insight into the law and not by the command of a higher authority.

In his concept of the self-legislation of reason, Wolff initially points to the role of reason as a reliable source of moral knowledge and moral motivation. His talk of self-legislation does not however have the broader meaning that reason chooses the law. As a law of nature, the moral principle is eternal and is neither produced by the divine or human will, nor can it be changed by these. Self-legislation consists in the fact that human beings recognize the moral quality of an action on the basis of their reason and perform or refrain from performing the action solely on the basis of its moral quality.

40. *Ibid.*: §8, 8.

41. *Ibid.*: §24, 18f. See Klemme 2019: 19f., who also addresses this formulation.

42. See Wolff 1733: §29, 20f.: "The natural law is also a divine law".

43. *Ibid.*: §29, 21.

44. *Ibid.*: §30, 21

45. See *ibid.*: §39, 29: "On the other hand, since an irrational person needs another obligation in addition to the natural one if they are to obey the law, rewards and punishments are also reasons for them to perform good actions and refrain from evil ones". From the incapability of natural obligation to motivate irrational people, Wolff derives coercive legislation not only in divine law but also in positive law (see Hüning 2002: 538-542).

46. Wolff 1733: §38, 28.

Reason is a ground of obligation because the good or evil of an action gives the rational person a reason to perform or refrain from performing an action without further consideration.

3. KANT ON WOLFF: BETWEEN THE IDEA OF THE INTRINSICALLY GOOD WILL AND THE PRUDENT CHOICE

From a general perspective, Kant rejects the moral theory of perfection for the same reason as all other moral theories he encountered. In the *Groundwork*, he reproaches the competing moral theories as a whole for not separating their investigations into morality "as pure practical worldly wisdom or [...] as metaphysics of morals" (GMS 4: 410) from experience and consequently not arriving at a pure moral principle. This criticism concerns both the empirical principles of morality based on the concepts of happiness and moral feeling and the rational principles based on the ontological or theological concept of perfection (see GMS 4: 441-444).[47] Kant's critique of the ontological concept of perfection is at least primarily aimed at Wolff and not Baumgarten. Kant does indeed deal in detail with passages from Baumgarten's *Initia philosophiae practicae primae* (1760) and *Ethica philosophica* (1740), which he used as the basis for his ethics lecture. However, in his taxonomy of moral principles in the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (cf. KpV 5: 39), which he only slightly modifies from his ethics lectures, he primarily refers to Wolff as a representative of moral perfectionism whereas he seems to categorize Baumgarten as a "theological moralist" due to his deviations from Wolff.[48]

3.1 Perfection as a Rational Principle

In addition to moral perfectionism, according to Kant divine command theory also falls under the rational concept of morality, because God is recognized by reason as the legislator or author of morality on the basis of his perfection. However, Kant concedes that the ontological concept of perfection enjoys advantages over the other moral principles he lists. Comparing the two rational principles of morality, Kant considers the ontological concept of perfection in the tradition of Wolff to be "better" than the theological one, which attempts to derive the criteria of morally correct action "from a divine, all-perfect will" (GMS 4: 443). Kant's first reason is that the ontological concept of perfection, unlike the theological concept of perfection, at least does not "get involved in a circle" in which morality is derived "from a divine, all-perfect will" to which all-goodness was previously ascribed (*ibid.*). If divine command theory avoids this circle and instead derives its will from "the attributes of desire for glory and dominion" combined with "dreadful representations of power and vengefulness," it arrives at "a system of morals that would be directly opposed to morality" (*ibid.*). Such a view,

47. For the classification of moral concepts, see Wood 2015: 123-126.

48. See Bacin 2019: 51, who is in agreement. Baumgarten's proximity to the theological conception of morality can be seen in Baumgarten 1760: §100. Kant also cites Crusius and Baumgarten together as representatives of theological ethics (V MS/Vigilantius 27: 510).

reminiscent of Pufendorf, is opposed to morality because, according to it, moral commandments and prohibitions originate from an arbitrary decision by God and their observance can only result from fear of punishment or hope of reward.

Kant thus favors moral perfectionism, which understands "morality from the nature of the action itself," over theological ethics, which derives morality "from a being different from us" (V Moral/Mrong II 29: 622). By taking the side of moral perfectionism, Kant is opposing a trend of his time, as he emphasizes: "The metaphysical principles are now very much abandoned. A large part has fallen on the theological principle, because the metaphysical has no power" (*ibid.*). However, moral perfectionism is also based on an error, even if this at least does not prove to be harmful to morality. The error is that the principle of perfection is too vague, which Kant expresses by calling it "empty," "indeterminate" and therefore practically "useless" (GMS 4: 443). Although moral perfectionism assumes that there is a rational principle of moral evaluation, the principle it establishes turns out, according to Kant, to be empty because it cannot be successfully applied.[49]

Kant draws a further comparison between moral perfectionism and moral sense theory, as according to him both the concept of ontological perfection and the concept of moral sense "at least do not infringe upon morality" (*ibid.*), although they do not promote it either. If he had to choose between the concepts of moral sense and ontological perfection, Kant declares, he would "decide for the latter; for, since it at least withdraws the decision of the question from sensibility and brings it to the court of pure reason, even though it decides nothing there it still preserves the indeterminate idea (of a will good in itself) unfalsified, for closer determination" (*ibid.*). A reference to Wolff's theory of self-legislation can be seen in Kant's statement that moral perfectionism brings the question of moral judgment "to the court of pure reason" (*ibid.*). For Kant prefers moral perfectionism over divine command theory because it recognizes reason as the authoritative source for moral judgment. Kant aligns himself with moral perfectionism because, according to it, humans can determine through reason the moral quality of an action.

3.2 Perfection as an End

One might wonder, however, why Kant also incorporates the idea of an intrinsically good will into moral perfectionism. Light can be shed on this with Kant's remarks from *Mrongovius II* where he also treats moral perfectionism as a double-edged enterprise, whereby his assessment is based on whether the perfection of an action is understood as an end or as a means. If perfection is understood as an end, it coincides with the idea of an action that is good without restriction: "It can also be taken that what is good without restrictions is perfection considered as an end: therefore, seek perfection that is good in itself or is an end in itself: or seek absolute moral perfection" (V Moral/Mrong. II 29: 626). This characterization is consistent with Wolff's statement that the rational being follows no other considerations and chooses the good action because it

49. See Klemme 2007: 177f., and Bacin 2019: 53f.

is good and avoids the evil action because it is evil. Kant finds the guiding idea of an intrinsically good will, which is crucial for him, in Wolff's description of the rational being that gives itself the law by selecting its actions solely based on their moral quality. However, the problem of the emptiness of the principle of perfection comes to light in the fact that, within this framework, only a tautological answer can be given to the question of how perfection can be recognized: "But this is just tautology. For if one wants to know what the ground for this perfection is, and one gets the answer: seek perfection; then it is always the same" (*ibid.*).

One shortcoming of moral perfectionism is that, according to Kant, it outlines the idea of an intrinsically good will, but does not derive an informative moral principle from it. It is nevertheless striking that, contrary to his general scheme, Kant does not criticize the heteronomy but the unfruitfulness of the moral principle in this understanding of moral perfectionism.

3.3 Perfection as a Means

However, according to Kant, a problem arises when Wolff tries to explain why moral requirements are binding for every human. As Kant puts it in *Mrongovius II*, the negative side of moral perfectionism lies in the fact that "perfections [...] are regarded as means" (V Moral/Mrong. II 29: 626), whereby "to seek these [...] would be pragmatic and not moral" (V Moral/Mrong. II 29: 626f.). Kant calls the imperative pragmatic, which recommends choosing the appropriate means to achieve happiness (see GMS 4: 417). Kant also addresses the topic of prudent choice in the *Groundwork* in his discussion of the ethics of perfection. He shows there that even moral perfectionism is only capable of justifying "*counsels* of prudence" and not "*commands* (*laws*) of morality" (GMS 4: 416). Kant considers the concept of perfection to be problematic because, like the other moral doctrines he examines, it constructs moral obligation as a hypothetical imperative. According to him, all moral conceptions that he rejects follow the idea "*I ought to do something on this account, that I will something else*", whereby "yet another law must be put as a basis in me, the subject, in accordance with which I necessarily will this something else" (GMS 4: 444).

Kant appears to suggest that according to moral perfectionism, an action aimed at perfecting one's own state is considered obligatory because it is inherent to the nature of the will to strive for perfection, and with increasing perfection comes happiness. As with the other moral philosophies he criticizes, according to Kant, "nature ultimately gives the law" (*ibid.*), even if the "impulse" to bring about the object lies in understanding and reason, "which by the special constitution of their nature employ themselves with delight upon an object" (*ibid.*). Kant criticizes this approach because the assumption of a human striving for perfection belongs to empirical psychology and a fact of empirical psychology is not suitable to justify an unconditional imperative. The ethics of perfection makes the mistake of deriving the binding force of moral laws from an assumption central to empirical psychology. According to Kant, the asserted psychological law is "contingent and hence unfit for an apodictic practical rule, such as moral rules must be" (*ibid.*) since it is derived from experience and experience is not sufficient to prove a law.[50]

In summary, Kant refers positively to Wolff because Wolff attributes the decisive role in moral judgment to reason and outlines the idea of an inherently good will based on the concept of a being guided solely by the moral quality of the action in its deliberation and execution. Leaving aside the vagueness of perfection as a moral principle, however, Wolff's theory of obligation is particularly problematic because it understands the binding force of moral rules as a hypothetical imperative based on an assumption of empirical psychology.[51] Kant derives his problematization, according to which Wolff's theory of self-legislation is incompatible with Wolff's own theory of obligation, from the comparison of the two strands he sees in Wolff's ethics – perfection as an end or as a means. Kant himself resolves this incompatibility by tracing the bindingness back to self-legislation. Perhaps surprisingly, his new approach can be traced back to his work on Crusius.

4. CRUSIUS ON OBLIGATION ARISING FROM THE WILL OF ANOTHER BEING

At first glance, Kant seems to entirely reject Crusius' ethics, as the theological ethics conceived by Crusius is unequivocally treated negatively in the *Groundwork*. But it is worth noting that Crusius' criticism of Wolff is largely in agreement with that of Kant. It also becomes clear with regard to *Mrongovius II* that Kant does not completely reject Crusius' theory of bindingness, but even says that it is correct with some restrictions. Kant in fact discovers an important building block for his theory of self-legislation in Crusius' theory of obligation.

4.1 Crusius' Criticism of Wolff

The fact that Kant sides with Wolff's moral perfectionism over theological ethics conceals the fact that Kant is in agreement with Crusius on various points in practical philosophy. Setting aside the connection to his own indifferentist concept of freedom, Crusius' criticism of Wolff's conception of obligation shares similarities with Kant's. Crusius presents his criticism in a long note in his *Guide to Rational Living*, which is added in the third edition from 1767. There he discusses errors that result from "an undetermined philosophical language of reasons and sufficient reasons".[52] Similar to Kant, Crusius is of the opinion that moral perfectionism does not do justice to the normative character of obligation and falsely attempts to illuminate obligation with assumptions from empirical psychology. The fact that the concept of the good motivates

50. Similarly, in the preface to the *Groundwork*, Kant objects against Wolff and his followers that their concept of obligation is "anything but moral" (GMS 4: 391), since they base it on empirical motives.

51. Klemme 2007: 172f., also emphasizes that Wolff reduces the moral obligation to a question of prudence. With regard to GMS 4: 444, however, Klemme's assertion that Kant did not make this criticism explicit is surprising.

52. Crusius 1767: §164, 236.

us to act, according to Crusius, does not inform us about what constitutes obligation. As Crusius points out, Wolff's fundamental "psychological proposition that we want what we want because it is or seems to be good" only concerns the physical origin of actions, but not their binding force.[53] Wolff in this sense overlooks the fact that the concept of obligation does not refer to how an action comes about, but rather why it ought to be done: "In the case of obligation, however, one does not want to know how an action occurs, as both evil and good actions have their sufficient effective causes; instead, one demands to know whether and why something *ought to* or is *permitted to* happen".[54]

Crusius generally asserts that in philosophy, the bindingness of an action is often confused with its originating conditions. His argument is that obligation cannot result from the originating conditions of an action in motives, as both good and evil actions have originating conditions in motives. Crusius directly applies this argument to Wolff's explanation of obligation arising from the linking of an action with motives:

> The same confusion lies in the notion that obligation is the linking of motives with actions. If one now says: motives from which the action arises, *genesi physica*? or by virtue of which it should happen? For even evil actions occur based on motives; and if such motives were not connected with the intention and did not determine it, they would not occur.[55]

Crusius accuses Wolff of confusing normative and motivational aspects in his discussion of obligation. An action with obligation cannot be distinguished from one without obligation based on its motivating reasons, as every action has a backstory of motivating reasons. According to this objection, Wolff offers a reason of the wrong kind for the binding force of good actions. Wolff only refers to explanatory reasons for the emergence of an action, but not to justifying reasons for the obligation to perform or refrain from performing an action.

4.2 Priority of Duties of Virtue

Crusius believes he finds another error in the practical philosophy of his contemporaries, which also applies to Wolff's ethics. According to Crusius, the choice of an action "based on true grounds of obligation" is confused with the choice "for the sake of prudence".[56] In contrast, a central thesis of Crusius' ethics is that the duties of virtue and prudence have a different status. In general, Crusius considers his *Guide to Rational Living* to be "the science that contains the rules for how the human will should be and act according to the dictates of reason".[57] Among these rules, two types of duties can be distinguished because, according to Crusius, the will of humans can be determined

53. Crusius 1767: §164, 236 (note).
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Crusius 1767: §164, 237 (note).
57. *Ibid.*: §155, 223.

either "with regard to divine natural laws, which are considered as the ultimate end of the Creator", or "with regard to the promotion of their perfection and happiness".[58] Duties of virtue are obtained here by holding the human will "against general laws of God that can be recognized by reason, that is, by consideration by the creatures".[59] Duties of prudence, on the other hand, comprise the rules of "how the will must arrange its actions and omissions so that both the perfection and happiness of each individual human in particular, as well as that of all together, are promoted as well as possible".[60] Crusius understands both types of rules as duties that express a moral necessity to perform or refrain from actions.[61] While the moral necessity of the duties of prudence derives from the ultimate ends of human nature, the moral necessity of the duties of virtue derives from the laws that form the ultimate end of divine action.

The types of duties are, however, not only differentiated by their ends, there is also a hierarchy between them. Anticipating the results of his investigation, he first formulates a hypothesis:

> For if there were divine laws, God would have intended the moral obedience of his rational creatures, and he would have demanded that they should make seeking God and doing his will their highest end, and he would have decreed that they should attain happiness under this condition.[62]

Setting aside the hypothetical formulation, Crusius advances the view that the laws imposed by God set a limit to the human pursuit of happiness and perfection. Even if the pursuit of happiness and perfection gives rise to duties of prudence, these are overridden by duties of virtue in cases of conflict. In other words, duties of prudence only hold authority when they overlap with duties of virtue, due to the priority of duties of virtue. Crusius asserts that duties of virtue take precedence over duties from considerations of prudence, which is why he refers only to the former as "obligation".[63]

4.3 Crusius on Bindingness

If we take a closer look at Crusius' concept of bindingness, it appears at first glance that Crusius argues in a similar way to Pufendorf by interpreting the concept of law voluntaristically. However, on a closer look, it gets clear that Crusius gets beyond Pufendorf's position. In a first step, Crusius clarifies that laws are based on general commands and not on commands relating to individual situations:

> A *law* is the general will of a higher authority, which itself does not have another higher authority above it, thereby imposing on those subject to it a duty to do or refrain from something, arising from the will of that authority. The same higher

58. *Ibid.*: §156, 224.
59. *Ibid.*: §156, 223.
60. *Ibid.*: §156, 224.
61. See *ibid.*: §162, 230.
62. *Ibid.*: §159, 225.
63. *Ibid.*: §164, 237 (note).

> authority that gives the law is called a *sovereign*. I therefore always require a kind of generality in the law, so that it may be distinguished from individual commands.[64]

Like Pufendorf, Crusius traces laws back to the will of a higher authority. However, he asserts that the will of the higher authority and the laws issued by it have a kind of generality. In a second step, Crusius provides a detailed explanation of how a sovereign acquires its normative status. He uses the concept of dependency to explain what characterizes a sovereign:

> Two things depend on each other to the extent that the one must receive something from the other. Accordingly, the *dependence* of the spirits on each other is that relation by virtue of which one receives certain goods from the will of the other, in such a way that if this will were to disappear, the goods would also disappear.[65]

According to Crusius, a dependency of A on B exists only if A receives a good from B that is indispensable for A and which A can only obtain through B. The "true moral dependence" is therefore different from "the mere predominant power of one over the other," in which B merely has greater power over A and coerces A to comply with B's command.[66] A sovereign, "whose will has a binding force", exists only if the recipient of the command is simultaneously provided by the giver of the command with goods that the recipient cannot obtain without it.[67]

Crusius derives from dependence not only God's authorization to give commands to all human beings. The dependence also affects the motives from which human beings, as dependent creatures, have to fulfill the duties of virtue. According to Crusius, a person only fulfills a duty of virtue if they do so in awareness of their dependence and thus out of obedience to God.[68] The fact that obedience to God is the necessary motive for the fulfillment of duty is also reflected in Crusius' distinction between the formal and material aspects of virtue. The material aspect of virtue finds its expression in actions corresponding to human and divine perfection, while the formal aspect of virtue lies in actions being performed out of obedience to God and not from other motives.[69]

According to Crusius, this does not contradict the fact that God inflicts evil on those who transgress the law. This punishment is meted out by God so that his law is not in vain, which would contradict his perfection.[70] Crusius, however, warns against the "misconception that divine punishments and rewards are necessary in order to make the law binding".[71] According to him, "all true legal obligation [...] would be annulled" if the obligation of an act were to be reduced to fear of punishment for non-

64. *Ibid.*: §165, 238.
65. *Ibid.*: §166, 239f.
66. *Ibid.*
67. Crusius 1767: §166, 240.
68. See *ibid.*: §174, 249; §176, 250-252.
69. See *ibid.*: §177, 252-254.
70. See *ibid.*: §189, 267.
71. *Ibid.*: §194, 272.

compliance and hope of reward for fulfilling duty.[72] Even if punishment and reward "are simultaneously linked to obedience as motivating causes", they must not constitute the ultimate end of obedience, as otherwise the formal aspect of virtue is lost.[73]

In summary, according to Crusius, the obligatory character of moral norms is based on the instructions of a higher authority, who has normative authority due to the dependence of those subordinate to the higher authority. One might be tempted to understand the relationship between the divine will and the law in Crusius as meaning that God also determines the law. In the quoted passages, however, it seems clear that Crusius recognizes the divine will as the source of binding force, not the content of the law. Crusius does not seem to share the conviction that moral norms are chosen by God according to their content and that God could also choose other moral norms.[74] On the contrary, Crusius ascribes to God an indispensable function not as the author of the content of moral norms, but as the author of their binding force.

4.4 Kant on Crusius: Duty from the Will of a Legislator

Unlike in the *Groundwork*, in *Mrongovius II* Kant engages more closely with theological ethics. His discussion comprises two parts: while in the first part he refers to the position that God merely gives the moral law binding force as a legislator, in the second part he deals with the position that the content of the moral law is due to God's arbitrary decision. Kant fundamentally rejects the second position:

> It is believed that morality does not precede the divine will, so I cannot say that God commands us to perform actions because they are duties, but rather actions are duties because God commands them; but then moral laws would be arbitrary, and we would not perceive any necessity in them. (V Moral/Mrong II 29: 626)

The subject of criticism is the view that God arbitrarily determines the content of duties. If God commands actions because they are obligatory, he is merely giving instructions to follow the obligations that exist independently of his will. But if actions are obligatory because God commands them, then God also chooses the actions that people should take. Kant considers it implausible to believe that moral duties are merely "statua" that result from an arbitrary decision by God (*ibid.*). In this context, Kant shares the argument against voluntarism that Leibniz had already put forward against Pufendorf, according to which voluntarism is incapable of justifying moral necessity: "The transgression itself would have no inherent repugnance and could also be permitted again because the cause of it lies not in the action itself, but solely in the will of

72. *Ibid.*

73. Crusius 1767: §194, 273.

74. This is also Schierbaum's thesis in her interpretation of Crusius' ethics: "On the one hand, the *content* of moral obligation is constrained by the required compatibility with perfection: the content of moral obligation is determined by God's necessary *nature*, not by his will. On the other hand, it is only because God *wills* human agents to act in accordance with perfection that they are obligated to do so" (Schierbaum 2024: 282).

God" (V Moral/Mrong II 29: 627). Like Leibniz and Wolff, Kant considers an explanation of morality unacceptable if it does not do justice to its objective character by attributing its content to an arbitrary divine decision.[75] Moreover, according to another of Kant's arguments, only through coercion can God induce people to observe morality if the content of morality is due to his decision. Even if God had revealed himself to all human beings, the divine will could not establish morality, since the reason for observing one's duty consists merely in the "power of the sovereign" (V Moral/Mrong II 29: 626) and the fear of punishment and hope of reward.

According to Kant, however, a different understanding of theological ethics arises if God's actions are regarded as necessarily determined by the law. Accepted here is the premise, also shared by moral perfectionism, that God's will necessarily follows the moral law. Unlike moral perfectionism, however, this branch of theological ethics assumes that God makes the law binding. Kant thus turns to the position that God commands actions because they are obligatory. The idea of a God who does not choose arbitrarily but acts on the basis of the necessity of the law as a legislator is attractive because it counteracts a deficiency in moral perfectionism. While the weakness of rational principles, as presented by moral perfectionism, is, according to Kant, that they "have necessity but not practicality" (V Moral/Mrong II 29: 627), the strength of theological ethics, which sees God merely as a legislator, lies in the fact that it takes account of practical necessity and is able to explain the action-guiding nature of the moral law.

The assumption that moral obligation has a prescriptive character based on the command of a will is appropriated by Kant with a crucial modification:

> It seems as if duty is based on the will of a legislator, not what one does according to one's own will, but according to the will of another. But the will of another is not the will of another being; it is only our own will, insofar as we make it general and regard it as a general rule. (V Moral/Mrong II 29: 627)

Kant recognizes a constitutive condition of moral obligation in the instruction of one will to another will. Although he also assumes that a commanding will must be distinguished from a will that receives commands, he is of the opinion that these are not the wills of different beings. Kant's view, which can especially be seen in the *Groundwork*, results from the fact that the will-based model of obligation can be stripped of its theological framework. The distinction between the wills of different beings is replaced by the distinction between the different wills of the same person.

It is not a stretch to see Crusius as the source for the position Kant discusses here. After all, Crusius criticizes psychological conceptions of obligation and regards God merely as a legislator, but not as the author of the moral law. Nevertheless, there is no direct indication that Kant attributes this view to Crusius. Instead of Crusius, Kant might be thinking of Baumgarten, who, despite drawing on Wolff, has a proximity to divine

75. On the arguments against theological ethics, see Bacin 2019: 55-57.

voluntarism.[76] But this is contradicted by the fact that Kant corrects Baumgarten's opinion that God can be seen not only as the legislator, but also as the author of the law.[77]

This notion that Kant is referring to Crusius can be supported by comparing Kant's discussion of Crusius in the 1770s. In *Moral Mrongrovius*, Kant ascribes to Crusius the conviction "that all obligation relates to the will of another" (V Moral/Mrongovius 27: 1412). However, since according to Kant the obligation does not result from an *arbitrium externum*, he concludes that there is no *obligatio positiva*, but only an *obligatio naturalis*. He also argues against Crusius that the *obligatio positiva* only refers indirectly to the action, whereas the *obligatio naturalis* addresses the action directly. What is meant by this is that *obligatio positiva*, in contrast to *obligatio naturalis*, does not take account of the objective morality of the act because it derives the goodness or wickedness of an act from the will of another being. Without relying on Crusius, Kant nevertheless concedes here that "derivation of morality from the divine will" (V Moral/Mrongovius 27: 1425) is possible, insofar as it helps to explain the driving force (*Triebfeder*) of the law. According to Kant, we do not need "a third being" for moral judgment, but "without a supreme judge all moral laws would be without effect" (*ibid*.): "All moral laws can be correct without a third entity, but in practice, they would be empty if no third entity compelled us to adhere to them" (*ibid*.). Kant thus includes a command component in the theory of moral law, according to which the prospect of divine reward and fear of punishment provide the driving force for moral actions.[78]

In the mid-1780s, Kant developed a new conception of the driving force, which consists of respect for the moral law and excludes any consideration of rewards and punishments (see GMS 4: 400f.). Unlike in the 1770s, in the mid-1780s Kant does not ascribe relevance to a divine legislator for the driving force, but for the moral obligation. In his discussion of theological ethics, as represented by Crusius, Kant makes a distinction that was not yet apparent in the 1770s. In line with his distinction between the two variants of theological ethics in *Mrongovius II*, he now maintains that the assumption of an obligation arising from God's instruction is compatible with objective morality and arrives at the insight that God's role as legislator does not presuppose his role as author. Subsequently, Kant shares with Crusius the view that an obligation presupposes the instruction of one will to another will. Unlike Crusius, however, he is not of the opinion that these are the wills of different beings. On this basis, he concludes that the self-legislation of reason not only plays an epistemic role in grasping the moral

76. In the *Initia*, Baumgarten claims that God is both the author and legislator of natural laws (see Baumgarten 1760: §100, 61f.). Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine the extent to which Baumgarten actually departs from Wolff. After all, he also claims that all laws given by God have a reason in the nature of the action and the agent (see Baumgarten 1760: §69, 33f.).

77. See V Moral/Mrong II, 29: 635: "Our author says that moral laws can be considered as positive divine laws, but this is incorrect, because positive laws are merely pragmatic, mere statuta (statutes)". Kant himself uses the distinction between author and legislator in his discussion of Baumgarten.

78. See also V Moral/Mrong II, 634: "The moral law provides obligation but not driving force. This is provided by the religion of morality". See Kuehn 2015: 57-63 on similar statements in the Collins Nachschrift.

law, but also a normative role in the obligation to act according to the moral law. While Kant emancipates himself from the notion that obligation results from the will of God, he retains the notion that a voluntarist conception of obligation is compatible with the assumption of an objective morality. According to him, the concept of the moral law is "a command (of reason)" that is "necessitating for a will" (GMS 4: 413). He accepts the idea that moral duty is based on a command, even if he denies that the will to act morally "was constrained by *something else*" (GMS 4: 433) than one's own will.[79]

5. CONCLUSION: LAW AND OBLIGATION

Summing up Kant's interaction with Wolff and Crusius, four distinct steps emerge:

1) Kant agrees with Wolff's assertion, in opposition to Pufendorf, that moral laws exist necessarily and that their content does not depend on an arbitrary act of God's will.

2) Like Crusius, Kant holds the view, in contrast to Wolff, that obligation cannot be elucidated by the psychological disposition to adhere to the moral law.

3) And like Crusius, Kant holds that moral obligation can solely be explained by the command of a superior will toward a subordinate will.

4) Unlike Crusius, however, Kant holds that the command on which the moral obligation is based does not originate from the will of another being.

And Kant's conception of self-legislation suggests references to both Wolff and Crusius:

1) Kant concurs with Wolff in holding that the self-legislation of reason plays an epistemic role in apprehending the moral law.

2) Influenced by theological ethics, exemplified by Crusius, Kant arrives at the conclusion that the normative nature of the moral law can likewise be explained through self-legislation.

Looking at the context of the discussion, it becomes evident that all aspects of self-legislation mentioned at the outset are discussed, save for one. In this context, Kant ascribes an epistemic and normative, but not a metaphysical significance to self-legislation, according to which it produces the moral law. The fact that, ontologically speaking, the moral law does not arise from the will of the rational being is also not subject to criticism. Transposing Kant's perspective on the role of the divine will concerning the law to the rational will of the human individual, it becomes evident that the moral law imposes constraints on the rational will rather than being actively chosen by it. Just as in the divine will, the human rational will does not serve as the source of the moral law, but only of its binding force. The notion that the law exists independently of the will constitutes for him the criterion for a compatible form of theological ethics. His exploration of theological ethics reveals that the will can only be considered legislative if it does not simultaneously dictate the content of the moral law.[80]

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79. For the development of Kant's discussion of Crusius' theory of obligation, see also Rivero 2018 and 2023.

80. The view that Kant combines realist and voluntarist components is not a widespread view in the literature. However, it is shared by Stern 2011 and Bacin 2017 and 2019. Stern argues

However, even if the moral law is not chosen by a rational will, it could originate from self-legislation in another sense. Some scholars point out that the moral law is the a priori rule for practical reason, and trace its necessity to its being constitutive for the exercise of practical reason.[81] But even these interpretations – as respectable as they may seem at first glance – have a problem, as Kant's discussion of Wolff and Crusius shows. As we have seen, he criticizes theological ethics – unlike the ethics of perfection – for generally containing a circle, because morality can only be derived from the divine will if we think of the divine will as all-good in the first place.[82] And if we hold the divine will to be good, then the question arises as to what makes the divine will good. Moreover, since only the moral law could make the divine will all-good, it follows that the moral law logically and presumably metaphysically precedes the divine will. There seems no reason not to apply this argument to the human rational will as well. It may be because of this problem that Kant understands the moral law not only as the a priori law of practical reason, but also as the law of the intelligible world in the *Groundwork*. In sum, it is clear that the idea of self-legislation plays an epistemic and normative role for Kant and that he takes up thoughts from Wolff and Crusius to develop this position. Perhaps surprisingly, however, it is not clear that, according to Kant, self-legislation is also the metaphysical source of moral law in any sense.

ABBREVIATIONS

All citations from Kant's works refer to volume and page numbers from the Akademie-Ausgabe (AA): Kants gesammelte Schriften, 29 vol., ed. Berlin-Brandenburgische (originally Königlich Preussische, and then Deutsche) Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Reimer, 1900-19, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1920-.
GMS = *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (AA IV)
KpV = *Critique of Practical Reason* (AA V)
V Moral/Mrongovius = *Moral Mrongovius* (AA XXVII)
V Moral/Mrong II = *Moral Mrongovius II* (AA XXIX)
V MS/Vigilantius = *Die Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius* (AA XXVII)

that Kant merges a realist understanding of the inherent worth of rational nature with a voluntarist interpretation of obligation (cf. Stern 2011: esp. 33, 90). But this view is challenged by Kant's prioritization of the law over values (for an overview of the debate, see Gava & Vesper 2024: 74f.). Stern also does not primarily trace Kant's voluntaristic conception of duty to his engagement with Crusius, despite its centrality in shaping it. Contrary to this, Bacin contends that Kant's notion of autonomy intertwines the two perspectives labeled by Kant as rationalistic – moral perfectionism and theological ethics (see Bacin 2019: particularly 60). See *ibid.*: 62: "While he adopts the arguments of previous critics of theological voluntarism like Leibniz, he never concludes from the rejection of the theological view that morality does not need prescriptions". Whereas Schwaiger is correct in asserting that "Kant consistently rejected theological moral positivism, which seeks to justify morality through the will of God" (Schwaiger 2011: 146), Kant does indeed draw from theological voluntarism in justifying obligation, albeit distinct from the justification of the content of morality.

81. See constituvist interpretations such as Sensen 2017, Reath 2019.

82. See above Section 3.1.

All translations are by the author apart from citations from Kant's *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. These are taken from the translations from Mary Gregor: I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998; I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason. Revised Edition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

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Achim Vesper
Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main
ORCID: 0002-3024-3287
avesper@em.uni-frankfurt.de

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DAVID DEL BIANCO

The Scientificity of Metaphysics in Lambert and the Precritical Kant

ABSTRACT: In the *Inquiry* (1764) Kant provides a comprehensive meta-metaphysical perspective that includes several issues concerning metaphysics, but he does not address the question of its scientificity. He is subsequently led to do so through his encounter with the account of scientificity Johann Heinrich Lambert provides in his *Neues Organon* (1764), where he identifies systematicity and especially *a priori* nature (i.e. independence from experience) as the fundamental features of scientific cognition, thereby conceiving of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions of the understanding. Kant adopts this account already in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770) by conceiving of metaphysics as the science of pure understanding in virtue of its pure cognitions. Moreover, Kant goes beyond Lambert with his science of sensibility grounded on the pure intuitions of space and time, which science Lambert could not have conceived since the only *a priori* cognitions he admits are concepts which, as such, belong to understanding.
KEYWORDS: Kant; Lambert; Metaphysics; Science; *a priori*

1. INTRODUCTION: METAPHYSICS AS AN OVERALL DISCIPLINE, NOT YET AS A SCIENCE

After a decade of works written for both academic and non-academic purposes, but all devoted to specific philosophical issues, in the 1760s Kant shows a new attitude towards philosophy by partially putting aside such specific questions in favour of a reflection on the nature and method of metaphysics conceived as an overall discipline. This reflection, which outlines a clear meta-metaphysical perspective,[1] becomes explicit in the *Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality*, published in 1764 but written at the end of 1762 on the occasion of the competition on metaphysical and geometrical certainty announced by the Royal Academy of Sciences of Berlin in 1761. The results of this investigation, carried out through a systematic comparison between metaphysics and mathematics, are well-known.

1. The meta-metaphysical character of the *Inquiry* is highlighted in the *Introduction*, where Kant writes that "[i]f what is presented in this treatise is itself metaphysics, then the judgement of the treatise will be no more certain than has been that science which hopes to benefit from our inquiry" (*Inquiry*, II, 275). Although a detailed examination of the *Inquiry* cannot be provided here, let me briefly point out that, despite Kant's claim that his treatise "contains nothing but certain empirical propositions, and the inferences which are drawn immediately from them" (*ibidem*; translation modified), I do not think that its overall perspective provides an empiricist framework, especially because Kant's account of experience is anything but clear.

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First, mathematics arrives at its definitions by means of a synthetic method consisting in the "arbitrary combination of concepts",[2] while metaphysics adopts an analytic method consisting in analyzing concepts that are already given "albeit confusedly or in an insufficiently determinate fashion" in order to find the characteristic marks which "the understanding initially and immediately perceives"[3] in them. Second, mathematics examines its universal concepts "under signs *in concreto*" by using numbers or figures, while metaphysics does so "by means of signs *in abstracto*"[4] by using words. Third, mathematics contains few unanalysable concepts and indemonstrable propositions, while these are innumerable within metaphysics, since the whole of human cognition is too vast and varied to be reduced to a few of them. Finally, mathematics is "easy and simple" because it only deals with quantitative magnitudes and a few rules governing their operations, while philosophy is "difficult and involved"[5] because it deals with qualities, which are far more difficult to clarify. The overall result is that metaphysical certainty is sufficient to produce conviction, but is less intuitive and generally much more difficult to achieve than mathematical certainty.

In short, in the *Inquiry* Kant deals with several important questions concerning metaphysics as such that were absent in his previous works. However, there is one which remains unanswered: the question of its scientificity. Despite all its innovations, the perspective Kant outlines in the first half of the 1760s does not address it. This does not mean that he does not conceive of metaphysics as a science: many quotes from several precritical works show that he clearly does,[6] and in the *Announcement* of the lectures of winter semester 1765-1766 he even qualifies it as the "main science [*Hauptwissenschaft*]".[7] However, he does not address the question of what it means to conceive of a discipline, and in particular metaphysics, as a science. This is surprising if we consider that the *Inquiry* is an investigation into the features of such a science: it examines its method, the signs representing its universal concepts, its unanalysable concepts and indemonstrable propositions, the nature of its certainty and so on. All these questions concern a science; but among them we do not find the question that is most important for an investigation on a science, namely: what gives it its status of scientificity or, in other words, what makes a discipline a science? What are the criteria that allows one to qualify a science as such? Kant provides no answer.[8] Despite its several achievements (some of which will remain unaltered even in the critical period),

2. *Inquiry*, II, 276.

3. *Inquiry*, II, 281.

4. *Inquiry*, II, 278.

5. *Inquiry*, II, 282.

6. See e.g. *Inquiry* (II, 275), *Only Possible Argument* (II, 66), and *Negative Magnitudes* (II, 167), where metaphysics is always qualified as a "science [*Wissenschaft*]". This also applies to the 1750s (e.g. *New Elucidation*, I, 416) and even to the 1740s (e.g. *Thoughts*, I, 30).

7. AA II, 308. Translation modified.

8. The question of scientificity remains unaddressed also in the case of mathematics, which Kant assumes as the paradigm of science, although without examining the criteria that make it so.

the *Inquiry* is not a treatise on scientificity. It is a treatise on certainty and distinctness and, as such, it considers both the distinctness metaphysics possesses and the method it must adopt in order to achieve its specific kind of certainty; but it is not a treatise on scientificity. Thus, in the meta-metaphysical perspective of the *Inquiry*, i.e. in the most comprehensive account of metaphysics in all of his entire precritical period, the question of scientificity is still absent.

At the end of its second *Reflection*, Kant writes that to follow the method of the *Inquiry* means entering "the natural path of sound reason [*den natürlichen Weg der gesunden Vernunft*]".[9] This quote recalls and at the same time anticipates the beginning of the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he speaks of "the secure course of a science [*den sicheren Gang einer Wissenschaft*]".[10] But there is a crucial difference. While in the first quote Kant refers to the path of sound reason, in the second he refers to the path of a science, thus explicitly addressing the question of the scientificity of metaphysics which is absent in the *Inquiry*. Therefore, considering that one of the fundamental questions of the *Critique* will be "*How is metaphysics as a science possible?*"[11] and that the *Inquiry* and the *Critique* are separated by almost twenty years in which Kant's theoretical works only amount to a rather strange book in the *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* (1766) and to a Latin dissertation that is important but written mainly for academic purposes as the *Dissertation on the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World* (1770), we might ask what it takes for him to move from the "natural path of sound reason" to the "sure course of a science". In other words, we might ask when and how Kant comes to deal explicitly with the question of scientificity.

I argue that this happens a few years after the writing of the *Inquiry*, when Kant is still developing his meta-metaphysical perspective. More specifically, I argue that he is led to address the question of scientificity by his encounter with his contemporary Johann Heinrich Lambert and with the account of scientificity Lambert provides in his *Neues Organon* (1764).[12] To justify this claim, I will first examine (Section 2) Lambert's account of scientificity. After a brief presentation of the overall structure and aims of his work, I will examine the two criteria of scientific cognition he provides, namely (Section 2.1) the systematicity of cognition and (Section 2.2), especially, its *a priori* nature, i.e. its independence from experience, thus showing that he conceives of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions of pure understanding. Then, I will show (Section 3) how Kant adopts this account of science already in the *Inaugural Dissertation* and how this adoption, (Section 3.1) which is clear in his account of metaphysics, at the same time amounts to (Section 3.2) a radicalization of it insofar as it includes a science of sensibility that is completely *a priori* but not intellectual. Moreover, I will briefly consider (Section 3.3) the accounts of scientificity of the most influential philosophers of

9. *Inquiry*, II, 289.

10. *CPR*, B vii.

11. *CPR*, B 22.

12. *Neues Organon oder Gedanken über die Erforschung und Bezeichnung des Wahren und dessen Unterscheidung vom Irrthum und Schein* [*New Organ, or Thoughts on the Discovery and Designation of Truth and its Difference from Error and Appearance*], Leipzig, Wendler 1764.

Kant's time in order to show why Kant cannot have taken his account of scientificity from them. Finally, I will conclude (Section 4) by summarizing the results of previous sections and by highlighting two difficulties which lead Kant from the perspective of the *Dissertation* to that of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In this way, I also hope to explain why, before changing his mind after Lambert's premature death in 1777, Kant had originally planned to dedicate the *Critique* to him.[13]

2. LAMBERT'S ACCOUNT OF SCIENTIFICITY

The short but interesting correspondence Kant and Lambert had between 1765 and 1770 shows that they knew and admired each other. In the first letter Lambert highlights "the similarity of our ways of thinking",[14] and in his first reply Kant confirms the "fortunate agreement of our methods";[15] moreover, after the former's premature death in 1777, in a letter to Johann Bernoulli of November 1781 Kant recalls the proposal, made by Lambert and accepted by him, to collaborate on a "reform of metaphysics".[16] However, while Lambert writes that he has appreciated Kant's *Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, Kant does not specify which of Lambert's works he is referring to in writing that he has found his philosophy methodologically similar to his own. I suggest that Kant adopts the account of scientificity Lambert provides in his *Neues Organon*, and in particular in the chapter *On Scientific Cognition* [*Von der wissenschaftlichen Erktenntniß*], the last section of its first part. However, before dealing with that, let us take a brief look at the structure of the work.

Published in 1764 and more than one thousand pages long, the *Neues Organon* is the first of the two main philosophical works by Lambert, which so far had mainly consisted of writings on mathematics and natural sciences, of which the most important were the *Cosmological Letters* published in 1761.[17] This work is divided into four parts, each one answering one of the questions raised in the *Preface*:

13. See *R* 5024 (AA XVIII, 64).

14. AA X, 51.

15. AA X, 55.

16. AA X, 277.

17. Lambert's second main philosophical work is the *Anlage zur Architectonic, oder Theorie des Einfachen und des Ersten in der philosophischen und mathematischen Erkenntniß* [*Outline of the Architectonic, or Theory of the Simple and Primary Elements of Philosophical and Mathematical Cognition*], published in 1771 but already written in 1764. Before the *Neues Organon*, the most important exceptions to an otherwise entirely mathematical and scientific production are his *Treatise of the Criterion of Truth* and his essay *On the Method to Rightly Prove Metaphysics, Theology and Morality* (written for the competition on metaphysical certainty but never sent), both written in 1761 and published posthumously. On these, see Dello Preite 1979: 47-59 and especially Todesco 1987: 101-159. Although the issue of scientificity is also present in the *Architectonic*, Lambert explicitly addresses it in the *Neues Organon*; therefore, I will only consider this work.

> 1. whether the human understanding is lacking in *powers* to walk safely and with certainty on the path of truth without so much foundering;
> 2. whether the *truth* itself is not sufficiently discernible to the understanding in order not to confuse it so easily with error;
> 3. whether the *language* in which the understanding adorns the truth makes it, through misunderstanding, indeterminacy, and ambiguity less discernible and more doubtful, or places other obstacles in its path;
> 4. whether the understanding lets itself be blinded by *illusion* without always being able to penetrate to what is true.[18]

The first question is answered in the *Dianoiology*, or "doctrine of the laws according to which the understanding directs itself in *thinking*",[19] the second in the *Alethiology*, or "doctrine of *truth*".[20] These disciplines would be sufficient "if the human understanding did not need to bind its cognition to *words* and *signs*, and if the truth did not often show itself to the understanding under a wholly different *appearance*, from which the understanding has to distinguish it, just as from error";[21] therefore, two further disciplines are required. The first, which answers the third question, is the *Semiotics*, or "doctrine of *designation* of thoughts and things", which must clarify "what sort of influence language and signs have on the cognition of the truth".[22] The second, which answers the fourth question, is the *Phenomenology*, or "doctrine of the *appearance*", whose aim is "to make the appearance discernible, and state the means to avoid it and to penetrate to the truth".[23] Moreover, these four sections explain the title of the work: following Bacon and Aristotle, they are "instrumental or […] tools of which the human understanding must avail itself in the investigation of truth",[24] and therefore an *organon* (the Greek word for "instrument" or "tool").

As I have said, I believe that Kant adopts the account of scientificity that Lambert provides in the *Dianoiology*. Here, according to its qualification as the *Doctrine of the Rules of Thinking*, Lambert examines the formal principles of rational thinking; then, after a long inquiry concerning several topics such as concepts, judgments, inferences and proofs, in the ninth and last chapter he finally raises the question of the scientificity of cognition,[25] i.e. of the fundamental features of scientific cognition. This question is initially dealt with through a comparison with experience, of which in the previous chapter Lambert had distinguished three increasingly complex kinds: common experiences, observations and experiments. Common experiences are the most elementary we

18. *NO,* iii. Translation modified.
19. *Ibidem*.
20. *NO,* iii-iv.
21. *NO,* iv.
22. *Ibidem*.
23. *Ibidem*.
24. *Ibidem*.
25. Contrary to Kant, Lambert's interest does not concern (or at least, not primarily) the scientificity of metaphysics, but rather the scientificity of cognition (both philosophical and mathematical) in general.

can have, and consist in "the mere sensation of that which falls under our senses without further intervention";[26] however, if an experience requires our further attention, then it is an observation; finally, if in order to experience something an observation requires us to combine things that in themselves would not be combined or viceversa and, in general, if it requires creating a state of things not normally found in nature, then it is an experiment. Lambert highlights the importance of experience by claiming that it is often "necessary for the foundation and enlargement of our cognition"[27] and adding that it allows us to know "that something *is*, that it is *such and not otherwise*, and sometimes also, *what it is*".[28]

However, having stressed the importance of experience, in the very beginning of the chapter Lambert presents a further and problematic aspect of it by claiming that if we simply settle on empirical cognitions, then all we have is a cognition that is only "*historical* [historisch]", i.e. "merely a *narrative* [*eine bloße* Erzählung] of what is in nature" or, what is the same, a "*common cognition* [gemeine Erkenntniß]" consisting in what can be known by every human being who "is not robbed of his senses".[29] This remark represents the first step of Lambert's comparison of historical (or common) and scientific cognition, which is focused on two criteria of scientificity that distinguish the latter from the former. The first criterion is systematicity.

2.1. The First Criterion of Scientificity: The Systematicity of Cognition

Although experience is important and sometimes necessary for our cognition, it allows us to obtain only concepts and propositions "each of which subsists, as it were, on its own alone",[30] resulting in a manifold of unrelated cognitions. On the contrary, "scientific cognition is based on the *dependency* of one cognition on another [Abhänglichkeit *einer Erkenntniß von der andern*]".[31] This is the first feature distinguishing it from common cognition since, whereas the latter merely includes particular cognitions without establishing relations between them, the former aims precisely at their coherent organization, i.e. at their systematization.[32] Thus, while common cognition amounts

26. *NO,* §557. My translation.
27. *NO,* §551. My translation.
28. *NO,* §599.
29. *NO,* §600. When the original German (or Latin) text is not in italics, it means that it is originally emphasized by bold (e.g. "historisch", "Erzählung", and "gemeine Erkenntniß" in this case).
30. *NO,* §601.
31. *NO,* §605.
32. In the *Neues Organon* Lambert does not speak of a "system" of cognitions nor of their "systematicity". However, since these differences are merely terminological and he explicitly refers to a "system [*System*]" of cognitions in several letters, I will speak of system and systematicity. Moreover, the fact that Lambert addresses the issue of systematicity from the very beginning of the chapter shows that his "explanation of the systematic character of scientific cognition" does not occur "in the *Alethiology*" (Arndt 1965: xv) but in the *Dianoiology*.

to a mere "*patchwork* [Stückwerk]", scientific cognition constitutes (or at least aims to constitute) a coherent and interconnected "*whole* [Ganzes]",[33] i.e. a system.

Moreover, in this regard Lambert does not conceive of scientific cognition as something established once and for all and clearly separated from common cognition. On the contrary, he emphasizes that, in order to realize the system it aims at, scientific cognition "investigates" how a particular cognition "can be determined by the other".[34] Thus, scientific cognition actively operates on common cognition, and it does so in two steps. First, it examines empirical cognitions in order to make them more distinct, since "common cognition takes things as they fall under our senses" and therefore "assumes obscure, clear, confused, puzzled and clear concepts without further distinction".[35] Second, scientific cognition "*compares empirical concepts and empirical propositions with each other*" in order to establish "how, if one knows or assumes some, the remaining ones can be found from them", thereby showing "*how they depend on each other*".[36] In this way, we cease to conceive of empirical cognitions "only as broken off pieces or as individual fragments" and see "through what the one can be compared with the other or lets itself be determined by the other",[37] thus satisfying the criterion of systematicity. In short, by showing how a given cognition depends on another and what other cognitions can be derived from it, and, more generally, by establishing the mutual interconnection of cognitions that would otherwise remain unrelated, i.e. by giving them the form of a coherent and internally organized whole as required by systematicity, "scientific cognition shows the richness of our knowledge [*Wissen*]".[38]

However, before moving to the next section let me point out two things. The first is that Lambert's account of systematicity is neither very detailed nor very clear. Despite its importance, he neither develops it nor explains how we are supposed to systematize cognitions; he basically only claims that we must do it by connecting cognitions insofar as some of them derive from or lead to some other, which is rather vague. This also means that systematicity is not a very rigorous criterion for distinguishing scientific from common cognition, since Lambert does not explain what degree of systematicity is sufficient to qualify a cognition as scientific. The second thing, which is more important, is that his criterion of systematicity is anything but original. The view that science must be systematic and not fragmentary was shared by several philosophers at the time, both contemporary to and preceding Kant and Lambert.[39] Therefore, I do not think

33. *NO,* §606.

34. *NO,* §605.

35. *NO,* §617 (my translation). For Lambert's account of the clarity, distinctness and completeness of concepts, see §§8-11. A brief list of tasks to carry out in order to systematize isolated cognitions is provided in §619.

36. *NO,* §610.

37. *NO,* §611.

38. *NO,* §607.

39. In this respect, Van Den Berg writes that philosophers such as Meier, Lambert and Kant "construed the notion of systematicity on the basis of a widely accepted axiomatic idea of science" (Van den Berg 2021: 282), which he calls the Classical Model. Moreover, in the *Ar-*

that the aspect of Lambert's account that leads Kant to address the issue of scientificity is his view on systematicity. On the contrary, I think it is the second criterion Lambert provides, namely the *a priori* nature of cognition.

2.2. The Second Criterion of Scientificity: The a priori *Nature of Cognition*

Lambert introduces the second criterion indirectly by referring to a "deeply rooted prejudice" claiming that

> *one can think no further than the senses reach* [man könne nicht weiter hinaus denken, als die Sinnen reichen]*, and what one cannot immediately experience* [was man nicht unmittelbar erfahren [...] könne]*, consequently cannot see or perceive without taking other cognition into consideration, that extends beyond the field of vision of human cognition and is impossible for us to know.*[40]

Despite its importance, the proper content of this prejudice is ambiguous. It is clear both that it concerns the possibility of cognitions that are independent of experience and that, since Lambert explicitly qualifies it as a prejudice, the epistemological view it presents is in all likelihood wrong; yet such a view is not entirely clear, because the prejudice can be read in two different ways, thus leading to two different epistemological theses, one of which is more demanding than the other.

The first way consists in focusing on the first sentence, which claims that "*one can think no further than the senses reach*": in this case, the epistemological thesis of the prejudice is that we cannot know what the senses cannot reach, i.e. what we cannot experience. The second way consists in focusing on the second sentence, which claims that "*what one cannot immediately experience* [...]*, that extends beyond the field of vision of human cognition and is impossible for us to know*": in this case, the epistemological thesis of the prejudice is that we cannot know only what we cannot *immediately* experience. As said, the fact that both theses amount to a 'prejudice' and that it is shared by those whose cognition is merely common (while Lambert distinguishes scientific cognition precisely from this) implies that the correct epistemological view is the opposite of that affirmed by the prejudice, which therefore is false. However, the problem is precisely that this prejudice is ambiguous because it allows two different readings, leading to two different 'negative' epistemological theses (i.e. theses that identify what we *cannot* know). Thus, if the prejudice is false and the correct epistemological view is its opposite, then we have two 'positive' theses. The first of them is the opposite of the first reading and claims that we *can* think "*further than the senses reach*", while the second is the opposite of the second reading and claims that we *can* know "*what* [we] *cannot immediately experience*". Therefore, the first 'correct' epistemological thesis claims that we can have cognitions that are independent of experience *as such*, while the second claims that we can have cognitions which are independent only of *immediate*

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chitectonic Lambert himself admits to having taken the title of this work from Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* (see *Architectonic*, xxviii).

40. *NO,* §601.

experience; accordingly, in the first case the independence from experience is absolute, while in the second it is relative. In any case, the first thesis is clearly more demanding than the second: to claim that we can know what we cannot *immediately* experience is something rather undemanding which an empiricist could concede without much concern, whereas to claim that we can know what we cannot experience *in general* is a much stronger epistemological claim, to which an empiricist would hardly agree.[41] Thus, the problem concerning the interpretation of the quoted passage, and therefore concerning the thesis Lambert indirectly presents, is that it allows both readings, and that Lambert leaves undecided (or at least unclear) which thesis he actually supports.[42]

Leaving the issue temporarily aside in order to deal with systematicity, he returns to the possibility of cognitions independent of experience in §634, where he thematizes this independence in terms of *a priori* and *a posteriori* nature of cognition, writing that

> insofar as one can find propositions, properties, relations, concepts, etc., on the basis of what one already knows without first needing to take these immediately from experience [*unmittelbar aus der Erfahrung*], to that extent we say that we find such propositions, properties, etc., *a priori* […]. However, if we have to use immediate experience [*unmittelbare Erfahrung*] in order to know a proposition, property, etc., we find it *a posteriori*.[43]

Thus, *a posteriori* cognition is cognition obtained through immediate experience, while *a priori* cognition is that which does not require it. These definitions tend to support the weaker epistemological thesis, since Lambert writes that a cognition is *a priori* if we do not need to take it "*immediately* from experience",[44] which does not exclude the possibility (and even suggests) that *a priori* cognitions are those taken from indirect or more remote experiences. In other words, this definition of *a priori* cognition implies that its independence from experience is not absolute (i.e. from experience *as such*) but merely relative (i.e. from *immediate* experience). This weaker sense of the *a priori* is confirmed in the following paragraphs, where Lambert considers its relation to *a posteriori* cognition in further detail:

> one easily sees that these two concepts must be taken *reciprocally* [verhältnißweise]. For if one wanted to infer that not only immediate experiences, but also everything that we can find on the basis of them is *a posteriori*, the concept *a priori* would be

41. I will refer to these theses as "the stronger" and "the weaker" epistemological theses.

42. The clarifications Lambert provides in the following paragraphs are not very helpful since they allow one to support both theses. On the one hand, in §602 he claims that he will provides examples "from the mathematical sciences, because they […] proceed the furthest and at the same time with the greatest certainty in the discovery and determination of what one cannot *experience* [*was man nicht* erfahren *kann*]", thus referring to cognitions that are independent of experience as such, which supports the stronger thesis. However, the actual example he provides in §603 concerns the measurement of the diameter of the Earth and of the distance between planets, which cognitions are only independent of immediate experiences but obviously not of experience as such, which supports the weaker thesis.

43. *NO,* §634.

44. *Ibidem*. Emphasis added.

> used in few of those cases where we can determine something through inferences in advance, because in such a case we would have to thank experience for none of the premises. And in that case nothing at all [*gar nichts*] would be *a priori* in all of our cognition. […] Accordingly, we want to let it be valid that one can call something *a priori absolutely* and *in strictest sense* [*absolute und* im strengsten Verstande] only if we have nothing at all to thank experience for […]. By contrast, we have no difficulty in calling *a priori in the broadest sense* [im weitläuftigsten Verstande] everything that we can *know in advance* [voraus wissen] without first letting it depend on experience […]. After the determination of both of the extreme meanings it can easily be discerned that something is more or less [*mehr oder minder*] *a priori*, according to how we can derive it from more [or less] distant experiences, and that, on the contrary, something is *completely not* [vollends nicht] *a priori* and consequently is *immediately* [unmittelbar] *a posteriori* if we must *experience* it immediately [*unmittelbar* erfahren] in order to know it.[45]

The quoted passage is dense, but Lambert's argument is clear.

The relative nature of the independence from experience of *a priori* cognition had already been hinted at by his claim that a cognition is *a priori* when we do not need to take it "*immediately* from experience",[46] but such a claim was not enough to rule out the possibility of cognitions completely independent of experience. However, now the ambiguity present from the very beginning of Lambert's account of it[47] seems to vanish, since he claims that the *a priori* nature of cognition is not absolute and, on the contrary, must be understood in its relation to its *a posteriori* nature. Lambert clarifies this view by introducing a distinction between a stronger and a weaker sense of the *a priori*, which coincides with his previous (and implicit) distinction between a stronger and a weaker epistemological thesis. Accordingly, a cognition can be *a priori* in the "*strictest sense*" (when "we have *nothing at all* to thank experience for"[48]) or the "*broadest sense*" (when it concerns something "that we can know *in advance* without first letting it depend on experience"). Lambert adds that the strictest sense is not viable since it would qualify as *a priori* only those cognitions that are absolutely independent of experience as such, thus qualifying as *a posteriori* not only those we obtain through immediate experiences but also those we obtain through less immediate (or even remote) ones. However, and this is the crucial point, "if one wanted to infer that not only immediate experiences, but also everything that we can find on the basis of them is *a posteriori* […], in that case nothing at all would be *a priori* in all of our cognition". In other words, the price of thinking an *a priori* as completely independent of experience as such is that we set a standard of cognitive purity that is too high for our cognitions to meet, with the consequence that in all of our cognition there is "nothing at all" that meets it and, therefore, nothing at all that is *a priori* in the stronger sense. However, if the stronger sense of the *a priori* is not viable, we can still assume the weaker. Thus,

45. *NO,* §§637-640. Translation modified.
46. *NO,* §634. Emphasis added.
47. Remember the ambiguity of the "deeply rooted prejudice" seen at the beginning of Section 2.2.
48. *NO,* §639. Emphasis added.

Lambert seems to claim that there is no clear dividing line between an *a priori* and an *a posteriori* that have turned out to be intrinsically intertwined; accordingly, a cognition will be "more or less *a priori*, according to how we can derive it from more [or less] distant experiences".

Let us briefly summarize what we have seen so far. In his inquiry on scientific cognition, Lambert identifies the two criteria for its scientificity in its systematicity and *a priori* nature, with the latter consisting in its independence from experience and taken in the weaker and relative sense. Thus, if we consider both criteria, it becomes clear that he conceives of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions.

However, there is a further aspect of Lambert's account of scientificity to consider, which is particularly important because it shows that, despite what we have just seen, he does *not* reject the stronger meaning of the *a priori*. On the contrary, this stronger sense is rehabilitated and fully legitimized in the second half of the chapter, where Lambert moves from the criteria of scientificity to the specific *a priori* cognitions that, coherently with the first criterion, must be systematized in order to realize his account of science as the system of *a priori* cognitions. Thus, the "investigation that arises here" consists in

> sorting concepts out with respect to this and bringing them into proper classes. And this difference therein primarily depends on the way *in which we arrive at or can arrive at concepts* [wie wir zu den Begriffen gelangen oder gelangen können]. For it is clear that the more we ourselves can have concepts without taking experience into account, the more our cognition becomes *a priori*.[49]

The quoted passage includes both criteria of scientificity by claiming that the concepts we "can have […] without taking experience into account" must be brought "into proper classes". Moreover, it shows that the *a priori* cognitions we are looking for are primarily concepts (and not, for example, propositions).[50] However, since a concept must first of all be possible, Lambert examines the possibility of concepts in general. In the case of empirical concepts, their possibility is not an issue since the fact that common cognition provides us with them is sufficient to prove it.[51] In the case of *a priori* concepts, Lambert does not directly address the issue of their possibility and instead refers to the possibility of forming concepts by means of a "*composition* of individual marks", which can be carried out "*arbitrarily*" as long as we can prove the possibility of the concept we are composing, which until this proof is merely "hypothetical".[52] Thus, he moves from the possibility of arbitrary composition of concepts to its conditions:

> [s]ince composite concepts can be resolved into simpler ones as their marks, one can conceive of completely simple concepts [*ganz einfache Begriffe*] that cannot be resolved further, but that can be determined or denoted through relations to other

49. *NO*, §645. Translation modified.

50. This means that in Lambert's view the faculty of *a priori* cognitions is the understanding. I will return to the importance of this remark in Section 3.

51. See *NO,* §646.

52. *NO,* §650.

> concepts. Such simple concepts constitute the foundation of the entirety of our cognition and one can justly and in the most proper sense [*im eigentlichsten Verstand*] call them *fundamental concepts* [Grundbegriffe] in order to contrast them with derivative concepts [*Lehrbegriffe*]. Since they have no parts, nothing is to be distinguished in them. [...] we can define them at most only through relations because the representation or perception thereof is thoroughly uniform [*einförmig*].[53]

It is possible to form complex concepts by means of an arbitrary composition of concepts that are absolutely simple; therefore, these simple concepts are fundamental insofar as they ground the possibility of composing more complex ones, thus constituting the foundation of our entire cognition. However, the issue of the possibility of absolutely simple concepts arises, and Lambert solves it by noting that

> [s]ince at least two elements are required for a contradiction, because the one must cancel out the other, fundamental concepts necessarily possess nothing contradictory. For since they are not composite, there is nothing in them that could cancel out anything else in it. Accordingly, the mere representation [*die bloße Vorstellung*] of a simple concept constitutes its possibility and this forces itself on us along with the representation.[54]

Traditionally identifying possibility with the absence of contradiction, Lambert proves the possibility of simple concepts by noting that a contradiction needs at least two different elements to occur between them, while simple concepts do not contain different marks which could be the opposite to each other and therefore lead to a contradiction. Thus, a simple concept is possible because it does not contain parts, and therefore it does not contain different marks that can give rise to a contradiction which would qualify it as impossible. In short, the possibility of a simple concepts is a logical consequence of its absolute simplicity.[55]

However, Lambert's decisive remark on the simple and fundamental *a priori* concepts and their relation to scientific cognition appears in §656:

> [s]ince in the dissection of composite concepts we approach the simple or fundamental concepts when we resolve them into their internal marks, it is clear that the farther we go in this resolution, the farther we can proceed *a priori* in scientific cognition, and that our scientific cognition would be *a priori* completely and in the strictest sense [*ganz und im strengsten Verstande*] (§639), if we knew the fundamental concepts in their entirety and [...] the first foundation of the possibility of their composition. For since the possibility of a fundamental concept forces itself on us along with the representation (§654), it arises thereby completely independently of experience [*von der Erfahrung dadurch ganz unabhängig*] such that even if we already have to thank experience for it, experience provides us, as it were, only the occasion [*Anlaß*] for the consciousness of it. However, once

53. *NO,* §653. Translation modified.

54. *NO,* §654. Translation modified.

55. I therefore find that Dello Preite's claim that the criterion of possibility as absence of contradiction "is limited to composite concepts and is not applied to simple concepts" (Dello Preite 1979: 72) plainly contradicts the text.

> we are conscious of it, we have no need to procure the ground of its possibility from experience, because possibility is already present with the mere representation. Accordingly, it becomes independent of experience. And this is a *requisitum* of cognition [that is] *a priori* in the strictest sense (§639) […]. Finally, if we are familiar with the foundation of the possibility of their composition, we are also in a position to form composite concepts from these simple ones without procuring them from experience. Accordingly, here too our cognition becomes *a priori* in the strictest sense (§639).[56]

The importance of this passage consists in the return of the stronger sense of the *a priori*.

The possibility of the simple or fundamental concepts *a priori* is proved by their non-contradictory nature, which is a direct consequence of their absolute simplicity. Moreover, and this is the crucial novelty, this makes these concepts *a priori* in the stronger sense: consisting in the absence of contradiction deriving from their simplicity, their possibility "arises thereby completely independently of experience", which makes these concepts "completely and in the strictest sense" *a priori* and independent of experience, which can only provide an 'occasion' to become conscious of them. In short, the fundamental concepts are *a priori* in the stronger sense because their possibility consists in their purely logical non-contradictory nature, which prevents their origin from being empirical.[57] However, the discovery of the absolute *a priori* nature of fundamental concepts yields an equally important consequence, namely the possibility of a science which is "*a priori* completely and in the strictest sense". Indeed, if our cognition is scientific insofar as it is *a priori* and if its fundamental concepts are *a priori* in the strictest sense, then it is possible to achieve cognitions which are "*a priori* completely and in the strictest sense"[58] and therefore, when they are brought into a system, a science which is fully so.[59] Lambert claims that we can achieve such a science by knowing "the fundamental concepts in their entirety" and "the first foundation of the possibility of their composition"; moreover, the knowledge of the first foundation of the possibility of the composition of simple and fundamental concepts *a priori* in the stronger sense allows us to "form composite concepts from these simple ones without procuring them from experience", thereby extending our cognition that is "*a priori* in the strictest sense", i.e. fully scientific.[60]

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56. *NO*, §656. Translation modified.

57. See also *NO*, §660: "the concept […] will be able to be viewed as *a priori* as soon as we can secure its possibility without [having to depend on] experience".

58. E.g. the propositions "two times two is four", "a syllogism in *Barbara* necessarily leads to its conclusion", "a circle is round" are all "completely independent of the actual world" (*NO*, §657) and therefore of experience, i.e. completely *a priori*.

59. Lambert provides geometry, chronometry and phoronomy as examples of such sciences, since they are founded on the completely *a priori* concepts of space and time (see *NO*, §658).

60. I do not entirely agree with Watkins, who claims that "the concepts that constitute [scientific *a priori*] cognition [...] must be [...] 'hypothetical concepts', which are constructed arbitrarily on the basis of individual marks" (Watkins 2018: 183). Hypothetical concepts can be *a priori* (because they can be formed by simple concepts *a priori*), but they are not the only *a priori* concepts nor the most important since our original *a priori* concepts are the funda-

The novelties introduced by the last quoted passage are crucial for Lambert's account of scientificity. The completely *a priori* nature of the fundamental concepts allows him to make room for the stronger sense of the *a priori*, which seemed to have been ruled out[61] and, therefore, to provide an account of scientific cognition that now is fully so insofar as it is grounded on concepts that are *a priori* "completely and in the strictest sense".[62] Thus, if we recall that the *a priori* nature of cognition is joined by systematicity as the other criterion of scientificity, we can conclude that the rehabilitation of the stronger sense of the *a priori* provided by the discovery of the absolutely *a priori* nature of fundamental concepts allows Lambert to strengthen his account of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions, since now the cognitions constituting this system are not (or not only) *a priori* in the weaker sense but in the stronger. In short, this discovery allows him to justify the possibility of a science that includes cognitions that are completely independent of experience, i.e. a science which is fully so since its cognitions are *a priori* "completely and in the strictest sense".

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mental and simple ones, whose combination leads to the composite and hypothetical. It is impossible to have hypothetical composite concepts completely *a priori* without first having the completely *a priori* simple concepts which form them. Therefore, the concepts that constitute scientific cognition are primarily the fundamental and simple, and only secondly the composite and hypothetical, as proved also by the fact that "the first foundation of the possibility of their composition" cannot be achieved without having first achieved "the fundamental concepts in their entirety".

61. Note that, strictly speaking, Lambert had *not* explicitly ruled out the stronger sense of the *a priori*. Speaking of cognitions *a priori* in the stronger sense, he had claimed that "whether in such a case something of this kind is to be found in our cognition, that is a completely different [...] question" (*NO*, §639; translation modified); this, however, does not mean that such cognitions are impossible.

62. I therefore disagree with both Wolters and Basso, who claim that the stronger sense of the *a priori* is "too narrow" (Wolters 1981: 79; Basso 2021: 190) for Lambert. Wolters claims that since experience "represents the first step of the constitution" (Wolters 1981: 79) of fundamental concepts, their "meaning is *genetically* connected to experience, but with regard to their *validity* they are thinkable in themselves" (Wolters 1981: 86): while I agree with the second part of his claim, I disagree with the first since, properly speaking, only the "occasion" to become conscious of the fundamental concepts is "*genetically*" connected to experience, while these concepts in themselves are not. Analogously, Basso qualifies Lambert's *a priori* "as an extension of the *a posteriori*", claiming that he "uses the term '*a priori*' to refer to a *relative beginning*, i.e., a beginning intrinsically indebted to preceding experiences" and concluding that "this 'hybrid *a priori*', which allows him to escape rigid dichotomies, can be regarded as Lambert's main contribution to epistemology" (Basso 2021: 190-192). We have seen that Lambert conceives of an *a priori* as a more abstract *a posteriori*, but this is only the weaker or "broadest" sense of it, and he also thematizes a stronger and "strictest" sense consisting in complete independence from experience, as in the case of the fundamental concepts. Moreover, Lambert's account of them shows that it is incorrect to speak of his alleged "skepticism concerning the possibility of the absolute *a priori*", let alone by motivating it claiming that in his view "concretely, all our cognition as such derives from experience" (Dello Preite 1979: 129-130). For the same reason there is no "essential ambiguity in the simple concepts, with regard to which the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* [would not be] very clear" (Dello Preite 1979: 106).

Let us leave Lambert's account by noting that it is far from complete. The meta-philosophical[63] inquiry of the *Dianoiology* has provided the criteria of scientificity, but not all the *a priori* concepts and corresponding sciences. Lambert completes this task in the *Alethiology* and, in further detail, in the *Architectonic* by providing the fundamental *a priori* concepts and the propositions (both axioms and postulates) deriving from them, thereby offering the full list of completely *a priori* sciences.[64] This remaining part of Lambert's overall project is not important for my purposes, and we can move to the next section. However, before doing so let us fix in mind the results achieved so far: (I) Lambert provides an account of scientific cognition that identifies its two criteria in its systematicity and especially in its *a priori* nature; (II) the *a priori* nature of cognition consists in its independence of experience; (III) this independence can be both relative and absolute, but Lambert emphasizes that proper sciences are absolutely *a priori*. Moreover, (IV) since the only *a priori* cognitions are concepts and the propositions deriving from them, which as such pertain to the faculty of understanding, he only admits a science of pure understanding, or a purely intellectual science. With this in mind, let us turn to Kant.

3. KANT'S ADOPTION OF LAMBERT'S ACCOUNT OF SCIENTIFICITY: THE *INAUGURAL DISSERTATION*

As I have said, I argue that Kant adopts Lambert's account of scientificity, thus beginning to conceive of science as a discipline including cognitions completely *a priori*, and that he also radicalizes it, thus going beyond Lambert himself. However, to locate both Kant's adoption and radicalization of Lambert's account of scientificity it is not necessary to wait the almost twenty years separating the *Neues Organon* from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. On the contrary, they occur several years before the *Critique* in the "inaugural dissertation" *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World* (1770). Let us consider it in detail.

3.1. With Lambert: Metaphysics as the Science of Pure Understanding

After a first section whose importance is downplayed by Kant himself,[65] in the second he introduces his well-known distinction between understanding and sensibility, with the former consisting in the "*faculty* of a subject in virtue of which it has the power to represent things which cannot by their own quality come before the senses of that

63. The meta-philosophical nature of Lambert's reflection has recently been noted by some scholars, e.g. by explicitly qualifying him as a "'meta-metaphysician'" insofar as he considers both "the foundation of philosophical disciplines" (Rumore 2022: 184) and "metaphysics as a potential science" (Zenker 2022: 128). Already Wolters had correctly spoken of a "turn concerning the theory of science" and claimed that Lambert's philosophy represents a "methodology reflecting on the conditions of possibility of scientific knowledge" (Wolters 1981: 179).

64. See *Architectonic*, §53.

65. In a letter to Lambert (to whom he had sent a copy of the *Dissertation*) he writes that "the first and the fourth sections can be scanned without careful considerations" (AA X, 98). Therefore I disagree with both Laywine's and De Boer's readings, which respectively focus on the fourth (see Laywine 1993: 101-123) and the first chapter (see De Boer 2020: 52-61).

subject", and the latter in the "*receptivity* of a subject in virtue of which it is possible for the subject's own representative state to be affected in a definite way by the presence of some object".[66] Leaving sensibility temporarily aside, Kant distinguishes between two uses of the understanding. The first is the logical use, by means of which "the concepts, no matter whence they are given, are merely subordinated to each other, the lower […] to the higher (common characteristic marks), and compared with one another in accordance with the principle of contradiction".[67] The logical use is therefore neutral with regard to the nature of the cognitions it systematizes, and accordingly it is "common to all the sciences". This is not the case with the real use, by means of which "the concepts themselves, whether of things or relations, are given by the very nature of the understanding: they contain no form of sensitive cognition and they have been abstracted from no use of the sense".[68] The real use belongs only to the discipline which is "the organon of everything which belongs to the understanding" and which "contains the *first principles* of the use of the *pure understanding*",[69] namely metaphysics. Accordingly, Kant writes that

> [s]ince, then, empirical principles are not found in metaphysics, the concepts met with in metaphysics are not to be sought in the senses but in the very nature of the pure understanding, and that not as *innate* [connati] concepts but as concepts abstracted from the laws inherent in the mind (by attending to its actions on the occasion of experience), and therefore as *acquired* concepts. To this genus belong possibility, existence, necessity, substance, cause *etc.*, together with their opposites or correlates. Such concepts never enter into any sensory representations as parts, and thus they could not be abstracted from such a representation in any way at all.[70]

This characterization is a novelty in Kant's account of metaphysics, whose definition in the *Inquiry* qualified it as the "philosophy applied to insights of reason which are more general".[71] With this new definition, Kant no longer focuses on its generality but rather on its independence from experience or, in Lambert's words, in its *a priori* nature.[72]

66. *Dissertation*, II, 392.

67. *Dissertation*, II, 393.

68. *Dissertation*, II, 394.

69. *Dissertation*, II, 395.

70. *Ibidem*. Kant's claim that the concepts provided by pure understanding are "abstracted from the laws inherent in the mind" is unclear. However, this is not important for my interpretation, since what matters to it is Kant's emphasis on their cognitive purity: once we know that they do not derive from experience, the specific features of their origin are not important.

71. *Inquiry*, II, 292. Between the *Inquiry* and the *Dissertation*, Kant provides a further definition of metaphysics in the *Dreams*, where it is qualified as the "science of the *limits of human reason*" (*Dreams*, II, 368). However, since there (as in his previous works) Kant qualifies metaphysics as a science without providing the criteria of this scientificity, the *Dreams* are unhelpful with regard to this question.

72. Kant does not directly use the term "*a priori*" to characterize the independence from experience of metaphysical cognitions. However, in presenting (cognitive) purity as the main feature of metaphysics, he is referring to the same independence from experience that Lambert presents as the criterion of scientificity, i.e. to Lambert's *a priori*, as shown also by his use of

Thus, by including only concepts (more generally, cognitions) that are not abstracted from experience but provided by the "very nature" of the understanding,[73] metaphysics is the science of pure understanding. This purity as the essential feature of metaphysics is highlighted several times throughout the *Dissertation*, for example by qualifying it as "*pure* philosophy".[74] But Kant also highlights the intellectual nature of metaphysical cognitions by devoting the whole Section V to a method aimed at preserving the metaphysical domain by not allowing "*the principles which are native to sensitive cognition* [to] *transgress their limits, and affect what belongs to the understanding*".[75] Finally, although in the quoted passage he does not qualify metaphysics as a science, that he conceives of it as such is proved not only by the fact that in all his precritical works Kant does so, but also by several textual passages: for example, he writes that "in pure philosophy, such as metaphysics, […] *method precedes all science* [omnem scientiam]",[76] that "the exposition of the laws of *pure* reason is the very genesis of *science* [*scientiae genesis*]",[77] that "the method of this *science* [*scientiae*] may not be well known at the present time",[78] and so on. In short, Kant conceives of metaphysics as a science because, by including cognitions absolutely independent of experience, it is pure, i.e. *a priori* and therefore scientific, according to Lambert's account of scientificity as the *a priori* (or, in Kant's words, pure) nature of cognition.[79] Thus, by consisting in a science of pure

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the term *a priori* not only in some passages of the *Dissertation* (e.g. at the end of §28) but also in his famous letter to Herz (February 1772). Moreover, Kant's account of metaphysics already represents a radicalization of Lambert's account of scientificity insofar as, contrary to Lambert who admitted both a strong and a weak sense of the *a priori*, Kant only admits the latter.

73. Kant's claim that the concepts of pure understanding are abstracted from the laws of the mind "by attending to its actions on the occasion of an experience [*occasione experientiae*]" clearly recalls Lambert's claim that "experience provides us [...] only the occasion for [their] consciousness" (*NO*, §656).

74. *Dissertation*, II, 411 (emphasis added). I completely agree with Moledo, who presents the novelty of Kant's account of metaphysics as pure philosophy as one of the most important results of the *Dissertation* and as a fundamental step towards the view of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (see Moledo 2016). However, he does not links this issue to the more general question of scientificity, in which that of the *a priori* is included as one of its criteria.

75. *Dissertation*, II, 411.

76. *Ibidem*. This claim reaffirms one of the fundamental theses of the *Inquiry*, namely the necessity of a preliminary meta-metaphysical investigation establishing the proper method of metaphysics and the specific nature of its cognitions, thereby showing the continuity of a meta-metaphysical perspective that had been presented for the first time in the *Inquiry* and that is still present in the *Dissertation*.

77. *Ibidem* (emphases added). It could be objected that in this quote Kant does not refer to pure understanding but to pure reason as the faculty of metaphysical cognitions. However, in the *Dissertation* he has not yet provided the critical distinction between the two, which, as already in the *False Subtlety*, "are not different *fundamental faculties*" (*False Subtlety*, II, 59).

78. *Dissertation*, II, 411. Emphasis added.

79. However, note that Kant's account of metaphysics as pure philosophy represents a first radicalization of Lambert's account of scientificity, since it emphasizes that metaphysical cognitions are completely pure, i.e. completely independent of experience, which means that their

understanding including a system of *a priori* cognitions, Kant's account of metaphysics is a perfect example of science in Lambert's sense.

However, this is not the only example of Kant's adoption of Lambert's account of scientificity, nor the most complete. Indeed, although important, it is not particularly detailed since it includes the two definitions seen above and the fundamental remark on the purity of its cognitions, but not much more since Section IV, which is explicitly devoted to metaphysics, is rather unoriginal and little more than the reproposition of the ontological theses concerning substances and God already presented fifteen years before in the *New Elucidation*.[80] Moreover, an objection can be raised against my reading. One could claim that Kant's view is not that metaphysics is a science *because* of its cognitive purity but, rather and less demandingly, that metaphysics is a science *that is also* cognitively pure. In this case, cognitive purity would only be *one* of the features of metaphysics as a science (and therefore of science in general), but not *the* feature that qualifies a discipline as a science. The answer to this objection is provided by the most complete example of scientificity of the *Dissertation*: Kant's theory of sensibility.

3.2. Beyond Lambert: The Science of Sensibility

In §12, the last paragraph of Section II, Kant interestingly writes that "*there is a science of sensory things* [sensualium [...] datur scientia]".[81] This statement is important insofar as it claims that, since the faculty of sensory things is sensibility, there is a science of sensibility, and therefore not only a science of pure understanding. Moreover, this is Kant's most explicit attribution of a scientific character to a theory concerning a cognitive faculty, since he is as clear as possible in writing that "*there is a science of sensory things*". However, what does it mean that there is a science of sensory things, or a science of sensibility? The reasons for this claim are not immediately clear, since Kant does not explain why a theory concerning sensibility is scientific. In this respect, §12 is unhelpful because it includes topics which seem to have nothing to do with it (e.g. a distinction between physics, psychology and pure mathematics) and introduces new ones (e.g. the "singular form of sensibility" or the "pure intuition") without clarifying them. Thus, the best way to explain Kant's claim consists in focusing on Section III, which concerns *The Principles of the Form of the Sensible World*.

In Section II, Kant had claimed that sensibility is not merely passive since its representations include not only the matter of sensation but also

> the *form*, the *aspect* namely of the sensible things which arises according as the various things which affect the senses are co-ordinated by a certain natural law of the mind. [...] the *form* [...] is undoubtedly evidence of [...] a certain law, which is inherent in the mind and by means of which it co-ordinates for itself that which is sensed from the presence of the object [...]. Accordingly, if the various factors in an

cognitive purity is absolute. In this way, Kant rejects Lambert's dicotomy between a stronger and a weaker sense of the *a priori* and admits only the former.

80. See *New Elucidation*, I, 410-416.

81. *Dissertation*, II, 398.

> object which affect the sense are to coalesce into some representational whole there is needed an internal principle of the mind, in virtue of which those various factors may be clothed with a certain *aspect*, in accordance with stable and innate laws.[82]

Sensibility is not merely passive, since it contains "stable and innate laws" that co-ordinate the matter of sensation. Section III completes this account by specifying that these stable and innate laws are the "principle[s] of the form of the *sensible world*" because they contain "the ground of the *universal connection* of all things, in so far as they are *phenomena*".[83] Thus, identifying such principles with time and space, Kant provides a detailed account of them by highlighting their fundamental features.

With regard to time, the first feature is that it "*does not arise from but is presupposed by the senses*" since "it is only through the idea of time that it is possible for the things which come before the senses to be represented as simultaneous or successive".[84] Kant's argument is well-known: our concept of time logically precedes any temporal characterization of phenomena, since without presupposing it such a characterization, and the representation of temporally ordered phenomena more generally, would not be possible. Note that, by claiming that the idea of time "*does not arise from but is presupposed by the senses*", Kant is claiming that it is independent of experience and therefore pure or, in Lambert's words, completely *a priori*. The same argument also applies to space, whose "*concept* […] *is not abstracted from outer sensations*":[85] we could not represent things as spatially placed without a logically preceding concept of space, which therefore is not taken from experience but is something we possess prior to it and by means of which we are able to represent empirical objects as spatially characterized. Thus, as in the case of time, the concept of space is independent of experience and therefore pure, or *a priori*. The acknowledgment of the pure or *a priori* character of space and time is followed by that of their singularity. Accordingly, Kant writes that "*the idea of time is singular* and not general"[86] and that "*the concept of space is a singular representation*",[87] since actual things are not represented "*under*" them as under general concepts but as contained "*in*" them as in single, boundless and qualitatively homogeneous quantities. Therefore, time and space are not concepts but, properly speaking,[88] intuitions. Accordingly, Kant writes that "*the idea of time is an intuition*" and adds that "in so far as it is the condition of the relations to be found in sensible things, it is conceived prior to any sensation", with the result that "it is not a sensory but a *pure intuition* [intuitus [...] purus]".[89] The same applies to space, which cannot be taken

82. *Dissertation*, II, 392-393.
83. *Dissertation*, II, 398.
84. *Dissertation*, II, 398-399.
85. *Dissertation*, II, 402.
86. *Dissertation*, II, 399.
87. *Dissertation*, II, 402.
88. Here Kant is correcting his own previous terminological ambiguity consisting in qualifying both time and space as "concepts [*conceptus*]" (and the former also as an "idea [*idea*]").
89. *Ibidem*.

from experience since it is "the fundamental form of all outer sensations": accordingly, "*the concept of space is thus a pure intuition*".[90] Again, note that Kant's emphasis on the purity of the intuitions of time and space refers to the same cognitive purity already thematized by Lambert and presented by Kant himself as the first fundamental feature of time and space. The last of such features emphasizes their subjective nature deriving from their being "the subjective condition[s] which [are] necessary, in virtue of the nature of the human mind, for the co-ordinating of all sensible things in accordance with a fixed law".[91]

In short, in considering the principles of the form of the sensible world, Kant discovers time and space as pure intuitions, i.e. as cognitive elements that are independent of experience and therefore absolutely pure.

Now, we have seen (I) that Lambert's account of scientificity refers to the *a priori* nature of our fundamental cognitive elements, (II) that with the pure intuitions of time and space Kant discovers the existence of pure cognitive elements, and (III) that Kant's purity consists in the exact same independence of experience as Lambert's *a priori*. This being the case, Kant's adoption of Lambert's account of scientificity would be proved if Kant attributed a scientific nature to a theory of sensibility whose main result is the discovery of pure intuitions which are completely independent from experience, since such an attribution would mean that he qualifies such a theory as scientific because it includes pure cognitive elements. But this is exactly what he does. Let us return to the final paragraph of Section II: here Kant had claimed that "*there is a science of sensory things*"[92] but he had not explained why it is so, i.e. why this theory of sensibility is scientific. Now we can answer this question by looking at what Kant has provided with his account of sensibility. He has shown that sensibility includes pure intuitions that are completely independent of experience: this is the reason why there is a science of sensibility. More explicitly, there is a science of sensibility because sensibility includes cognitive elements that are completely independent of experience and therefore completely pure.[93] Thus, since the theory of sensory things includes cognitive elements which are completely pure, then it is a science or, in Kant's words, "*there is a science of sensory things*". Moreover, two further reasons prove that the fundamental feature of time and space which allows the qualification of their theory as a science is their cognitive purity. The first is that cognitive purity is the only feature of space and time that is reasonable to assume as that which makes their theory a science: to claim that a science is such because its objects are not general concepts but "*singular representations*" makes

90. *Dissertation*, II, 402.

91. *Dissertation*, II, 400.

92. *Dissertation*, II, 398.

93. This is also the answer to the objection raised at the end of Section 3.1: showing that the theory of sensibility is a science *because of* its cognitive purity, the *Dissertation* also shows that metaphysics is a science *because of* its cognitive purity, and not merely a science *which is also* cognitively pure. Thus, it shows that in Kant's view the fundamental feature which qualifies a discipline as a science is its cognitive purity, i.e. Lambert's criterion of scientificity consisting in its *a priori* nature.

little sense, and the same applies to the claim that a science is such because its objects are intuitions or because they are not "*something objective and real*". These features are important for Kant's overall account of space and time, but none of them is the decisive element that makes the theory of sensibility a science, as shown by their absence in Kant's account of metaphysics, which is nevertheless a science. This last point leads us to the second reason for assuming cognitive purity as the fundamental feature of science: it is the only feature shared by metaphysics and the theory of sensibility, which are both qualified as sciences. A science cannot be such by including cognitive elements that are single representations or intuitions, because this does not occur in metaphysics (whose cognitions are general representations and concepts): therefore, if the fundamental feature of a science were not its purity but some other feature of the theory of sensibility, then metaphysics would not be a science; but Kant claims that it is. Conversely, a science cannot be such by including intellectual cognitions, because this is not the case of the theory of sensibility; therefore, if this were the fundamental feature of a science, then the theory of sensibility would not be a science, but Kant explicitly claims that it is. The only feature that metaphysics and the theory of sensibility share is cognitive purity, which proves that in the *Dissertation* Kant conceives of a science as an *a priori* discipline; and, since this is Lambert's criterion of scientificity, it proves that he has adopted Lambert's account of scientificity applying it to both metaphysics and the theory of sensibility. Moreover, I have argued that Kant also radicalizes Lambert's account, thus going beyond him: now it is clear why. As shown by his account of metaphysics and reaffirmed by his theory of sensibility, a first radicalization consists in Kant's rejection of Lambert's weaker sense of the *a priori*: the cognitive purity that characterizes both his account of metaphysics and his theory of sensibility is absolute and consists in a complete independence from experience, which leads Kant to reject Lambert's dichotomy and to admit only the stronger sense of the *a priori*. However, leaving aside Kant's radicalization of the sense of the *a priori*, his account of metaphysics is a perfect example of Lambert's account of scientificity because it is a science of pure understanding, i.e. a science as Lambert conceives of it. But with his account of sensibility Kant goes beyond Lambert insofar as he demonstrates the existence of a science that is not intellectual. The theory of sensibility is a science because it concerns completely pure cognitions, yet these are not concepts but intuitions; therefore, the theory of sensibility is not a science of pure understanding but a science of pure sensibility. In this respect, Kant's claim that "the two principles of sensitive cognition [...] are not, as is the case with the representations of the understanding, general concepts but singular intuitions which are nonetheless pure"[94] can be reformulated as claiming that the science of sensibility does not concern pure concepts, "as is the case with the representations of the understanding", but pure intuitions, and is nevertheless a science. Such a science represents Kant's overcoming of Lambert insofar as the latter could not have conceived of a science of sensibility, since in his view all the fundamental elements of our cognitions are concepts (and propositions deriving from them) belonging to the

94. *Dissertation*, II, 405.

understanding. On the contrary, Kant's discovery of time and space as intuitions as pure as their conceptual counterpart (i.e. the concepts of metaphysics) leads him precisely to his new science of sensibility and, thereby, beyond Lambert.

3.3. Why Lambert? Other Possible Sources for Kant's Account of Scientificity

According to my interpretation, Kant comes to deal with the issue of scientificity through his encounter with Lambert's account of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions, which Kant adopts and applies to both metaphysics and the theory of sensibility in the *Dissertation*.

However, one could reasonably ask: why Lambert? Why should we assume that Kant's account of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions comes from him and not from others? After all, Lambert is only one of the philosophers Kant explicitly or implicitly dialogues with, and the richness of his precritical period also consists in the variety of philosophical systems he deals with. It is therefore possible that Kant was driven to address explicitly the question of scientificity by other philosophers, and consequently that the account of scientificity in the *Dissertation* is not a novelty of Lambert's philosophy but something Kant found elsewhere. To argue against this possibility, I will briefly consider the accounts of science provided by the main philosophers of Kant's time who implicitly or explicitly appear in his works, namely Wolff, Baumgarten, Meier and Crusius.

Wolff provides his most explicit definition of science in §2 (*What is Science* [*Wissenschaft*]) of the *Vorbericht* of his so-called *German Logic*. Here he writes that science is "the ability of the understanding [*Fertigkeit des Verstandes*] to irrefutably demonstrate [*unumstößlich darthun*] all that one affirms on the basis of unquestionable grounds [*aus unwidersprechlichen Gründen*]".[95] The same account also appears with the exact same formulation in §1 (*Nature of Science*) of the seventh chapter, where Wolff reaffirms that "science is nothing but an ability to demonstrate [*eine Fertigkeit zu demonstriren*]".[96] These definitions clearly show that he does not conceive of science as a particular set of cognitions; on the contrary, in his view science consists in the "ability to demonstrate" something. Accordingly, its fundamental feature does not concern the nature of its cognitions but the method by which they are proved, a method with a syllogistic character aiming to demonstrate all cognitions by deriving them from definitions, principles and experiences. Even without examining Wolff's view in further detail, it is clear that his account of science does not qualify it as a system of *a priori* cognitions, since it consists in the inferential procedure by means of which a cognition is proved; but this is not the account of science that emerges from Kant's *Dissertation*. This is enough to show that Kant cannot have taken his views on scientificity from Wolff, as was also to

95. Wolff 1978: 115 (my translation). The exact same definition can also be found in §30 of the *Discursus praeliminaris* to his *Latin Logic*: see Wolff 1983: 13; see also §594. Lambert himself notes that "*Wolf* [sic] had no other conception of scientific cognition than that *everything in it must be proved on the basis of grounds* [*aus Gründen erwiesen werden*]" (*Architectonic*, §15).
96. Wolff 1978: 200. See also Wolff 1983: §598.

be expected considering that Wolff takes mathematical proofs as the perfect example of science and claims that one should try to bring mathematical method into the other disciplines,[97] while Kant had rejected such a project already in the *Inquiry*.

With regard to Baumgarten, it is well-known that Kant used his *Metaphysics* as the textbook for his academic lessons; therefore, if he adopted Baumgarten's account of scientificity, it is reasonable to look for the reason why in this work. However, in the *Metaphysics* Baumgarten provides no definition of science. This is rather puzzling since each discipline he considers (ontology, general cosmology, psychology and rational theology) is qualified as "science [*scientia*]" but without a definition of what a science is. This situation recalls that of the precritical Kant up to the *Dissertation*, as he likewise qualifies metaphysics (and other disciplines) as science without clarifying what a science is. Thus, since Baumgarten does not provide a clear definition of science, let alone a definition of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions, we can exclude that Kant has taken his account of scientificity from him.

With regard to Meier, Kant used his *Excerpt from the Doctrine of Reason* for his lessons on logic: again, if Kant adopted Meier's account of science, it is reasonable that such an account would appear in this work, whose most interesting parts in this respect are the first two, concerning cognition and method respectively. However, two reasons show that it is rather unlikely that Kant's account of scientificity comes from Meier. The first is that Meier is not interested in scientific but rather in "learned [*gelehrte*] cognition" (i.e. "rational cognition that is perfect to a higher or more appreciable degree"[98]), as shown by the title of both the first part of his work (*On Learned Cognition*) and all its paragraphs, which concern "the amplitude of learned cognition", "the greatness of learned cognition", "practical learned cognition" and even "learned concepts", "learned judgements" and "learned rational inferences". Thus, Meier is not interested in how and whether philosophical cognition can be scientific: he is interested in how and whether it can be learned. This does not mean that he does not conceive of the doctrine of reason and of philosophy more generally as sciences: he clearly does so by qualifying the former as the "science [*Wissenschaft*], which deals with the rules of learned cognition and of learned exposition"[99] and the latter as the "science of the universal qualities of things insofar as they are cognized without faith".[100] Rather, it means that his main interest is not, as in the case of both Lambert and Kant, the scientific nature of philosophical cognition, but its learned nature. This leads us to the second reason. Although Meier qualifies such disciplines as sciences and defines science in a rather vague way as "a learned cognition, insofar as it is extensively certain",[101] he speaks of a "*scientific method* [scientifische Lehrart] (*methodus* […] *scientifica*)"[102] qualifying it as "the meth-

97. See Wolff 1978: 200.
98. Meier 2016: §21.
99. Meier 2016: §1.
100. Meier 2016: §5.
101. Meier 2016: §185.
102. Meier 2016: §421.

od" in which "thoughts must be proved from each other [...] through a demonstration [*Demonstration*]".[103] He thus speaks of a "*demonstrative* or *scientific method* [demonstrativische *oder* scientifische Lehrart]" and therefore identifies in a rather Wolffian way the scientificity of cognition with the possibility to prove it. Especially this last view, together with Meier's interest in learned rather than scientific cognition and with the consequent absence of a definition of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions in his work, shows that Kant cannot have taken his account of scientificity from Meier.

Finally, scholars have long acknowledged Crusius' importance to Kant insofar as Kant refers to him to carry out his critique of Wolffian philosophy; it is therefore reasonable to ask whether Kant might not have adopted Crusius' account of scientificity. Such an account is provided in §21 of Crusius' *Path to Certainty* [*Weg zur Gewißheit*], a paragraph designed to establish "what belongs to a science in general [*Wissenschaft überhaupt*]". Here he writes that "'science' [*Wissenschaft*], insofar as one defines it objectively and does not conceive it as a capacity of the understanding itself", is "a certain complex of learned truths that has a remarkable extent and which [truths] are treated together by means of a rational ground [*um eines vernünftigen Grundes*]".[104] Thus, Crusius defines science as a set of cognitions whose fundamental features are its "remarkable extent" and a sort of systematicity since this "rational ground" allows the connection of cognitions into a whole. Therefore, aside from the "remarkable extent" which is rather vague, Crusius claims that science is a system of cognitions based on a common "rational ground". However, as we have seen with regard to Lambert, to claim that science must be systematic is anything but original, since essentially all the German philosophers of the time shared this view. Therefore, even admitting that Crusius conceives of science as a proper system, this is not enough to support the reading that Kant took his account of scientificity from Crusius. Moreover, and most importantly, Crusius does not mention the *a priori* nature of cognition as a criterion of its scientificity, nor does he claim that scientific cognitions must be independent from experience, making it impossible to explain on the basis of his views Kant's account of scientificity in the *Dissertation*.

All of these observations show why it is rather unlikely, and in some cases almost impossible, to assume that Kant has taken his account of scientificity from Wolff, Baumgarten, Meier or Crusius.[105] To explain the account of scientificity in the *Dissertation*, we must refer to one that conceives of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions. In other words, we must refer to Lambert's account.

103. *Ibidem*.

104. Crusius 1965: §21. My translation.

105. There is also a chronological argument. Kant was already familiar with their works in the 1750s, as shown by his references to Wolff and Crusius in the *New Elucidation* and by his adoption of Baumgarten's and Meier's works for the academic courses he started to hold in 1755: therefore, if his account of science derived from theirs, then why is this issue absent not only from his writings of the 1750s but also from those of the first half of the 1760s? And why does it arise only later in the decade, and more precisely after Kant's reading of Lambert's works?

4. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS: TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON

My claim is that Kant comes to explicitly address the question of the scientificity of metaphysics through his encounter with Lambert in the mid-1760s, and that he adopts Lambert's account of scientificity already in the *Dissertation* of 1770. To support this view, I have articulated my argument in three steps. In the first and introductory section, I have briefly recalled the main results of the *Inquiry* to show that the issue of scientificity is the only issue Kant does not address in this otherwise comprehensive meta-metaphysical perspective. In the second section, I have reconstructed Lambert's account of scientificity, showing that in his *Neues Organon* he provides two criteria of scientific cognition, namely its systematicity and a *priori* nature. Examining the latter, I have shown first that Lambert conceives of it as the independence of a cognition from experience, and second that, although his distinction between a stronger and a weaker sense of the *a priori* initially seems to rule out the former, Lambert fully legitimizes it in his account of fundamental concepts, which are completely *a priori* since their possibility is grounded in their absolute simplicity. Thus, I have shown that Lambert conceives of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions, which moreover is purely intellectual since in his views *a priori* cognitions are concepts (and, secondly, propositions deriving from them), and thus pertain to understanding. In the third section, I have shown that this account of scientificity is the same account we find in Kant's *Dissertation*, where both metaphysics and the theory of sensibility are qualified as sciences precisely because they concern cognitions that are completely pure. This shows that the *Dissertation* represents Kant's first adoption of Lambert's account of scientificity. Moreover, I have shown Kant's overcoming of Lambert insofar as he also provides a science of sensibility that is completely pure but not intellectual since it concerns pure intuitions. Finally, I have briefly considered the accounts of scientificity of Wolff, Baumgarten, Meier and Crusius in order to show that it is highly unlikely that Kant took his account of scientificity from them, thereby indirectly confirming that he indeed took it from Lambert.

Let us conclude by taking a look at Kant's philosophical development after 1770. Having reached this point, we might ask what Kant needs to move from the *Dissertation* to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. After all, his overall perspective in 1770 is quite promising: in the *Inquiry* he has achieved significant results concerning metaphysics as a whole, and in the *Dissertation* he has addressed the question of scientificity left unanswered in the *Inquiry* by adopting Lambert's account of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions. Thus, having established that sensibility and understanding are different cognitive faculties and having provided the complete account of the science of sensibility, Kant's only remaining task is to provide the complete account of the science of pure understanding, i.e. metaphysics, since the *Dissertation* is merely a "propaedeutic", aiming to "teach the distinction between sensitive cognition and the cognition which derives from the understanding"[106]. Once this last task is carried out, Kant's overall account of scientificity will include both the science of pure sensibility and the science of pure understanding, i.e. the sciences of both our fundamental cognitive faculties, and it will be complete.

106. *Dissertation*, II, 395.

However, the eleven years passing between the *Dissertation* and the *Critique of Pure Reason* show that the realization of this project is more difficult than expected. More specifically, in the attempt to provide a complete account of metaphysics as the science of pure understanding, Kant becomes increasingly aware of difficulties concerning the very core of his project, i.e. the account of metaphysics as a science and therefore, given his adoption of Lambert's account of scientificity, the account of metaphysics as a system of *a priori* cognitions. In my view, these fundamental difficulties are two.

The first and most important appears in Kant's well-known letter to Herz of February 1772. Here he writes that, since in the *Dissertation* he "was content to explain the nature of intellectual representations in a merely negative way, namely, to state that they are not modifications of the soul through the object", he had "passed over the further question of how a representation that refers to an object without being in any way affected by it can be possible": it is the famous question asking "what is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call 'representation' to the object?".[107] In other words, if the pure concepts of the understanding are neither produced by the affection of given objects nor produce them, then how do they relate to objects? The *Dissertation* provides no answer. There are many ways to interpret this problem. Following Kant, we can interpret it as pertaining to the relation of the *a priori* concepts of pure understanding to their objects; or as pertaining to their origin, since it is not explained by their rather vague abstraction "from the laws inherent in the mind"; or as pertaining to the spontaneity of pure understanding, since the problem is the justification of concepts it provides. I find all these interpretations plausible and even complementary. However, I think that all of them are different formulations of a single and more general question which, unsurprisingly, is the question of scientificity. In the *Dissertation*, Kant identified the fundamental feature of the scientificity of metaphysics in the purity of its cognitions, thus qualifying it as the science of pure understanding. However, if this is the case, not being able to explain the relationship of such cognitions to objects means having a science that lacks what already in 1772 Kant calls "validity [*Gültigkeit*]", since it is unable to explain the relation of its cognitions to objects. In Lambert's words, the metaphysics of the *Dissertation* remains "stuck in mere terminology"[108] because it cannot explain the origin and objective validity of its pure cognitions, which therefore remain mere words of an ungrounded metaphysical theory. Most importantly, since Kant identifies the main flaw of the *Dissertation* with the absence of an explanation establishing "how a representation that refers to an object without being in any way affected by it can be *possible*",[109] being unable to explain the origin and validity of pure concepts means being unable to explain their "possibility", i.e. the "possibility" of pure cognitions. But this purity is precisely the fundamental feature of scientificity. Thus, being unable to explain the "possibility" of the pure cognitions of metaphysics means

107. AA X, 130-131.
108. AA X, 52. Translation modified.
109. AA X, 130-131. Emphasis added.

being unable to explain the "possibility" of their scientificity, and therefore the possibility of the scientificity of metaphysics itself as the system of such cognitions. In short, and in terms that project us directly into the critical period, the question of the letter to Herz is basically the same question of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "*How is metaphysics as a science possible?*".[110]

The second, less-known difficulty concerns the ambiguity of Kant's concept of metaphysics. The *Dissertation* provided no clear distinction between pure understanding and pure reason, thus reaffirming the view of the *False Subtlety* that "*understanding* and *reason* […] are not different *fundamental faculties*".[111] Accordingly, metaphysics was qualified as the science that includes "the *first principles* of the use of the *pure understanding*",[112] but it could have been qualified as the science that includes those of the use of pure reason with the same theoretical legitimacy. However, this view begins to falter in the same period, and even in the same year, as the letter to Herz. In the *Logik Philippi*, which includes the lectures on logic Kant gave in May 1772, he distinguishes between "concepts [*conceptus*]" and "ideas [*ideae*]", the former being "universal concepts of the understanding [*allgemeine Verstandesbegriffe*]" and the latter "universal concepts of reason [*allgemeine Begriffe der Vernunfft*]".[113] Thus, although both faculties include universal representations (since "a concept [*Begriff*] is a universal representation [*eine allgemeine Vorstellung*]"[114]), they are nevertheless different. The same distinction can be found in some *Reflexionen* of the 1770s. In R2835 Kant writes that a "representation *a priori*" is either a "notion [*notio*]" or an "*idea* [*idea*]",[115] and in R2836 he defines the former as an "intellectual concept [*conceptus intellectualis*]" (i.e. a "concept [*Begrif*]" which "even with regard to the content [*dem Inhalte nach*] originates from the understanding [*aus dem Verstande entspringt*]"[116]) and the latter as a "concept of reason [*Vernunftbegrif*]" which "cannot have an object within experience [*keinen Gegenstand in der Erfahrung*]".[117] Thus, although maintaining their cognitive purity by claiming that their concepts are both "pure [*pur[i]*]", already in 1772 Kant begins to distinguish between understanding and reason. However, this is problematic: if pure understanding and pure reason are different faculties, then the concept of metaphysics of the *Dissertation* is ambiguous. There it was the science of pure understanding and, since the distinction between pure understanding and pure reason was still absent, it could just as well be defined as the science of pure reason since, more generally, there metaphysics was the science of the pure cognitive faculty, which in this work is still one and the

110. *CPR,* B 22.

111. *False Subtlety*, II, 59.

112. *Dissertation*, II, 395.

113. AA XXIV, 451.

114. *Ibidem*.

115. AA XVI, 537.

116. *R* 2837 claims that "notion is a concept that [is] not taken from experience" (AA XVI, 539) and that the object of an idea "cannot be found within experience" (AA XVI, 540).

117. AA XVI, 538-539. Thus, Kant's account of notion and idea is the same he provides in the *Stufenleiter* (see *CPR,* A 320/B 377).

same faculty. However, after the distinction of both *Logik Philippi* and *Reflexionen* this is no longer true. If pure understanding and pure reason are different faculties, then to provide the complete account of an indistinct "metaphysics" that does not distinguish between them is inadequate. Accordingly, Kant's discovery of the difference of the two faculties leads to a change in his account of metaphysics, and therefore to a change in the task outlined in the *Dissertation*. If metaphysics is the science consisting in a system of *a priori* cognitions, then this task becomes the exposition of the metaphysics of both pure understanding and pure reason, i.e. of the system of *a priori* cognitions of both pure understanding and pure reason. However, several questions arise: what are the concepts of pure understanding and what those of pure reason? In what are they similar and in what do they differ? How do they relate to each other and to experience? Do they both form a coherent system? If so, how? All these questions, still unanswered, are crucial for Kant's account of the scientificity of a metaphysics that has turned out to be twofold.

The questions raised by both difficulties will find answers only in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. There, the account of metaphysics as a science deriving from Kant's solutions to them will join the science of sensibility that he has already established in the *Dissertation*, thus completing his project of a scientificity including the science of pure sensibility grounded on intuitions, the science of pure understanding grounded on categories and the science of pure reason grounded on ideas, all completely *a priori*. In my view, this also explains why, as shown by *R* 5024, Kant had originally decided to dedicate the *Critique* to Lambert: because, although radicalizing it and bringing it to a level of complexity and originality unknown to him (and not only to him), it is Lambert's account of science as a system of *a priori* cognitions that Kant adopts in order to establish metaphysics as a science. In this sense, the *Critique* will represent Kant's complete development of Lambert's account of scientificity. Thus, although it will be Kant who will make metaphysics enter "the safe course of a science", I hope to have shown that this course was initially shown to him by Lambert.

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ABBREVIATIONS

All citations from Kant's writings, letters and *Reflexionen* (*R*) refer to the volume and page number from the Akademie-Ausgabe (AA): *Werke. Akademie-Textausgabe*, 23 vol., Berlin, De Gruyter, 1902-1923. Translations are from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992-2012: *Correspondence*, ed. by A. Zweig, 1999; *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, 1998; *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*, ed. by D. Walford and R. Meerbote, 1992.

Architectonic = Lambert, J. H. 1965b. *Anlage zur Architectonic, oder Theorie des Einfachen und des Ersten in der philosophischen und mathematischen Erkenntniß*, Riga, Hartknoch 1771; repr. Olms, Hildesheim.

CPR = *Critique of Pure Reason* (A = first edition, B = second edition).

Dreams = *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics.*

Dissertation = *Dissertation on the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World.*

False Subtlety = *The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures.*

Inquiry = *Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality.*

Negative Magnitudes = *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy.*

New Elucidation = *New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition.*

NO = Lambert, J. H. 1965a. *Neues Organon oder Gedanken über die Erforschung und Bezeichnung des Wahren und dessen Unterscheidung vom Irrthum und Schein*, Leipzig, Wendler 1764; repr. Olms, Hildesheim. Partially translated in E. Watkins, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Background Source Materials*, New York, Cambridge, 2009 (and modified if needed).

Only Possible Argument = *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God.*

Thoughts = *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces.*

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David Del Bianco
Università degli Studi di Milano
ORCID: 0000-0003-0793-5274
david.delbianco@unimi.it

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ANTONIO LAMARRA

Le dissertazioni latine di Kant nella *Neuedition* dell'Accademia

ABSTRACT: The first volume of the *Neuedition* of Kant's works has been edited under the auspices of the *Berlin-Brandenburgische* Academy of Sciences at the very end of 2023, including the first three Latin dissertations published by the author, *De igne* (1755), *Nova dilucidatio* (1755), and *Monadologia Physica* (1756), whereas the edition of the dissertation *De mundi sensibilis atque intellegibilis forma et principiis* (1770) will be included in the second volume, now in preparation. In this paper, the motivations for a new critical edition are explained as well as the criteria that differentiate it from the classical *Akademie-Ausgabe* edition, which dates back at the beginning of the last century.

SOMMARIO: Sotto gli auspici della *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, alla fine del 2023 è stato pubblicato il primo volume della *Neuedition* delle opere di Kant, che include le prime tre dissertazioni latine del filosofo, *De igne* (1755), *Nova dilucidatio* (1755) e *Monadologia Physica* (1756), mentre l'edizione della *De mundi sensibilis atque intellegibilis forma et principiis* (1770) è prevista nel secondo volume, attualmente in preparazione. L'articolo illustra le motivazioni che giustificano questa nuova edizione critica e i criteri che la differenziano dalla classica edizione della *Deutsche Akademie*, che data agli inizi del secolo scorso (*Akademie-Ausgabe*).

KEYWORDS: Kant's Dissertations; Latin Dissertations; Critical Edition; Kant's *Neuedition*

Le quattro dissertazioni latine, che – secondo una tradizione secolare – Kant sottopose alla discussione pubblica lungo il corso della sua carriera accademica, non costituirono solo il dovuto ossequio ad un'usanza venerabile dell'università europea ma sono testi dotati di una propria originalità di pensiero, ancora in grado di esprimersi nella lingua che per un paio di millenni era stata comune ai dotti dell'Occidente romano e poi cristiano. Formatosi ad essa fin dagli anni dell'infanzia, quando ne iniziò lo studio presso il *Collegium Fridericianum*, Kant – come è noto – coltivò con venerazione fino alla più tarda età un'ampia e precisa conoscenza dei classici latini, dei quali era in grado di recitare a memoria e senza difficoltà interi passi.[1] Come ancora la generalità

1. Della grande padronanza dei classici della letteratura latina da parte di Kant testimoniano concordemente i suoi primi biografi, L. E. Borowski, R. B. Jachmann e A. Ch Wasianski, che pubblicarono le loro biografie kantiane nel 1804, anno della scomparsa del filosofo. Furono riunite in un solo volume e nuovamente pubblicate da Felix Gross nel 1912. Citiamo però dalla ristampa di quest'ultimo volume ad opera della *Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft*, apparsa nel 1993 e poi ancora nel 2012 (Gross 1912). Quanto alla conoscenza dei classici latini da parte di Kant, vedi Gross 1912: 12, 65 (Borowski), 110 (Jachmann), 206 (Wasianski).

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dei filosofi della sua generazione, egli era quindi perfettamente in grado di esprimersi in latino, sebbene d'abitudine scrivesse e insegnasse in tedesco. Lo stile della sua prosa e – come ci testimonia uno dei suoi primi biografi – il suo eloquio latino erano un po' pesanti,[2] ma certo non potevano giovar loro le ormai scarse opportunità di esercizio, visto che solo in occasioni ufficiali di qualche rilevanza, e soprattutto in occasione delle giornate dedicate alla discussione delle dissertazioni, nelle università del suo tempo si riprendeva l'uso della tradizionale lingua accademica. *De igne*, *Nova dilucidatio*, *Monadologia physica* oltre che, naturalmente, *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*, le dissertazioni latine di Kant,[3] appartengono dunque a pieno titolo alla sua bibliografia e alla storia del latino come lingua filosofica. Furono presto ripubblicate fin dalle prime edizioni in più volumi delle opere kantiane e tradotte in tedesco già alla fine del XVIII secolo.[4] Naturalmente, vennero incluse nella fondamentale edizione critica voluta dall'allora *Königlich-Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* alla fine del XIX secolo e che proprio in questi anni sta attraversando un'importante fase di rinnovamento.

Per oltre un secolo e fino ai giorni nostri gli studi kantiani hanno potuto avvalersi della disponibilità di un'edizione completa e universalmente riconosciuta degli scritti del filosofo, quelli da lui pubblicati come quelli lasciati nello stato di manoscritti, la sua corrispondenza e perfino trascrizioni di diversi suoi corsi universitari: con i suoi 29 volumi, l'*Akademie-Ausgabe*, la cui pubblicazione iniziò nel 1900, è ben presto divenuta infatti – e tuttora rimane – l'*editio princeps* dell'opera di Kant.[5] Le ragioni di questo indiscusso successo sono numerose e convergenti: fin dall'inizio vi giocarono un ruolo

2. Gross 1912: 141 (Jachmann).

3. Secondo il regolamento in vigore all'università di Königsberg nella seconda metà del XVIII secolo, Kant nel 1755 presentò la dissertazione *De igne,* per conseguire il titolo di *Magister philosophiae*, e nello stesso anno anche la *Nova dilucidatio*, per ottenere la *venia docendi*, cioè l'abilitazione all'insegnamento. Con la pubblicazione della *Monadologia physica* l'anno seguente, ottemperò ad una precisa disposizione accademica che poneva al *magister philosophiae* la condizione di aver pubblicato almeno tre dissertazioni per poter aspirare a diventare professore ordinario. Come è noto, la dissertazione *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibili forma et principiis* fu presentata e discussa nel 1770 *pro loco*, vale a dire proprio per ottenere la posizione di professore. Su questi aspetti della biografia accademica di Kant, si vedano le note stilate in proposito da Igor Agostini in Kant 2014: xxii-xxiii, 5-6, 55, 145-146, 193-195.

4. Già durante la vita di Kant furono pubblicate diverse raccolte dei suoi scritti minori. La più autorevole delle quali fu l'edizione in quattro volumi dei *Vermischte Schriften*, pubblicati da Johann Heinrich Tieftrunk tra il 1799 (i primi tre volumi) e il 1807 (il quarto). Vedi Kant 1799-1807.

5. Il progetto di un'edizione critica completa degli scritti di Kant fu avanzato nel 1894 da Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Heinze e Eduard Zeller all'allora *Königlich-Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (oggi: *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften*) e approvato due anni più tardi. Le pubblicazioni ebbero inizio al volgere del nuovo secolo a partire dalla corrispondenza, mentre la pubblicazione della Sezione I iniziò nel 1902. Come è ben noto, l'*Akademie-Ausgabe* di Kant si compone di quattro Sezioni: I. Opere, voll. 1-9, II. Corrispondenza, voll. 10-13, III. Manoscritti, voll. 14-23, IV. Lezioni, voll. 24-29. Vedi Kant 1900-2020. Secondo la consuetudine, d'ora in avanti nelle note ci si riferirà a quest'edizione con la sigla AA e all'accademia di Berlino e Brandeburgo con la sigla BBWA.

non secondario il prestigio dell'accademia berlinese e quello dei singoli studiosi che parteciparono all'impresa come editori dei testi kantiani;[6] ma poi, a misura che i diversi volumi venivano pubblicati, furono probabilmente determinanti, da un lato, la completezza dell'edizione, dall'altro, la grande diffusione della ristampa in brossura della Sezione I contenente le opere pubblicate dal filosofo[7] e infine l'abitudine – invalsa negli ultimi cinquant'anni – di citare Kant (come già in uso per Aristotele), rinviando al volume, la pagina e la riga dell'*editio princeps*. Ciò non ostante, al mutare dei criteri filologici prevalenti e all'affermarsi di un'accresciuta sensibilità per la dimensione storica del linguaggio, diversi motivi d'insoddisfazione cominciarono ad essere espressi, almeno a partire dagli anni Cinquanta del secolo scorso. L'*Akademie-Ausgabe* infatti – e in particolare i nove volumi della Sezione I, pubblicati tra il 1902 e il 1923[8] – obbedisce a criteri filologici fortemente normativi, che si traducono in interventi degli editori spesso piuttosto invasivi. Ne hanno fatto le spese, nel caso dei testi kantiani, tanto l'ortografia quanto la sintassi, con la completa perdita di quella caratteristica poligrafia che era propria dei testi tedeschi ancora nel corso del XVIII secolo e quindi anche di buona parte delle opere di Kant, il quale peraltro considerava un inutile disturbo per il lettore ogni mutamento arrecato all'ortografia comunemente accettata fin dai tempi della sua giovinezza.[9] In presenza di un'ortografia non coerente e regolare (e in generale di un'*usus scribendi* contraddistinto da significative variazioni nel tempo), l'orientamento metodologico dell'*Akademie-Ausgabe* fu infatti sia di normalizzare la scrittura kantiana, conferendo un valore canonico agli usi che erano stati propri degli scritti kantiani più tardi, sia di intervenire significativamente anche sulla punteggiatura, le cui peculiarità vennero in generale attribuite piuttosto alla disinvoltura dei tipografi che alla mano di Kant. Poiché un certo grado di soggettività inevitabilmente accompagna ogni tentativo di definire canoni (ortografici o morfosintattici) secondo i quali emendare i testi, il rischio più consistente di una filologia così fortemente normalizzatrice consiste nel finire col sovrapporre surrettiziamente alla scrittura dell'autore interventi interpretativi dell'editore. A questi inconvenienti cerca di sopperire la *Neuedition* delle opere pubblicate da Kant.

Escludendo dal proprio orizzonte metodologico ogni pretesa di standardizzare lessico e sintassi dei testi kantiani, la *Neuedition* si pone invece l'obiettivo di restituire al lettore testi quanto più fedeli all'esplicita intenzione dell'autore o quanto più prossimi alla sua volontà presuntiva, allorché vi siano fondati motivi per ritenere che l'intenzione dell'autore non abbia avuto modo di realizzarsi nel testo pubblicato. Si restringe così

6. Quindici in totale gli studiosi che contribuirono come editori alla Sezione I dell'AA: Erich Adickes, Benno Erdmann, Max Frischeisen-Köhler, Paul Gedan, Max Heinze, Alois Höfler, Oswald Külpe, Kurd Lasswitz, Heinrich Maier, Paul Menzer, Paul Natorp; Johannes Rahts, Karl Vorländer, Wilhelm Windelband, Georg Wobbermin.

7. Quest'edizione delle opere di Kant fu pubblicata sul finire degli anni Sessanta (Kant 1968). Nel 1977, ai nove volumi della Sezione I si aggiunsero ulteriori due volumi di note.

8. I voll. 1-8 (Sezione I) uscirono negli anni tra il 1902 e il 1912; ne fu pubblicata una ristampa (*Neudruck*) tra il 1910 e il 1920. Il volume 9 uscì invece solo nel 1923.

9. Vedi Gross 1912: 129 (Jachmann).

notevolmente l'ambito di intervento degli editori, in quanto si limitano in maniera significativa numero e varietà delle peculiarità testuali che possono essere considerate alla stregua di errori da emendare. In primo luogo, viene preservata la poligrafia di Kant, anche quando le differenti forme grafiche di una parola occorrano nel medesimo testo o nella medesima unità di testo. Tanto meno poi nel testo si introducono correzioni a livello morfosintattico, concernenti le forme flesse delle parole, la punteggiatura, o comunque la struttura sintattica della frase, anche nel caso di costruzioni *ad sensum* o di veri e propri anacoluti. Per converso, in questa prospettiva gli editori intervengono ad emendare l'originale kantiano solo quando sia ben dimostrabile la sua incoerenza con la struttura complessiva del testo, o col contesto di riferimento, o ancora con le convenzioni linguistiche dell'epoca condivise dall'autore. Si intende invece che errori di stampa evidenti e non-problematici (come nel caso, ad esempio, di lettere rovesciate o illeggibili) siano corretti senza neppure darne notizia nell'apparato critico, dove invece troveranno dovuta testimonianza i veri e propri interventi critici operati dagli editori che, d'altro canto, devono essere sempre considerati in qualche misura congetturali.

Il primo volume della *Neuedition* della Sezione I è apparso alla fine del 2023, pronto quindi per le celebrazioni del tricentenario kantiano previste per il 2024.[10] Vi hanno partecipato come editori Fabian Burt, Hansmichael Hohenegger, Antonio Lamarra, Konstantin Pollok, Riccardo Pozzo, Helmut Pulte e Thomas Sturm, coordinati da Martin Rose e Maja Schepelmann. Edito sotto gli auspici della BBAW, riunisce gli undici scritti pubblicati da Kant tra il 1747 e il 1756, e include quindi solo le prime tre dissertazioni latine del filosofo: *De igne*,[11] *Nova dilucidatio*[12] e *Monadologia physica*,[13] mentre – come sopra accennato – la cosiddetta *Dissertatio inauguralis*[14] comparirà nel secondo volume, attualmente in fase di preparazione.[15] Nel complesso delle opere di Kant, l'edizione delle dissertazioni latine che contrassegnarono il *cursus* della sua carriera accademica presenta alcune peculiarità che meritano di essere segnalate. In primo luogo va notato che in questo caso l'orientamento normativo dei criteri editoriali dell'*Akademie-Ausgabe*, nell'impossibilità di riferirsi ad un canone moderno, si era indirizzato decisamente verso il latino classico, evidentemente assunto come insuperato modello di pertinenza e di eleganza linguistica. Con la conseguenza, non poco paradossale, di emendare i testi di un filosofo della seconda metà del XVIII secolo alla luce del latino ciceroniano. Aveva indubbiamente pesato il pregiudizio classicista che vedeva

10. Kant 2023. L'edizione delle quattro dissertazioni latine è stata affidata collettivamente a Hansmichael Hohenegger, Antonio Lamarra, e Riccardo Pozzo.

11. Kant 1755a. *Neuedition*: 326-365; *Editorischer Bericht*: 823-844.

12. Kant 1755b. *Neuedition*: 366-501; *Editorischer Bericht*: 846-871.

13. Kant 1756. *Neuedition*: 502-537; *Editorischer Bericht*: 915-929.

14. Kant 1770.

15. Un'ampia ed esauriente presentazione dei criteri editoriali che hanno guidato la preparazione di queste edizioni è stata pubblicata da Martin Rosie e Maja Schepelmann in apertura del volume; vedi Rosie & Schepelmann 2023. Un resoconto molto ricco di informazioni riguardo alla *Neuedition* delle opere di Kant è pure disponibile sulla *Kantian Review*, attualmente online; vedi Pozzo 2024.

nel latino una lingua morta e priva di sviluppi evolutivi, destinata dunque per un paio di millenni solo ad una lenta ma inesorabile corruzione. In realtà, come è noto a chiunque abbia praticato la storia delle idee in ambito europeo, dalla fine dell'età classica fino all'epoca del Lumi il latino aveva continuato a dipanare la sua vicenda millenaria come lingua dell'alta cultura, offrendo a teologi, filosofi, scienziati ed eruditi di ogni genere uno strumento di pensiero e di espressione ben vivo e capace di tracciare nuove mappe al sapere, grazie soprattutto alla sua inesausta creatività lessicale. Questo è il caso delle dissertazioni kantiane che, del resto, offrono forse l'ultima testimonianza di un latino filosofico ancora capace di esprimere una certa originalità di pensiero e non solo una pratica meramente accademica, come avverrà ancora per diversi decenni in non poche università europee. Anche in questo caso pertanto il lavoro di edizione è consistito soprattutto nel ripristinare nei testi di Kant le lezioni originarie, scremandoli dei numerosi interventi normalizzatori che vi si erano andati accumulando da un'edizione all'altra e, d'altra parte, emendando i numerosi errori di stampa presenti in particolare nelle pagine dell'*Akademie-Ausgabe*.[16]

Riguardo all'ortografia, non solo si è rispettata l'eventuale poligrafia del testo, ma anche la preferenza talora accordata da Kant a varianti ortografiche più tarde rispetto a quelle del latino classico. Secondo l'uso del tempo, non si è fatta distinzione grafica tra i suoni 'u' e 'v', sempre resi con la sola lettera 'v', da leggersi come consonante davanti a vocale e viceversa come vocale, se seguita da consonante. In ambito sintattico, oltre a rispettare le concordanze indotte dalla presenza di eventuali costruzioni *ad sensum*, si è pure deciso di non intervenire nemmeno nel caso di anacoluti che finivano per violare la correttezza sintattica del testo. Gli editori hanno deciso senz'altro di rispettare tali peculiarità testuali, anche nel caso di un paio di proposizioni infinitive che paiono avere il soggetto nel caso nominativo, ma che in effetti sono riconducibili alla, sia pur rara, evenienza di costruzioni con *nominativus pendens*.[17] Anche per quanto riguarda la punteggiatura, gli editori si sono limitati a intervenire solo quando si potesse ritenere con

16. Già nel 1991 A. Lamarra e P. Pimpinella avevano pubblicato una ventina di errori di stampa presenti nei testi (in particolare nella *Neudruck*; cfr. n. 4) delle dissertazioni *De igne*, *Nova dilucidatio, Monadologia physica* e rilevati in occasione dell'elaborazione lessicografica di quegli scritti, al fine di ricavarne indici dei luoghi e concordanze lemmatizzate; vedi Pimpinella, Lamarra & Procesi 1991: 40. Questo volume era stato preceduto da un analogo volume dedicato alla *Dissertatio inauguralis*; vedi Pimpinella & Lamarra 1987. Un ulteriore errore di stampa presente in quest'ultima dissertazione fu poi segnalato nel volume n. 44 del *Kant-Index*; vedi Lamarra, Pimpinella & Russo 2016: xvi-xvii, che riproponeva, in una versione unificata (e in parte rivista), i dati elaborati nei volumi di indici più sopra menzionati.

17. Vedi *De igne*, Sectio I, Prop. V: Quae in corporibus duris compressiones vulgo vocantur, dilatationis verius s. extensionis nomine nuncupandae sunt; quippe materiae durae multo minus, quam aqva, in arctiora spatia vi comprimente adigi posse, per se liquet (*Neuedition*, Bd. I, 338 = AA 1, 375). Lasswitz corregge senz'altro il testo portando il nominativo plurale *materiae durae* all'accusativo *materias duras*, sintatticamente ineccepibile. Tuttavia, che non si fosse trattato di una pura svista da parte di Kant testimonia il nominativo del secondo termine di paragone *aqua*, che dunque egli è pure costretto a correggere in *aquam*. Cfr. *Monadologia physica*, Sectio II, Prop. X, corollarium: [. . .] et congruum sit vires omnes elementi motrices qvod est specifice duplo fortius, esse in ratione eadem fortiores, semper vires nominatae in eadem

evidenza di essere in presenza di errori di stampa o per migliorare la comprensibilità di periodi molto lunghi e complessi.[18] Lo stesso Kant, del resto, si mostra consapevole della poca accuratezza della sua punteggiatura, allorché fra gli *errata* della *Dissertatio inauguralis* annota che, a quel proposito, «per totam dissertationem varie erratum est» e rinvia alla benevolenza del lettore per le necessarie correzioni.[19]

Per quanto concerne la tradizione testuale delle dissertazioni kantiane, notiamo subito che non ne sussistono più i manoscritti d'autore e che dunque il lavoro di edizione ha dovuto basarsi sulla prima e unica pubblicazione dei testi curata dallo stesso Kant e di quelle che alla prima seguirono. Un caso del tutto particolare è rappresentato però dalla *De igne*, che in effetti – in accordo con quanto prevedevano le regole in vigore nell'università regiomontana – non fu mai stampata, ma resa pubblica mediante il deposito di una copia manoscritta. Tale copia, ancora disponibile per l'*Akademie-Ausgabe* come per l'edizione di A. Buchenau,[20] è purtroppo andata perduta durante la Seconda guerra mondiale. Il testo della *De igne* quindi è stato stabilito sulla base delle edizioni successive e delle esplicite menzioni del manoscritto kantiano presenti nell'apparato critico dell'edizione Buchenau.[21] Nella fase di avvio del lavoro di edizione, la *Nova dilucidatio* presentava una situazione in tutto analoga. Anche in questo caso infatti, a partire dal dopoguerra, non si avevano più tracce dell'edizione originaria del 1755, nonostante le ricerche effettuate nelle biblioteche europee da numerosi studiosi di Kant. Approfondendo diversi aspetti delle pratiche accademiche in uso in quel periodo riguardo alle discussioni pubbliche delle dissertazioni, gli editori si sono resi conto che non sempre era veramente chiaro quale ruolo vi giocasse l'autore, se quello del *praeses,* del *defensor* o del *respondens*. Il frontespizio della *Nova dilucidatio* non indica *praeses*, ma individua in Kant il *defensor* e in Chr. A. Borchard il *respondens*; quest'ultimo peraltro firma anche la dedica della *Dissertatio* a Joh. von Lehwald. Era dunque plausibile in via d'ipotesi che, almeno in qualche caso, il testo kantiano fosse stato erroneamente attribuito al *respondens* dalla biblioteca che lo aveva preso in carico e che fosse ancora possibile trovarne copia. In effetti, seguendo questa pista di ricerca, nella primavera del 2020 furono ritrovati due esemplari della dissertazione kantiana, uno nella biblioteca universitaria di Riga e un altro nella biblioteca reale di Copenhagen.[22] Questo ritrovamento, che restituiva l'edizione originaria della *Nova dilucidatio* alla bibliografia kantiana, ha prodotto

distantia aeqvari, adeoque aeqvale volumen elementi determinare necesse est (*Neuedition*, Bd. I 530-532 = AA I 485).

18. Non va dimenticato peraltro che ancora all'epoca di Kant l'interpunzione obbediva a criteri molto diversi da quelli attuali, indicando la scansione e la lunghezza delle pause necessarie alla lettura piuttosto che la struttura sintattica del periodo.

19. Kant 1770: *Errata*, 38.

20. A. Buchenau fu uno dei curatori dell'edizione Kant 1912-1922 (1922-1923).

21. Per maggiori dettagli a questo proposito, si veda l'*Editorischer Bericht* al testo pubblicato dalla *Neuedition*: 824-828.

22. Una prima notizia in proposito si trova in: Hohenegger, Lamarra & Pozzo 2020, poi ripresa in Hohenegger, Lamarra & Pozzo 2021. Proprio nell'imminenza della pubblicazione, l'amico Hansmichael Hohenegger mi informa di aver individuato un terzo esemplare della prima edizione della *Nova dilucidatio*, disponibile dal gennaio dell'anno in corso sulla piatta-

un frutto del tutto inatteso con la scoperta di un manoscritto all'interno dell'esemplare di Copenhagen, strettamente legato alla dissertazione di Kant. Si tratta infatti dell'intervento autografo preparato da uno degli *opponentes*, identificabile nel giovane Joh. Reinhold Grube, in vista della discussione pubblica della *Nova dilucidatio*,[23] e che risulta vergato su alcune delle pagine di un esemplare interfoliato dello scritto kantiano. La nuova edizione delle dissertazioni latine di Kant è stata dunque effettuata a partire dalla pubblicazione originaria dell'autore e dalla collazione di quest'ultima con le edizioni successive, salvo che per la *De igne*, vista l'indisponibilità della versione manoscritta a suo tempo depositata presso la biblioteca dell'università di Königsberg.[24] Come del resto per l'insieme della *Neuedition*, non ci si è limitati a collazionare le prime edizioni dei testi kantiani con l'*Akademie-Ausgabe* ma è stato recensito l'insieme delle edizioni più autorevoli dei testi.[25]

Infine, sembra interessante segnalare che, a fronte dei testi latini delle dissertazioni kantiane, la *Neuedition* offre anche una traduzione tedesca. Nel caso della *Nova dilucidatio*, della *Monadologia physica* e della *Dissertatio inauguralis*, il testo a fronte è il risultato di una accurata revisione della traduzione settecentesca di Tieftrunk, condotta dagli editori alla luce della nuova edizione critica. Si è voluto in questo modo affiancare al latino delle dissertazioni un lessico filosofico che, per essere ad esse coevo, fosse quanto più possibile prossimo a quello dello stesso Kant. Per la *De igne* invece – non compresa nell'edizione di Tieftrunk – si è ripresa la traduzione di Otto Buek, che data all'inizio del secolo scorso.

forma online *Gallica* (gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9124873h) e proveniente dalla biblioteca delle Facultés Loyola Paris (segnatura: P033/116.6).

23. A proposito di questo ritrovamento e del manoscritto contenuto nell'esemplare (interfoliato) della biblioteca di Copenhagen, vedi: Hohenegger, Lamarra & Pozzo 2022. Oltre a una descrizione di questo esemplare annotato, gli autori vi forniscono una trascrizione delle note manoscritte latine di Grube insieme con la loro traduzione inglese. Al di là del merito delle osservazioni critiche sviluppate dal giovane *opponens*, l'esame dell'esemplare di Copenhagen offre comunque diversi spunti di interesse, in quanto (e si tratta di circostanza assai rara) documenta in maniera molto diretta, dal punto di vista di uno dei partecipanti al dibattito, quanto avveniva durante la discussione di una dissertazione accademica.

24. Un aiuto sia pure parziale hanno offerto le indicazioni fornite dall'apparato critico dell'edizione Buchenau, che in un certo numero di casi riferisce delle lezioni del testo riscontrate dall'editore nel collazionarlo con le edizioni successive.

25. La recensione dei testi ha dunque sistematicamente considerato l'edizione in dodici volumi ad opera di Karl Rosenkranz e Friedrich Wilhelm Schubert (Kant 1838-1842) e quella quasi coeva in dieci volumi di Gustav Hartenstein (Kant 1838-1839), che in seguito ne pubblicò una seconda edizione in otto volumi (Kant 1867-1868). Del 1868 l'edizione a cura di Julius Hermann von Kirchmann (Kant 1868-1878) che seguiva molto fedelmente la prima edizione di Hartenstein. Successivamente, fecero seguito all'AA l'edizione in undici volumi pubblicata da Bruno Cassirer tra il 1912 e il 1922, poi ristampata negli anni 1922-1923 (Kant 1912-1922 [1922-1923]), e quella pubblicata da Wilhelm Weischedel a partire dal 1956 (Kant 1956, 1968a, 1968b).

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Kant's Latin Dissertations in the *Neuedition* of the Academy

Antonio Lamarra
ILIESI-CNR
antonio.lamarra@cnr.it

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MIRELLA CAPOZZI

Kant on Translation

ABSTRACT: For Kant communication is possible with both non-verbal and verbal language. Non-verbal language is universal and does not require translation. Verbal language, which uses hearable signs and is based on conventions and association, is indispensable for abstract thinking but is not universal and needs to be translated. I argue that Kant's conception of translation complies with his conception of verbal language, and has interesting consequences, such as his claims that: a) only true poetry is translatable, b) translations enriched the German language making it suitable for philosophy, and c) since Germans translated everything, anyone who knew German could know everything without learning other languages. I also maintain that for Kant the German practice of translation promoted cosmopolitanism and patriotism that jointly respond to his call to eradicate nationalism. Finally, I touch on the problem of translating into dead languages and on Kant's acknowledgment of the work of translators.
KEYWORDS: Universal Non-Verbal Language; Translations of Verbal Languages; Cultural and Political Effects of Translations; Translation and Poetry; Translations into Dead Languages and the Rights of Translators

1. INTRODUCTION

Kant maintains that we have a language because we live in a society: "If in the beginning people did not live socially, they could not have a language".[1] Indeed, to have a language, as a consequence of living in a society, is what Kant characterizes as humanity [*Humanität*], which he makes consist in "communicability and urbanity [*Communicabilität und Urbanität*]".[2] Kant grounds this conception on the assumption of a common sense, which he considers a necessary condition not only for the universal communication of a feeling, but also:

> with good reason, and indeed without appeal to psychological observations [...] as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition, which is assumed in every logic and every principle of cognition that is not skeptical.[3]

1. Refl 1387, AA 15: 604 (1772-1775).
2. Log, AA 9: 45.
3. KU, 5: 239.

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2. NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE DOES NOT NEED TRANSLATION

Having secured a firm ground to communication, Kant does not say that language has to be verbal. For he moves from a premise, namely that there is a harmonic natural connection of mind and body, whose main example are miens, i.e., the "facial features put into play".[4] Kant argues that "every change and agitation of mind produces miens which harmonize with the change of mind",[5] and the relation between each mien and a specific agitation of mind is so solid that "no other mien can be found for this agitation of mind".[6]

Besides miens Kant mentions gestures. He concedes that gestures can be subjected to our will, but maintains that, at least in some cases, they have a natural connection with feelings: "Gestures are natural signs and are well subject to our discretion, but nature has determined expressive gestures that hang together with a feeling".[7] Kant also declares mere tones capable of expressing an affect: "Every sound [*Laut*] that expresses an affect, every strong sensation has its special signs".[8]

All these bodily expressions of mind:

A. can be interpreted as corresponding to specific affects of a person, even if that person would like to hide them:

> it is difficult not to betray the imprint of an affect by any expression [*Miene*]; it betrays itself by the painstaking restraint in gesture or in the tone itself, and he who is too weak to govern his affects will expose his interior through the play of expressions [*Mienenspiel*] (against the wish of his reason), which he would like to hide and conceal from the eyes of others. But if one finds out about them, those who are masters in this art are not exactly regarded as the best human beings with whom one can deal in confidence, especially if they are practised in affecting expressions that contradict what they do.[9]

B. can be intentionally used by a person as signs to communicate with other people without resorting to words, for example when communicating with children: "Nurses make sure that children are afraid to pick up many things. If at the sight of a caterpillar they make a terrible mien, the children will certainly leave the caterpillars alone".[10]

C. permit a universal communication across peoples and cultures. Kant explains that, as regards miens:

> there does not at all exist any agitation of the mind with which no mien is supposed to harmonize, and because the agitation of the mind is one and the same with all peoples [...] something is here thus planted in nature.[11]

4. Refl 1247, AA 15: 551 (1780-1789).
5. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 667.
6. *Ibidem*.
7. V-Anth/Mensch, A 25: 1026.
8. *Ibidem*.
9. Anth, AA 7: 300.
10. V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 131.
11. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 667.

Therefore, miens "are valid and universal signs of mind motions",[12] and are the same "for all human beings",[13] for they "have a single meaning in the whole world".[14] As regards gestures:

> there are gestures established by nature, by which human beings of all races and climates understand each other, even without prior agreement. To these gestures belong nodding the head (in affirmation), shaking the head (in disavowal) [etc].[15]

As regards tones, in the case of theater actors:

> [if] the tone of the language is to determine the action, one must let the *actors* speak emotionally in an unknown language; one would not know the true content of the speech but would know whether he begs, threatens, etc. other people.[16]

From all this it follows that non-verbal communication does not require translation and has advantages compared to communication with words: "We have nothing as universal as the miens, for words are not so universal; hence a pantomime comedy which could be valid for all peoples could be staged".[17] For, a pantomime, which is "an intuitive form of a serial sequence of figures of people",[18] "can surely be considered a language that is understood in the whole world".[19] Thus, according to an analogy established in the third *Critique*, "the gestures in a language", just as the shapes produced by artists in the "pictorial art", make "the thing itself speak as it were in mime".[20] Not to mention that, according to a passage cited above, the communicative value of tones can be truly appreciated if they are used intentionally in an unknown language, i.e. if the translation is deliberately forbidden.

3. VERBAL LANGUAGE

Upon closer examination, Kant's assessment of non-verbal language is not as positive as it seems. Non-verbal language remains important when combined with words since, as we read in the third *Critique*:

> the kind of expression that people use in speaking in order to communicate to each other, i.e., not merely their concepts, but also their sensations [...] consists in the word, the gesture, and the tone (articulation, gesticulation, and modulation). Only the combination of these three kinds of expression constitutes the speaker's complete communication. For thought, intuition, and sensation are thereby conveyed to the other simultaneously and united.[21]

12. V-Anth/Parow, AA 25: 443.
13. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1293.
14. Refl 1258, AA 15: 554 (1773-1778).
15. Anth, AA 7: 301.
16. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 999.
17. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 667.
18. Refl 683, AA 15: 304 (1768-1770).
19. V-Anth/Parow, AA 25: 443.
20. KU, AA 5: 24.
21. KU, §51, 5: 320.

However, on its own, non-verbal language can be ambiguous. For Kant has doubts about books that deal with the "*exegesis* of faces" since "one turns red because is aware of the crime of which he is accused, another turns red only because he finds himself offended by the fact that the other person expresses suspicions about him".[22] Therefore, "we can certainly communicate our thoughts to others through miens and gestures, but the simplest means is hearing".[23] A lecture on anthropology explains: "words, and not pantomimes and gestures, are chosen as means to communicate one's thoughts to another, simply because sound expands everywhere and one feels the impressions on hearing far more strongly than on sight".[24] Another lecture adds:

> we speak with words and not with miens (which would also be feasible) because we have no other ability to make a stronger impression on someone else; even if the other person turns away, he still hears us.[25]

The argument that hearable words are preferable because sound expands everywhere, and, as remarked by Lambert "is such that one is rarely forced to turn one's ear towards it",[26] is not the only one Kant employs, and surely is not the main one. For, his main argument is that hearable words are preferable because they are the signs of general conceptual representations, the ones that characterize abstract thinking.[27] Much depends on the fact that hearing "does not present objects in [terms of] their shape [*Gestalt*]",[28] with the consequence that "the sounds of language do not lead immediately to the idea of it [the object]".[29] This is precisely the property that makes words the best signs of concepts: "For our cognitions as signs of the understanding, nothing is as fitting as words, because in themselves they do not signify anything else; thus, the understanding can connect the relevant concept with it".[30]

Moreover, words are not simply the sensible clothing of concepts. Kant criticizes a widely accepted distinction between judgment and proposition according to which 'judgment' [*Urtheil*, *iudicium*] is the mental act, and 'proposition' [*Satz*, *propositio*] is a judgment expressed in words. For him without words we could not judge at all,[31] indeed, "without words one cannot think at all".[32] This means that hearable words have

22. V-Anth/Parow, AA 25: 447.
23. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 909.
24. V-Anth/Parow, AA 25: 276.
25. V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 55.
26. Lambert 1764, *Semiotik* §15.
27. Cf. Lifschitz 2012: 2.
28. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 943.
29. Anth, AA 7: 155.
30. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 536.
31. Cf. V-Lo/Pölitz, AA 24: 580: "logicians define a proposition [*Satz*] *per Judicium verbis prolatum*, which is false, however, we would not judge at all, if we had no words"; cf. also V-Lo/Wiener, AA 24: 934.
32. V-Lo/Pölitz, AA 24: 588.

a constitutive role in thought.[33] A statement in the *Opus Postumum* leaves no doubt on this matter: "thinking is speaking and this is a hearing [*Das Denken ist ein Sprechen u. dieses ein höhren*]".[34] Hence the privileged role Kant assigns to the sense of hearing not only in communicating, but also in the very ability to think.[35]

These are the bases of Kant's conception of the word: "the word in itself means nothing, but is only an arbitrary sound, thus it cannot be connected with anything other than the concept of the thing".[36] A word has the mere function of *custos* of a concept that it accompanies by association, that is, by "a habit in the mind such that when one idea is produced, the other also comes into being".[37] Famously, Kant qualifies words as:

> characterizations, i.e., designations of the concepts by means of accompanying sensible signs, which contain nothing at all belonging to the intuition of the object, but only serve them, in accordance with the laws of association of the imagination, and hence in a subjective regard, as a means of reproduction.[38]

Characters differ from symbols: "such a sign, that represents the idea of a thing, is called a *symbolum*, which differs from characters".[39] Since words are characterizations:

> words can be signs; but not symbols of representations. Through words the representations are not represented symbolically; but they are simply companions [*begleiter*] of representations. They lend themselves at best to the designation of concepts insofar as they only refer to associations and not to similarities, through words that are mere sound, thoughts are not disturbed, therefore they also serve at best to thinking.[40]

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33. Cf. Capozzi 2002: 443-444; Capozzi 2021; Capozzi forthcoming.

34. OP, AA 21: 103.

35. On this basis, Kant assigns a fundamental role in cognition to the sense of hearing, cf. *V-Anth/Fried*, AA 25:498: "hearing is an organ of reason; since without hearing there is no speech, and without speech, no signs of the concepts, and without that no use of the understanding can take place". Hence his claim that people deaf from birth had a severe impairment regarding abstract thinking, despite the existence of methods that taught them to communicate and even speak. But he believed that these methods did not achieve what for him was the fundamental function of abstract thought, that is, the function of detaching the word from a specific image, something that, in his opinion, only sound signs were capable of doing. On this topic cf. Capozzi 2021: 100-102.

36. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1024.

37. Anth, AA 7: 176.

38. KU, AA 5: 351-352. Hearable and spoken words share this property with visible mimetic and algebraic signs. Mimetic signs are not to be understood as the mime that makes the thing itself speak, but are the conventional signs established for teaching mime. For the difference between words and the signs of algebra, cf. Capozzi 2021: 112-113.

39. V-Anth/Parow, AA 25: 338.

40. V-Anth/Busolt, AA 25: 1474.

4. VERBAL LANGUAGE NEEDS TRANSLATION

A consequence of having words that are arbitrary hearable signs lacking a connection with shapes and images, and based on a convention, is that there is no universal verbal language. For there are as many verbal languages as there are conventions: only if verbal language were innate (or deeply implanted in our nature) "there would have to be only one language now".[41]

This means that verbal languages must be translated.

Actually, there would have been a way to avoid translations: to create a universal language, if not a spoken one, at least a written one that could allow communication between speakers of different languages. According to a widespread opinion, a model of such a universal written language was offered by Chinese writing. Francis Bacon referred to this feature of Chinese script in *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum*,[42] included in his *Instauratio magna* from which Kant quoted the motto added to the 1787 edition of the *Critique*.[43] Leibniz emphasized the independence of the "écriture des Chinois" from the spoken language inasmuch as it "porrai paraître inventée par un sourd".[44] Kant disagrees. He accords to writing an enormous value in communication, to the point that sight conquers a privileged function in communication: "Among the communicating senses is first and foremost sight, through which the longest and most general communication of ideas is possible, that is, through writing".[45] But, having made a distinction (somewhat analogous to the distinction between verbal and non-verbal language), according to which: "writing is either 1. By letters or characters [*Buchstaben oder Charactere*] 2. By real characters or figures and symbols [*Realcharactere oder Figuren und Symbolen*]",[46] he excludes that real characters can immediately denote things and notions.[47] He acknowledges that the Chinese script, "as some claim, is a script for things, because it always designates things directly. Therefore, their writing is used by their neighbors who do not understand a word of Chinese".[48] He is also perfectly aware that the peculiarity of the signs of Chinese writing is that they "do not signify tones, but the things themselves [...] Those in Coghin-China and Tunquin understand well the Chinese writing but not their language".[49] Nonetheless, his only comment is that this script is very difficult and only the "true literates" can learn it.[50]

41. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1417.
42. Bacon 1623, in Bacon 1861: vol. II, I, Liber VI, p. 411.
43. KrV, Bii.
44. Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais sur l'entendement humain*, II, ix, 10, in Leibniz 1875–90: vol. V, p. 25.
45. V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 53.
46. V-Anth/Busolt, AA 25: 1474.
47. Kant examines various kinds of writing using real characters, figures and symbols, cf. Capozzi forthcoming.
48. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1025.
49. V-PG, AA 26: 204.
50. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1025.

Accordingly, he declares the superiority of alphabetic writing consisting of "characters (letters, which are signs for sounds)".[51] He attributes the invention of this writing – which "must have been invented very late" [52] – to the genius of the person who first realized that "the whole language can be resolved itself into a few tones".[53] Indeed, his appreciation of alphabetic writing is so high that he expresses the wish for a complete alphabet:

> A language that has only 24 letters is indeed poor. The French have many nasal tones that we do not have, e.g., *comment*: there are also guttural tones: and it would be a pleasing thing to collect all the letters that one encounters in all languages, and thereby make a complete alphabet.[54]

In conclusion, despite the suggestions of philosophers he admired, Kant does not intend to change his phonetic conception of language, so central to his philosophy.[55] He thus accepts the plurality of languages as a fact, and believes that the problem of understanding foreign languages can be solved by simply learning and translating them, since the possibility of translation is somehow guaranteed by his assumption – which I have quoted at the beginning of this paper – of the existence of a common sense as the necessary condition for the universal communicability of our cognition.

5. LEARNING AND TRANSLATING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Given this conception, it is no wonder that Kant promotes the study of foreign languages, including the languages of minorities, since he believes that all languages acquaint us with the history of nations and reveal the character of peoples.[56] Therefore, he encourages an education:

> in which languages are acquired early and in an easy way, and so that [students] are not plagued for long [with learning] by the grammatical method [...] by the twelfth year of age a child can have learned languages in such a way, that it can speak them as well as its mother tongue. The Basedow Philanthropin is an example of this [manner of instruction].[57]

51. Anth, §39, AA 7: 192.

52. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1025.

53. *Ibidem*. Lambert 1764: *Alethiologie* §149, remarks that, thanks to the inventor of the alphabet, "we do not represent now things directly, but the sound of words and therefore we can write also the language of those peoples that have no writing as soon as we hear them speak. How this discovery facilitates learning a language is evident to everyone".

54. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1025.

55. The lack of a connection of words, as articulate sounds, with shapes and images is very important for Kant's philosophy because it makes the schematism of empirical and pure sensible concepts indispensable. At the same time, this lack of connection is relevant to his doctrine of philosophical acroamatic proofs, which establish the necessary conditions for empirical and pure sensible concepts to belong to the entirety of all possible experience; cf. Capozzi 2021: 109-111.

56. Cf. Kant, *Nachschrift* to Mielcke 1800, AA 8: 445.

57. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 724-725.

Anyone who has learned and speaks a foreign language actually translates it. Therefore, it is appropriate to ask how the process of translation relates to Kant's conception of verbal language. To answer this question, I quote his remark:

> One can soon understand a book in a foreign language, and say what it means in our native language. But we will not be able to translate something from our native language into a foreign language so easily.[58]

Kant offers a first explanation of this state of affairs:

> The foreign word, which is a certain arbitrary sign, is not as closely connected with the concept of the thing as the thing is with the word to which I have become accustomed in my native language.[59]

Therefore, the difficulty we encounter in translating a foreign word into our language is due to an association between word and thing that is more indeterminate in the foreign language than in ours. But Kant also provides a more detailed explanation of how and why this happens:

> If we have to translate from a foreign language into the native language, then we go 1. from the word to the thing, 2. from this to the native language (but this is the way we have learned the latter, namely from things to words). On the contrary, if we want to find the foreign word from a word in the native language, this has two items: the word and the thing connected at the same time.[60]

This text explains that to translate a foreign word we have to look for the corresponding thing and, when we have found it, we have to connect this thing to the word to which it is associated in our language, since "in the unknown language the words give things and then thereby the native language".[61] The last part of this process is easy because "it is easier to remember the expressions of the native language",[62] given that we are familiar (we have a habit) with the association of that thing with a word. But when we translate a word of our language into a foreign one, we do not simply have to translate that word in isolation: we have to translate that word t*ogether* with its established association with a certain thing (or rather with the concept of that thing). This means that what we have to connect with a foreign word is actually a *thing*, and this is difficult, as declared by the following passage:

> if I have the thing, I cannot so easily remember a foreign word because 100 words could have been connected with one thing, thus I can easily find the words for the things in my native language, but not so easily translate into a foreign language, because I should immediately get from the thing to another word, and this is difficult.[63]

58. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1024.
59. *Ibidem*.
60. Refl 374, AA 15: 148 (1769-1778).
61. Refl 373, AA 15: 147 (1776-1771).
62. *Ibidem*.
63. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 1024.

What Kant says about the differences in translating to and from the native language answers our question: the process of translation is related with, and confirms, his thesis that words are arbitrary sounds associated with concepts by convention, whether the words belong to our native language or to a foreign one, since it is only a different competence and a different memory of the association that differentiates them.

6. TRANSLATING FOREIGN WORKS

If learning and translating foreign languages is important, translating and publishing foreign works is even more important. The merits of these translations are cultural, as Humboldt will write in 1816 in the introduction to his translation of *Agamemnon*:

> translation, especially poetic translation, is one of the most necessary tasks of any literature, partly because it directs those who do not know another language to forms of art and human experience that would otherwise have remained totally unknown, but above all because it increases the expressivity and depth of meaning of one's own language.[64]

In addition to the merit of spreading knowledge among those who cannot read the original texts, Humboldt credits translations with improving the ability of the translator's language to express thoughts. Leibniz too – in a treatise known to the second generation of Wolffians also thanks to Gottsched –[65] had considered the translation of good books from other languages "the true test of a language's superfluity or deficiency [...] for that shows what is lacking and what is available",[66] so that the activity of translating is one of the means to improve a language.

On his part, Kant claims that translations have enriched the German language, in particular the translations from Latin by missionaries, as reported by one of his students:

> German is similar to Greek in this respect. It has many apt expressions. If one word does not fit, then another does, and one always expresses more than the other. One does not find this at all with French. Professor Kant attributes this to the spread of religion in Germany: the missionaries had no proper words to express their thoughts and concepts, thus they invented new ones which are closely related to Latin, because they knew that, e.g., simple [*einfaltig*] means literally that which has one fold, in Latin simple [*simplex*], which comes from single [*simplus*] and fold [*plica*]; in this way our language is much enriched.[67]

These translations were valuable "because these missionaries, all improvers of the German language, wanted to enlighten the intellect of the Germans, had to speak little with tropes",[68] and chose to coin new words. Kant points out that their choice was particularly important because it produced numerous synonyms. It should be noted that Kant denies the existence of authentic synonyms:

64. Humboldt 1816, translation in Schulte and Biguenet 1992: 56. Cf. Gasser 2003: 15-16.
65. Cf. Gottsched 1732: 369-411; cf. Buchenau 2013: 66.
66. Leibniz 1696-1697: 344, translated in Robinson 2014: 344.
67. V-Met/Mron, AA 29: 758.
68. V-Lo/Busolt, AA 24: 686.

> actually there are no synonyms in any language. For when words were invented one certainly wanted to signify with each of them a particular concept, which one will always find on more exact investigation of the word.[69]

Nonetheless, "the quantity of synonyms" – or it would be better to call them 'so-called synonyms' – "is always a proof of the richness of the language. For, one can use the synonyms to determine the different degrees of precision in the object".[70] Almost synonymous expressions favor a more precise exposition by avoiding using the same term for different concepts.

Kant's appreciation for the missionaries, who preferred to coin new words rather than resort to tropes in their translations, is also an indication of his preference for literal translations. This preference is clear when he comments a case of translation of proverbs. He does not have a high opinion of proverbs: "speaking through proverbs is [...] the language of the rabble, and shows a complete lack of wit in social intercourse with the refined world".[71] Nevertheless, he also says:

> It would be desirable that someone would make the effort of researching proverbs in the German language and that this would also happen with other nations; since from this [research] what is characteristic of each nation would be clarified.[72]

Consistently with this view, Kant complains that the translation of "the proverbs in Don Quixotte", which he considers "the best and funniest things in the book", had not been literal since these proverbs had been rendered "with German proverbs; but it would have been better to translate the Spanish ones to know the peculiarity of the way of thinking of the Spanish nation".[73]

7. WHAT CANNOT BE TRANSLATED

Not everything can be translated. An interesting case of untranslatability emerges in the context of Kant's theory of poetry. Since poetry "is nothing other than a clothing of thoughts in images",[74] a translator of poetry has to use words of his own language but must preserve the original images in the translation:

> The pictorial images of the poets of things [*Die mahlerische Bilder der Poeten von Dingen*], e.g., of envy, the serenity of the air, the beauty of a cheerful summer day can represent the tranquillity of the mind. If one wants to express the tranquillity

69. V-Lo/Dohna, AA 24: 783.

70. V-Lo/Busolt, AA 24: 685-686.

71. Anth, §55, AA 7: 222.

72. V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 968.

73. *Ibidem*. The Academy editors of Kant's lectures on anthropology (AA 25: 968, footnote) make the hypothesis that this criticism could refer to the Bertuch's translation of *Don Quixote*, cf. Cervantes 1775-1777. If this were the case, Kant's criticism is well founded. Recent literature has highlighted many places in Bertuch's translation in which the German rendition is, to say the least, very far from literal, cf. Beutell Gardner 2015: 32-33.

74. Log, AA 9: 28.

> of the mind in another language, one has to use another word, but the image of it can remain the same in a foreign language.[75]

On these bases, Kant criticizes Klopstock. If true poetry moves with its images, then:

> Klopstock is not a poet of the proper kind, he only assumes the position of someone who is touched, I do not see the thing, but one who is touched, and I am also touched *per sympathie*. Otherwise, the images would at least have to move if I take away the words, but that does not happen.[76]

In this respect, Klopstock compares unfavorably with Milton. For, unlike Milton who arouses admiration "through the depiction of objects",[77] Klopstock "moves us [...] just as someone who weeps also makes us weep",[78] and – Kant regrets – "this has not been seen by those who compare Klopstock with Milton".[79]

In a revealing passage Kant corroborates his negative opinion on Klopstock's poetry by claiming that it is impossible to translate it into another language:

> We must not judge beauty according to charm, [and] especially not according to emotions. For they mislead very much. Poems that surely are emotional do not have true beauty. Klopstock is like this. His writings therefore cannot be translated into any other language.[80]

In sum, since if there is no image there is no authentic poetry, and if the purely 'emotional' aspect of non-authentic poetry cannot be translated, then to be translatable becomes a test for being authentic poetry. Kant is convinced that only true beauty is preserved in translation: "if writings lose almost everything in translation, it was a contingent suggestion of the phantasy attached to national expressions, but not an independent beauty".[81]

Another case that escapes translation is that of foreign words that express the peculiar character of a people:

> The French language has words that cannot be expressed in German at all; this is because they express attributes of their character, for example, *frivolité* (a scholar's inclination to represent the small as great and the great as small, and thus [to make] a satire, if one cannot manage to poke fun at it. In similar fashion, the word *conduite,* a good way of living.[82]

In cases like these the foreign words should be left untranslated.

75. V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 126.

76. V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 132. Vorländer 1924: III.1, Kap, 5.1, highlights the similarities between Kant's and Lessing's views on Klopstock.

77. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1282.

78. V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 97.

79. V-Anth/Parow, AA 25: 323. According to Budick 2010: 98, Kant criticizes "Herder's reductive conflation of Klopstock's poetry with Milton's".

80. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1332.

81. Refl 917, AA 15: 401 (1776-1778).

82. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1399; cf. also Anth*,* AA 7: 314.

8. ADOPTING FOREIGN WORDS WITHOUT TRANSLATION

Granted that we have to leave some foreign words untranslated, it would still be possible to adopt some foreign words directly into our language. Kant has an articulate position about this possibility. In some cases, he considers the adoption of foreign words ridiculous:

> in a solemn speech, a foreign word sounds most ridiculous in the German language. A priest once said at the conclusion of his sermon: "If you do this you will become like this, you will promote your own well-being, and I will be much *obliged*".[83]

In some cases, Kant acknowledges that we prefer to use a foreign expression, but this happens because "we take pleasure in letting our mind wander about in obscurity", since "every obscurity which is suddenly clarified, provides amenity and delights much".[84] We may doubt whether there is any obscurity if the person we address with a foreign expression understands it as well as an expression of his own language. Kant's answer to this doubt confirms what we have seen regarding the process of translating from a foreign language: "the foreign expression must still first be translated in the mind" of our listener, since "only then does the concept come to mind".[85] This mental translation creates a "detour", and "through this detour [...] the concept is weakened, just like a beam of light through repeated refraction".[86] As a result, some of the sought-after obscurity remains, along with the pleasure of unveiling it, which finally explains why "we like the foreign expression better; for example, to use *Cour* for 'courting'".[87] The counter-proof of this explanation is that "if the foreign expression is used altogether too often, and is adopted just the same as one's own, then it loses the veil it initially had".[88]

It is clear that Kant does allow the adoption of those foreign expressions that do not have to undergo a process of mental translation, and therefore have the same status of the expressions of our native language. However, he poses a condition: it must be possible to easily identify their origin. This condition is met in German, a language that is "very pure and every mixing from foreign languages is immediately noticeable, e.g. Genie, from *ingenium* or *genius*", while "the French take, e.g., a Latin word, add a French ending, it immediately sounds completely French".[89] Out of prudence, Kant advises that even in German, where this does not happen, the effort should be made "to use foreign words is parentheses".[90]

83. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1411.
84. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 480-481.
85. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 481.
86. *Ibidem*.
87. *Ibidem*.
88. *Ibidem*.
89. V-Anth/Mron, 25: 1411.
90. Refl 5108, AA 18: 90 (1776-1778).

9. THE ROLE OF TRANSLATIONS IN THE SPECIAL STATUS OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

From what we have seen so far, Kant's emphasis on the excellence of the German language is undeniable. This is confirmed when he compares it with foreign languages, for example:

> The sentiment for honor is in the Frenchman vanity, in the Spaniard haughtiness, in the Englishman pride, in the German pomp, and in the Dutchman conceitedness. At first glance these expressions seem to mean the same thing, but in the richness of our German language they mark very noticeable differences.[91]

But what, according to Kant, makes German a special language are the following features.

German is particularly suitable for philosophy thanks to its rich vocabulary: "Wealth of ideas through the wealth of languages".[92] Having such a great wealth of words is beneficial to philosophical terminology and makes German a privileged language for philosophy. As already mentioned, a notable component of this linguistic wealth are synonyms: "The German language is very rich in synonyms; it is therefore more suited for philosophy than French, for the latter has many words with multiple meanings".[93] Furthermore – Kant claims – the German language could become the common means of communication among European countries. This claim is especially noteworthy because for long time it was claimed that French was "the language that would translate all other idioms, and perhaps, in due course, replace them".[94] The first generation of the German Enlightenment had already reacted to this claim. Christian Thomasius commented: "if our ancestors the old Germans were to rise and come to Germany, they would not think that they were in their country and with their compatriots".[95] At the same time, Thomasius advised the Germans "to learn from the French self-respect and pride in their own language and traditions".[96]

Kant knows that the Frenchman "thinks that his language is the best and believes that everyone has to learn it".[97] But not only does he seem to adhere to Thomasius' exhortation to respect one's own language, he also feels entitled to overturn the perspective in favor of German and, what is most interesting, he does so by appealing to the vast amount of translations made by the Germans: "The Germans translate everything, and one could advise other nations to learn German, for then they could dispense with all the other languages".[98] Kant supports this privilege by arguing:

> We have this advantage over other peoples. We can certainly accept the lightness of the French, the substance from the English, but not the manner; we have our

91. GSE, AA 2: 249; cf. V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 563-564.
92. Refl 3403, AA 16: 816 (1752-1756).
93. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1411.
94. Keohane 2018: 63.
95. Thomasius 1701: 3.
96. Barnard 1965: 432.
97. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1402.
98. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1409.

> own. We have to clean, expand, determine, but not change the language. It is the language of interpretation throughout Europe. Germany is in the middle.[99]

An echo of these words seems to resonate when, in 1827, Goethe wrote to Carlyle: "Whoever understands and studies German finds himself in the market, where all nations offer their wares; he plays the interpreter, while enriching himself".[100]

10. THE POLITICAL MERITS OF TRANSLATIONS AND THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

I suggest that what Kant says about translation has also a political outcome. This suggestion comes from the following Kantian *Reflexion* that deals with cosmopolitanism and patriotism as a response to national pride and national hatred:

> national pride and national hatred are necessary for the separation of nations. Therefore, either through religion [...] or through the conceit of the understanding [...] or through bravery [...] or through freedom, that all others are slaves, a people loves its country before others. Governments like to see this delusion [*Wahn*] [...] On the other hand, reason gives us the law that, because instincts are blind, they do direct animality [*Thierheit*] towards us, but they must be replaced by maxims of reason. For this reason, this national delusion [*Nationalwahn*] has to be eradicated, patriotism and cosmopolitanism must replace it.[101]

Thanks to an analysis based primarily on politics and morality, Kleingeld has convincingly argued that, although patriotism and cosmopolitanism – necessary to counteract national pride and national hatred – may seem incompatible, Kant defends them both.[102]

In my opinion, it is possible to add a significant element to this analysis. To this end, it is important to emphasize that Kant considers language differences a cause of national hatred: "One already has biased attitudes towards a nation that has the same language. Prussian, Livonians. Likewise the total diversity of languages causes national hatred".[103] Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that Kant includes language differences among the causes that hinder the compatibility of cosmopolitanism and patriotism: "the human species is divided into so many different peoples by languages, religions and customs and by each of them its patriotism is kept out of a cosmopolitan cast of mind".[104]

Predictably, the removal of this obstacle is entrusted by Kant to the study and the translations of foreign languages and texts, something in which the Germans excel since, as we know, he praises their polyglotism – a property usually attributed to the

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99. Refl 853, AA 15: 377 (1776-1778).

100. J.W. Goethe's letter to T. Carlyle (July 20 1827), in Norton 1887: 25-26.

101. Refl 1353, AA 15: 590-591 (1772-1778).

102. Kleingeld 2003.

103. Kant, *Bemerkungen zu den Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*, AA 20: 147, translated in Kant 2011: 165.

104. Refl 1451, AA 15: 634 (1776-1778).

Germans in the 18th century –[105] as well as their vast production of translations: "The German [...] learns all languages and translates from all. Every stranger is at home with him. It is the country of world citizens".[106] Polyglotism and translations promote cosmopolitanism because they are the sign, and the effect of a lack of national pride, and therefore also of national hatred:

> In his dealings with others, the German's character is modesty. More than any other people, he learns foreign languages, he is [...] a wholesale dealer in learning [...] he has no national pride, and is also too cosmopolitan to be deeply attached to his homeland.[107]

The Germans' lack of national pride is such a good quality that – Kant claims – must be preserved: "The Germans have no national pride. Some writers now want to encourage national pride, but that [lack] is a good quality that one should not get rid of".[108]

Now, precisely because they have nothing in common with a nationalistic cast of mind, polyglotism and translations favor not only cosmopolitanism but also patriotism. The Germans' passion for translations has had a patriotic outcome because it has benefited the language of their homeland, but 'patriotic' does not mean 'nationalistic' since – as synthetically stated within a Kantian note devoted to their characteristics – the Germans translate because they are "admirer of other peoples. Translators [*Bewunderer anderer Völker. Übersetzer*]".[109] It is interesting to note that something similar, regarding the passion for translation as proof of the cosmopolitanism inherent in being German, and as a means that Germans were able to use for their own improvement, can be found in what Novalis wrote to A.W. Schlegel in 1797:

> Apart from the Romans, we are the only nation that has felt the urge to translate so irresistibly and owes it so much education [...] This urge is an indication of the very high, original character of the German people. Germanness is cosmopolitism [*Deutschheit ist Kosmopolitismus*] mixed with the strongest individuality. Only for us translations have been extensions.[110]

As for Kant, we can conclude that cosmopolitanism and patriotism, insofar as they are the result of polyglotism and multiple translations of the Germans, are free from any connection with national pride and hatred. They therefore contribute to eradicating the national delusion condemned by Kant and are – from the 'linguistic' point of view that I have tried to highlight – perfectly compatible.

105. Cf. Fauser 1991: 109-114.
106. Refl 1352, AA 15: 590 (1772-1778).
107. Anth, AA 7: 318.
108. V-Anth/Mron, AA 25: 1409.
109. Refl 1497, AA 15: 772 (1775-77).
110. Novalis' letter to A.W. Schlegel (November 30 1797), in Raich 1880: 41.

11. TRANSLATIONS INTO LATIN: AN EXCEPTION

For Kant Latin is a special language for many reasons. It is his second language: "by the time Emanuel was ready to leave school, he spoke and read Latin very well".[111] Latin is also special because it is the language of some of Kant's works, because he employs it in his German works and in his teaching activity,[112] and because he relies on Latin to clarify important concepts, as proved by the Latin *verisimilitudo* and *probabilitas* used to explain the differences in meaning of *Scheinbarkeit* and *Wahrscheinlichkeit*.[113] Sometimes Latin is indispensable, e.g., in logic where, as many German authors, Kant has to use it to differentiate negative and infinite judgements: "In negative judgments the negation always affects the copula; in infinite ones it is not the copula but rather the predicate that is affected, which may best be expressed in Latin".[114] Finally, Latin is the language that he insists on knowing and preserving,[115] because we need a model of taste for the arts of discourse, and such a model can only be a language which is dead, "in order not to have to suffer the alterations that unavoidably affect living languages", and is also learned, "so that it should have a grammar that is not subject to any willful change of fashion but has its own unalterable rules".[116]

If Latin is a special language in all these respects, it is also special in that it constitutes an exception to a main point of what Kant says about translation into another language.

We have seen Kant say that translating into another language is more difficult than translating from another language into ours because it is more difficult to find the right foreign word, but what happens if in the language into which we translate we do not find a word corresponding to a word of our language? Could we behave as we do when, translating from another language, we do not find an adequate term in ours, and so we create a new one? What would happen if the language we translate into was Latin?

Kant is aware that the Latin lexicon may not be able to meet all the needs of a translation from another language, in particular from German. I just need mention his disappointment when he observes that Latin does not allow us to distinguish those

111. Kuehn 2001: 59.

112. Kant adopted texts written in Latin for some of his lectures, and used Latin often in his lectures and always in his *repetitoria*, cf. Capozzi 2002: 95.

113. Cf. Capozzi 2020.

114. Log, AA 9: 104. Cf. Capozzi 2018: 17.

115. Kant reports the opinion that the study of Latin would be no longer needed since ancient texts could be read in the many translations available at the time, cf. V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 191: "The French are currently contributing a lot to the decline in taste, because they are translating all Latin and Greek books into French. When the *Corpus Iuris* was last translated into their language, someone said that now no one will learn Latin anymore".

116. KU, §17, AA 5: 232 note. In Refl 1524, AA 15: 899 (1780-1789), Kant points out another advantage of knowing Latin: it avoids entrusting the translation of sacred texts to "others who understand the language of the sacred documents", and who "tell us what we should believe", with the consequence that our natural conscience "is directed according to the sentence of scholars, and morals and virtue are replaced by observances".

who believe or do not believe in matters of rational belief from those who believe or not believe in historical matters. For, he points out that Latin has the term "*credulus*" corresponding to the German "*gläubisch*" that, together with its opposite "*ungläubisch*", refers to "historical belief".[117] But he regrets that Latin has no term to translate "*gläubig*",[118] and its opposite "*ungläubig*", that refer to rational belief.[119] Kant denounces a similar case when he writes that the Latin *bonum* and *malum* "contain an ambiguity owing to the poverty of the language",[120] whereas there are suitable expressions in German: "for *bonum* it has *das Gute* and *das Wohl,* for *malum* it has *das Böse* and *das Übel* (or *Weh*)".[121]

This being the case, one might imagine that Kant would advise against a Latin translation of his German works, so rich in conceptual and terminological innovations. But Kant wanted a translation of his main work, and he wanted it to be in Latin, since he states that some topics of philosophical speculation require scholastic precision and a scholastic language [*Schulsprache*],[122] and Latin was still the language universally known by the scholars of his time, regardless of their native languages. Thus, in 1786 he approved F. G. Born's project for a Latin translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*,[123] and in 1792, due to the delay in the publication of that translation,[124] he promptly accepted another proposal by R. G. Rath to translate the same work.[125]

Rather surprisingly, we have no evidence that Kant was concerned that the Latin translation of the *Critique* might encounter lexical difficulties. All we have evidence of is his recommendation to C. G. Schütz, in a letter of 1787, to revise the translation that Born was about to make, so as "to make sure that the style, which might aim too much at elegance, be more or less Scholastic if not quite Old Latin in its precision and correctness".[126] In his letter to Rath of 1792 Kant declares to be certain that Rath will not care too much about Latin elegance and, above all, that he would "not render the

117. Kant 1998a (Logik Bauch), Rand Text 109, ms. 93, p. 254; cf. also V-Lo/Dohna, AA 24: 734.

118. Cf. V-Lo/Dohna, AA 24: 734: for *gläubig* "we actually have no Latin word".

119. Cf. V-Lo/Dohna, AA 24:750: "In Latin there is no word for" *ungläubig*; cf. Kant 1998b (Logik Hechsel), ms. 61, p. 383.

120. KpV, AA 5: 59.

121. KpV, AA 5: 60.

122. Cf. MS AA 6: 206; cf. Capozzi 2011: 337.

123. Cf. F.G. Born to Kant (May 7 1786), Br, AA 10: 443-444.

124. Born completed his translation many years after proposing his project, cf. Kant 1796.

125. Cf. R.G. Rath's letter to Kant (September 8 1792), Br, AA 11: 366, and Kant's letter to Rath (October 16 1792), Br, AA 11: 374-375.

126. Kant's letter to C.G. Schütz (June 25 1787), Br, AA 10: 490; Kant's recommendation to Schütz was probably due to the fact that Born, as he wrote to Kant (May 7 1786), Br, AA 10: 444, was thinking of a translation into "old classical Latin". It is interesting to note that in KrV, A345/B 403, footnote, Kant had apologized for the numerous occurrences of Latin expressions in the German text of the *Critique*, but had justified their use because, while admitting that they did not favor elegance, he believed that they promoted intelligibility.

work not unintelligible with Germanisms, the way Germans often do".[127] These letters are very clear. When he writes to Schütz, Kant asks him to replace the elegant classic old Latin with a 'less elegant' scholastic one, but he does not ask him to introduce new Latin words, in case Latin lacked words capable of translating German terms. When he writes to Rath, he is even more explicit as he makes it clear that he wants to exclude German-sounding neologisms.

This is undoubtedly a (silent) exception to the Kantian thesis according to which the exercise of translation is a privileged way to improve and expand a language. This thesis can be applied to living languages, both if the translation from another language favors the introduction of neologisms into one's own language, and if the translation into another language favors the introduction of neologisms in the latter. As regards Latin, this thesis certainly applies to translations from Latin, which are capable – have historically been capable, as Kant reports – of enriching the German language with neologisms. But this thesis does not apply to the translation into Latin, even if Kant does not say so explicitly, or prefers not to say so explicitly. It is therefore not surprising that Born, in translating the *Critique of Practical Reason*, did not attempt to give Latin equivalents of the German terms contained in the above-quoted passage concerning the ambiguity of *bonum* and *malum*, but left them untranslated.[128] He did so not because those terms are connected to some peculiarity of the German character, as *frivolité* is connected to the French character, but because if adequate terms are not found in Latin, new ones cannot be invented. Latin is special inasmuch as it is a learned and dead language, and a translation cannot change or enrich it.

12. A LAST WORD ON TRANSLATORS

I have tried to give an overall picture of what Kant says about translation, but it seems appropriate to conclude by briefly paying due attention to the way in which he considers those who carry out the work of translation: the translators.

In 1785 Kant condemned unauthorized reprints of books.[129] This condemnation is based on his definition of 'book' as "a *discourse* to the public; that is, the author *speaks* publicly through the publisher",[130] a silent discourse "by visible linguistic signs",[131] which no one can deliver apart from the author, with the intermediation of his publisher.

However, he admits that if someone "alters another's book (abridges it, adds to it, or revises it)", so that it would be wrong "to pass it off any longer in the name of the author of the original" because there is "another author", and "his publisher [...] does not represent the first author as speaking through him, but another one".[132] What is most interesting is that Kant adds: "translation into a foreign language cannot be taken

127. Kant's letter to R.G. Rath (October 16 1792), Br, AA 11: 375.
128. Kant 1797: 53-54.
129. VUB, AA 8: 79-87.
130. MS, AA 6: 289.
131. *Ibidem*.
132. VUB (May 1785), AA 8: 86-87.

as unauthorized publication; for it is not the same speech of the author, even though the thoughts might be precisely the same".[133]This is an important acknowledgement of the work done by translators, but what deserves our attention is that it does not depend on the value that Kant attributes to the cultural and even political role of translations but, once again, to the determinant role of language. Since the original authorship is inseparably connected to the language in which the book was written, and since the translation contains a discourse to the public in a language other than the original, Kant recognizes the legal and economic rights of its publisher,[134] but only to the extent that he ascribes a linguistic originality to the translator.

ABBREVIATIONS

Citations of Kant's writings are from *Kant's gesammelte Schriften* (1900-), edited by the Royal Prussian, subsequently German, then Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences. This edition is cited as AA (*Akademie Ausgabe*) followed by Arabic numerals to indicate volume and page. Citations from the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* are made according to the original pagination of the first two edition of 1781 and 1787, as A/B.

Abbreviations of Kant's texts follow those adopted by *Kant-Studien*:

Anth = *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*
Br = *Briefe* (AA 10–13)
GSE = *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*
KpV = *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*
KrV = *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*
KU = *Kritik der Urteilskraft*
Log = *Logik*
MS = *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*
OP = *Opus Postumum*
Refl = *Reflexion*
V-Anth/Busolt = *Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1788/1789 Busolt*
V-Anth/Collins = *Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1772/1773 Collins*
V-Anth/Fried = *Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1775/1776 Friedländer*
V-Anth/Mensch = *Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1781/1782 Menschenkunde, Petersburg*
V-Anth/Mron = *Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1784/1785 Mrongovius*
V-Anth/Parow = *Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1772/1773 Parow*
V-Lo/Busolt = *Logik Busolt*
V-Lo/Dohna = *Logik Dohna-Wundlacken*
V-Lo/Pölitz = *Logik Pölitz*
V-Lo/Wiener = *Wiener Logik*
V-Met/Mron = *Metaphysik Mrongovius*
V-PG =*Vorlesungen über Physische Geographie*
VUB = *Von der Unrechtmäßigkeit des Büchernachdrucks*

133. *Ibidem*.

134. This means that the publisher of the translation does not commit "the crime of stealing profits from the publisher appointed by the author" that Kant denounced in MS, AA 6: 289. Cf. Hohenegger 2020: 365-366.

TRANSLATIONS

When available, English translations of Kant's texts are from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992-ff., which all bear the indication of AA pagination in the margin. I am responsible for the translations from: Refl; V-Anth/Busolt; V-Anth/Collins; V-Anth/Mensch; V-Anth/Parow; V-Lo/Busolt; V-Lo/Pölitz; V-PG. The translations of other authors quoted in the text, unless otherwise stated, are also mine.

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Mirella Capozzi
Sapienza University of Rome
ORCID: 0000-0002-6564-9797
mirella.capozzi@uniroma1.it

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IGOR AGOSTINI

Il concetto kantiano di esteriorità e la *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*

ABSTRACT: This article aims to show that in the *KrV* it is possible to identify a third sense of exteriority, irreducible to the phenomenal/transcendental exteriority couple, which corresponds to that which Kant presents, in the *Second Analogy of Experience*, as a sense of the object further than mere representation (*Vorstellung*) – the object of consciousness – and the thing in itself (*Ding an sich*). To this end, it argues the following three theses: 1) the *Second Analogy of Experience*, achieving a task that in the *Transcendental Deduction* is not yet obtained, elaborates a third sense of object, which is reducible neither to mere representation nor to the thing in itself; 2) to this third sense of object corresponds a third sense of exteriority; 3) it thus turns out to be possible to attempt to integrate the interpretation of the concept of exteriority operating in the *Refutation of Idealism* in the light of the concept of object elaborated in the *Second Analogy of Experience*.
SOMMARIO: L'articolo intende provare la tesi che nella *KrV* è possibile individuare un terzo senso di esteriorità, irriducibile alla coppia esteriorità fenomenica/esteriorità trascendentale, che corrisponde a quello che Kant presenta, nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, quale senso dell'oggetto ulteriore rispetto alla semplice rappresentazione (*Vorstellung*), oggetto della coscienza, e alla cosa in sé (*Ding an sich*). A tal fine, argomenta le tre tesi seguenti: 1) la *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, terminando il compito che nella *Deduzione trascendentale* non è ancora concluso, elabora un terzo senso di oggetto, che non è riducibile né alla semplice rappresentazione, né alla cosa in sé; 2) a questo terzo senso di oggetto corrisponde un terzo senso di esteriorità; 3) risulta dunque possibile tentare di integrare l'interpretazione del concetto di esteriorità operante nella *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* alla luce del concetto di oggetto elaborato nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*.
KEYWORDS: Object; Idealism; External Reality; *Second Analogy of Experience*; Phenomenon

1. PREMESSA

È stato sottolineato come, tra le questioni di esegesi kantiana, non ve ne sia alcuna che, presso gli specialisti, raccolga meno consenso di quella relativa alla natura della dottrina dell'Idealismo trascendentale (*transzendentaler Idealismus*, A 490/B 518) – secondo la definizione dello stesso Kant.[1] Indotta dalla recensione di Garve e Feder del 19 gennaio 1782 alla prima edizione della *KrV*,[2] la successiva riflessione kantiana sull'Idealismo trascendentale avrebbe originato, anzitutto, il famoso *Anhang* dei *Prolegomeni*, nonché numerose modifiche apportate alla seconda edizione della *KrV* – in particolare, la soppressione della *Critica del quarto paralogismo della psicologia trascendentale* (A 367-380), l'incorporazione della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* (B 274-279) e l'inserzione di una lunga nota nella nuova *Prefazione* (B xxxix).

Ora, un momento essenziale della comprensione della dottrina dell'Idealismo trascendentale consiste, da un lato, nella sua caratterizzazione, già nella prima edizione, nei termini del "realismo empirico", secondo il quale essa si concede la realtà della materia come fenomeno (A 371); e, d'altra parte, nel chiarimento del concetto di esteriorità, vale a dire del senso in virtù di cui si è autorizzati a parlare, sempre secondo il Kant della *Critica del quarto paralogismo*, di una realtà delle cose che sono "al di fuori di noi" (*außer uns*, A 372). Kant stesso si incarica del compito di un tale chiarimento, notando l'ambiguità del termine e distinguendo l'esteriorità fenomenica dall'esteriorità trascendentale (A 373). Invece, le cose si complicano per il fatto che, nel 1787, nella *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, Kant afferma, ancora una volta, l'esistenza delle "cose al di fuori di me" (*Dinge außer mir*, B 275, 276), ma in un senso che è lungi dall'essere sovrapponibile con certezza a quello operante nella *Critica del quarto paralogismo*.

In questo articolo, delineerò prima di tutto uno stato dell'arte delle interpretazioni principali, rilevando come il contrasto tra le differenti letture dell'Idealismo trascendentale kantiano si esplichi, almeno in parte, tramite la condivisione tacita di un presupposto, che consiste in una certa tendenza a considerare come esaustiva la distinzione tra i due sensi di esteriorità teorizzati in A 373. Sosterrò la tesi che nella *KrV* si possa individuare un terzo senso di esteriorità, irriducibile alla coppia esteriorità fenomenica/esteriorità trascendentale, che corrisponde a quello che Kant presenta, nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, quale senso dell'oggetto ulteriore rispetto alla semplice rappresentazione (*Vorstellung*), oggetto della coscienza, e alla cosa in sé (*Ding an sich*).

L'idea che ci sia in Kant un terzo senso dell'istanza dell'oggetto ha, in realtà, una lunga storia: tra i commentatori moderni, essa risale almeno a Norman Kemp Smith, che, sulla scia della dottrina della cosiddetta 'terza affezione' di Hans Vaihinger e di Erich Adickes, aveva rilevato la presenza, in Kant, di una nuova e rivoluzionaria interpretazione della distinzione cartesiana tra soggettivo e oggettivo.[3] Tuttavia, questo tipo di lettura risulta problematico, poiché emerge un certo rischio di opacità, e per ciò stesso la necessità di una più precisa determinazione della natura di questo preteso nuovo

1. Cfr. Stang 2023.
2. Cfr. Garve-Feder 1782.
3. Così, Kemp Smith 1918.

senso di oggetto – e segnatamente dell'individuazione di uno spazio concettuale entro cui pensarlo all'interno del sistema kantiano, il quale, in effetti, sembra non ammettere alcuna alternativa tra *Vorstellung* e *Ding an sich*. Questa è la ragione per la quale, ancora oggi, un eminente specialista come Paul Guyer ha potuto, con buone ragioni, qualificare come "unclear", la posizione assunta sul problema da Norman Kemp Smith.[4]

Ritornando su quest'eterna controversia, non oso proporre una nuova interpretazione né elaborare una soluzione del problema; piuttosto, mi propongo il compito, più modesto, di offrire qualche elemento per inquadrare la questione secondo una prospettiva che non è stata – mi sembra – particolarmente considerata dagli specialisti. A tal fine, proporrò le tre tesi seguenti: 1) la *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, terminando il compito che nella Deduzione trascendentale non è ancora concluso, elabora un terzo senso di oggetto, che non è riducibile né alla semplice rappresentazione, né alla cosa in sé; 2) a questo terzo senso di oggetto corrisponde un terzo senso di esteriorità; 3) risulta dunque possibile tentare di integrare l'interpretazione del concetto di esteriorità operante nella *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* alla luce del concetto di oggetto elaborato nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*.

2. Il problema della coerenza tra *Critica del quarto paralogismo* e *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*

Nel 1781, nella *Critica del quarto paralogismo*, Kant scrive che l'idealista trascendentale è un realista empirico che, poiché "fa valere questa materia, e persino la sua possibilità interna, semplicemente come fenomeno, il quale, separato dalla nostra sensibilità, non è nulla, allora per lui la materia è soltanto una specie di rappresentazioni (intuizioni), che si dicono esterne, non come se si riferissero ad oggetti esterni in se stessi, ma in quanto riferiscono le percezioni allo spazio, nel quale ogni cosa è fuori dall'altra, mentre lo spazio stesso è in noi" (A 370, tr. it., pp. 1273, 1275). Nel 1787, nella *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, invece, Kant scrive che "la percezione di questo permanente", richiesta per la determinazione della mia esistenza, "è possibile solo grazie a una cosa fuori di me (*Ding außer mir*) e non in virtù della semplice rappresentazione di una cosa fuori di me" (*Vorstellung eines Dinges außer mir*, B 275, tr. it., p. 42).

Sembra difficile negare che fra i due testi intercorra una variazione: nella prima edizione, le cose esteriori "non sono altro che semplici fenomeni, cioè rappresentazioni in noi, della cui realtà noi diveniamo immediatamente coscienti" (A 372, tr. it., p. 1277); nella seconda, invece, la realtà esterna è "una cosa fuori di me" (*Ding außer mir*, B 275) e "solo l'esperienza esterna è propriamente immediata" (B 276, tr. it., p. 429, modificata). Questa differenza ha condotto alcuni commentatori, da Vaihinger fino ai nostri giorni,[5] ad affermare che il testo della critica al *Quarto paralogismo* non sia conciliabile con la *Confutazione*: nella critica al *Quarto paralogismo*, difatti, l'esteriorità sembra interpretata fenomenicamente, in quanto le cose esterne sono rappresentazioni,

4. Cfr. Guyer 1987: 452-453.

5. Vaihinger 1884: 131, seguito poi, fra gli altri, da Kemp Smith 1918: 313 e da Luporini 1961: 181.

mentre la *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, al contrario, sembra escludere in maniera netta ogni riduzione rappresentativa delle cose esterne.

Ma c'è di più: la posizione della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* sembra porre un problema di coerenza non solo con la critica al *Quarto paralogismo*, ma con la stessa prospettiva di fondo della *KrV*: come, nel quadro del criticismo, si potrebbe mai parlare di una "cosa fuori di me", in opposizione alle rappresentazioni? Sembra cioè che non vi sia spazio, nella *KrV*, per un terzo elemento tra la rappresentazione e la cosa in sé.

Il che spiega altresì due tratti che si direbbero quasi costitutivi del dibattito storiografico sulla *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*: 1) Prima di tutto, una questione che si ripresenta incessantemente, a scapito del reiterato divieto kantiano di accedere alla conoscenza delle cose in se stesse: la *Confutazione* ha forse come scopo quello di provare l'esistenza delle cose in se stesse? 2) In secondo luogo, la risposta maggioritaria ad essa: considerando che Kant ha sempre affermato che le cose in se stesse sono inconoscibili, la *Confutazione*, anche a dispetto di alcune affermazioni dei *Prolegomena*, non ha forse voluto provare l'esistenza delle cose in sé. L'interpretazione di segno opposto è stata pur sostenuta da alcuni autori,[6] che si sono inevitabilmente attirati l'obiezione di attribuire a Kant un Realismo trascendentale, incompatibile con la medesima confessione kantiana di Idealismo trascendentale.[7] La messa fuori gioco di questa lettura, però, non elimina il problema, sebbene permetta di riformularlo in termini più corretti: se la *Confutazione* non intende dimostrare l'esistenza della cosa in sé, che cosa dimostra?

3. UNA SINTESI DELLE INTERPRETAZIONI

Nella storia delle interpretazioni si registrano almeno, oltre a quella appena scartata, quattro differenti letture del concetto kantiano di esteriorità o, detto in altri termini, quattro sensi secondo cui si è ritenuto di poter qualificare la "cosa fuori di me" (*Ding außer mir*) come distinta dalla rappresentazione (*Vorstellung*) di essa:[8] 1) La cosa in sé è il fenomeno (*Erscheinung*), nel senso empirico di ciò che è conforme alle forme *a priori* dello spazio e alle categorie dell'intelletto. Secondo questa lettura, allorché Kant parla, nella *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, di una "cosa fuori di me" distinta dalle mie rappresentazioni, egli utilizza l'espressione in un senso molto ristretto e specifico, ossia per opporre i fenomeni del senso esterno a quelli del senso interno. L'esteriorità è cioè presa in senso esclusivamente empirico; ne consegue che non c'è alcuna contraddizione tra la *Confutazione* e la critica al *Quarto paralogismo*, perché in quest'ultimo l'esteriorità è intesa in senso trascendentale.[9] Questa lettura ha il vantaggio non solo di rendere

6. Essa fu proposta, fra gli altri, da Erdmann 1878: 197 e da Prichard 1999: 319-324. La lettura è stata poi rilanciata, in una forma più elaborata, da Strawson 1966: 261-262.

7. Di qui le critiche che da sempre sono state indirizzate contro di essa, a partire almeno da Vaihinger 1884: 128 sgg.; da Caird 1889: 632 sgg.; da Adamson 1879: 249 sgg.; e, richiamandosi a loro, Kemp Smith 2003: 314.

8. Cfr. la dossografia di Beiser 2002: 113 sgg., che qui seguo per l'essenziale, con minime precisazioni o integrazioni.

9. Cfr. Müller-Lauter 1964: 79-80.

giustizia al linguaggio realista della *Confutazione* e di rendere plausibile l'argomento di Kant, ma di risultare coerente con l'Idealismo trascendentale nel suo insieme. Inoltre, non credo neanche che essa sia soggetta alla difficoltà, che pur si è ritenuto gravare su di essa, secondo la quale, se tutto quello che Kant intende con "cose fuori di noi" non fossero altro che esperienze spaziali, egli non avrebbe stabilito granché, e certamente niente contro l'Idealismo cartesiano, poiché quest'ultimo non nega che si abbiano delle rappresentazioni di cose esterne a noi – come pure si è sottolineato.[10] Mi pare infatti che una tale difficoltà si darebbe nel caso in cui lo spazio fosse una rappresentazione concettuale, il che non è dato il suo statuto di intuizione, che dà l'oggetto; la difficoltà si porrebbe cioè dal punto di vista cartesiano, ma non da quello kantiano, come chiarito in particolare da B 69, dove si afferma che l'intuizione, in quanto intuizione, discrimina il fenomeno (*Erscheinung*) dalla parvenza (*Schein*) come qualcosa di effettivamente dato (sebbene distinto dalla cosa in sé, in quanto dipendente dalla natura del soggetto).[11] Una prerogativa, questa, che non spetta al concetto, perché il pensare non dà oggetti. Nondimeno, l'impressione è che una tale soluzione sembri provare troppo poco: l'intuizione resta in effetti, anch'essa, come il concetto, una rappresentazione. Essa, quindi, dà bensì l'oggetto, ma in quanto tale esso è dato sempre nella rappresentazione stessa: "la sensibilità deve contenere delle rappresentazioni a priori, le quali costituiscono la condizione per cui ci vengono dati degli oggetti" (A 15/B 29-30, tr. it., p. 109). Così, da un lato, le rappresentazioni, anche avendo un oggetto esterno, restano pur sempre determinazioni dello stato interno dell'animo: "le rappresentazioni – abbiano o meno come loro oggetto delle cose esterne – in se stesse appartengono pur sempre, come determinazioni dell'animo, allo stato interno" (A 34/B 50, tr. it., p. 137); e, dall'altro lato, gli oggetti esterni, restano sempre delle rappresentazioni della sensibilità: "gli oggetti in sé non ci sono assolutamente noti, e quelli che chiamiamo gli oggetti esterni altro non sono che semplici rappresentazioni della nostra sensibilità" (A 30, B 45, tr. it., p. 129). Resta da spiegare, cioè, come un tale carattere rappresentativo sia compatibile con l'esteriorità.

Ora, le due letture sin qui analizzate condividono in realtà un presupposto, ovvero quello di tenere ferma come esaustiva la coppia opposizionale cosa in sé/rappresentazione, puntando l'una sul primo, l'altra sul secondo termine. Le difficoltà incontrate dall'una e dall'altra, manifeste per la prima, comunque sostanziali per la seconda, hanno spinto gli interpreti all'individuazione di una soluzione ulteriore, il cui filo conduttore sarebbe quello di isolare un senso di esteriorità che non si riduca alla rigida alternativa cosa in sé/rappresentazione. Le ulteriori tre interpretazioni del concetto sono state elaborate in questa direzione: 2) La cosa fuori di me è la cosa in sé considerata in quanto

10. Beiser 2002: 115.

11. Così in B 69: "In quello che ci appare, infatti, gli oggetti e le proprietà stesse che noi vi attribuiamo vengono sempre considerati come qualcosa di effettivamente dato: solo che, dipendendo questo loro carattere unicamente dal modo di intuire del soggetto – nella relazione che intercorre tra esso e l'oggetto dato – quest'oggetto, come ciò che appare, viene distinto dallo stesso oggetto com'è in sé".

appare nello spazio secondo le *forme a priori*.[12] Questa lettura si scontra con la difficoltà patente che, se questo fosse il senso di esteriorità impiegato dalla *Confutazione*, sarebbe, ancora una volta, violata la restrizione di Kant circa i limiti della conoscenza al fenomeno; e questo tanto più che, secondo la *KrV*, anche ammesso che la cosa in sé sia identificata con la cosa in sé in quanto appare, e non con un *noumeno* del tutto distinto dai fenomeni, essa resterebbe sempre e comunque al di fuori dei limiti dell'esperienza possibile. 3) La cosa fuori di me è il fenomeno (*Erscheinung*), ma considerato in sé, ovvero come rappresentato, da un lato, indipendentemente dalla nostra conoscenza empirica, e, dall'altro, dipendente sempre dalle attività sintetiche dell'*ego* trascendentale.[13] Questa interpretazione reca dei vantaggi evidenti: non viola in modo flagrante gli insegnamenti di Kant sui limiti della conoscenza e rende giustizia al linguaggio più realista della *Confutazione*. Cosa ancora più importante, essa mostra come la *Confutazione* sia coerente con l'Idealismo trascendentale, perché rileva come degli oggetti possano esistere indipendentemente da noi (ovvero, dalla nostra coscienza empirica), ma essere tuttavia dipendenti dalla nostra attività conoscitiva. Tuttavia, questa stessa spiegazione presenta anche seri inconvenienti, di cui il principale concerne l'idea stessa di un apparire in sé, il quale condurrebbe inevitabilmente ad una paradossale duplicazione del fenomeno (d'altronde, questa medesima interpretazione ammette anche l'esistenza della cosiddetta 'doppia affezione', che è almeno altrettanto problematica). Inoltre, supporre che i fenomeni esistano indipendentemente da qualsiasi coscienza empirica significa non solo trascurare il ruolo della sensibilità nella loro costituzione, ma anche collocare tutto il problema della conoscenza al livello della coscienza empirica.[14] 4) La cosa fuori di me è l'esperienza.[15] Secondo questa lettura, allora, ciò che Kant intenderebbe dimostrare con la *Confutazione* è che la nostra coscienza implica un'esperienza delle cose nello spazio, e non solo delle rappresentazioni o delle percezioni isolate dalle cose stesse. Se abbiamo una tale esperienza, dunque, la nostra rappresentazione o percezione non sarà puramente soggettiva, perché sarà conforme ai principi universali e necessari dell'esperienza in generale. In tal modo, sembrerebbe evitarsi qualsiasi ricaduta nell'Idealismo cartesiano, perché le cose esterne, così intese, non si ridurrebbero in alcun modo a rappresentazioni (come sembra, invece, nella critica al *Quarto paralogismo*). La *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* non asserirebbe, dunque, che abbiamo una rappresen-

12. Cfr., per esempio, Fischer 1898: 603-620; ma anche Erdmann 1878: 202-203. Beiser attribuisce questa lettura anche a Guyer 1987: 282, 291; 1983: 377-378, che costituirebbe una rielaborazione di quella di Fischer e di Erdmann. Mi pare però che mentre Erdmann sostiene che la *Confutazione* affermi l'esistenza delle cose in sé, proprio come i *Prolegomeni*, Guyer, da parte sua, attraverso un'indagine molto meticolosa basata su diversi testi del *Nachlass* e su una tarda confutazione dell'Idealismo, afferma che l'oggetto, è, bensì, la cosa in sé esistente al di fuori di noi, ma con una forma che non coincide con quella delle forme *a priori* attraverso le quali la percepiamo; questo perché Kant, nell'edizione del 1787, ha abbandonato l'idea di un isomorfismo tra forme *a priori* e oggetto, che condivideva ancora nel 1781 (A 386).

13. Cfr. Vaihinger 1884: 85-164, in part. 145 n. 2, 156-157; tale argomento sarebbe stato poi sviluppato da Adickes 1929: 22-23 e, sulla scia di questi, da Kemp Smith 2003: 614.

14. Beiser 2002: 59.

15. È la lettura di Beiser, cfr. 2002: 117 sgg.

tazione delle cose nello spazio, ma che di esse abbiamo una conoscenza, in quanto le nostre rappresentazioni dello spazio sono appunto conformi alle condizioni universali e necessarie dell'esperienza: "delle cose esterne noi abbiamo anche esperienza, e non semplicemente immaginazione" (B 275, tr. it., p. 427).

Abbastanza paradossalmente, questa interpretazione non è stata avanzata adducendo, a suo ulteriore sostegno, un testo che ritengo invece essere a tal fine particolarmente pertinente, ossia la *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*.[16] Non so se è per questa ragione, o – più probabilmente – in modo del tutto indipendente, ma tale lettura, mentre rende conto del carattere di necessità con cui la "cosa fuori di me" si impone alla coscienza (per cui essa non è semplicemente immaginata, ma conosciuta), non ne spiega anche l'esteriorità: certamente, l'esperienza costituisce un terzo termine tra la rappresentazione e la cosa stessa, ma il problema è mostrare in che modo a quest'esperienza possa essere ascritto il carattere di esteriorità.

4. IL CONCETTO DI OGGETTO NELLA *SECONDA ANALOGIA DELL'ESPERIENZA*

Pur nella loro problematicità, le tre letture qui proposte hanno contribuito a fissare come acquisito un punto: per comprendere la concezione kantiana dell'esteriorità non è possibile attenersi alla distinzione netta rappresentazione/cosa in sé; in altri termini, la comprensione del realismo empirico di Kant, nella *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, richiede l'identificazione di un senso dell'oggetto che si distingua, da un lato, dalla rappresentazione, e, dall'altro, dalla cosa in sé. Kemp Smith aveva dunque completamente ragione nel sottolineare che, per Kant, "the subjective is not opposite in nature to the objective, but is a subspecies within it";[17] ma tutto il problema è qui nel definire la natura di questo senso dell'oggetto, sul quale il giudizio dei commentatori, come visto, è tutt'altro che unanime. Da questo punto di vista, sembra allora troppo severa la critica di Guyer nei confronti dello studioso inglese per non avere chiarito il presunto "nuovo" senso dell'oggetto col quale Kant, secondo lui, avrebbe rivoluzionato la filosofia moderna, perché la difficoltà, come s'è visto, è trasversale ai vari schieramenti esegetici.

Nelle pagine seguenti vorrei avanzare un'ipotesi di lavoro, cercando di integrare il senso kantiano di "cosa fuori di me" (*Ding außer mir*) nella *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* a partire dal concetto di oggetto elaborato nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*. Che quest'ultima costituisca il luogo centrale della nozione kantiana di oggetto è una tesi forse non abbastanza spesso enfatizzata, ma che certamente è stata già sottolineata da alcuni interpreti. Robert Wolff ha particolarmente insistito su questo punto, identificando nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza* il luogo in cui, all'interno della *KrV*, si completerebbe il percorso di determinazione della natura dell'oggetto intrapreso a partire dalla *Deduzione trascendentale*. In un passaggio celebre della prima edizione, escluso poi dalla seconda, *Della sintesi della ricognizione nel concetto*, Kant scrive:

16. Pur rivendicandone, ad un certo momento, l'importanza ai fini della comprensione della *way of ideas* in Kant: cfr. Beiser 2002: 136.
17. Cfr. Kemp Smith 2003: 313.

> E qui allora è necessario aver chiaro che cosa si intenda con l'espressione: oggetto delle rappresentazioni. Abbiamo detto in precedenza che i fenomeni stessi non sono che rappresentazioni sensibili, le quali allo stesso modo non devono essere considerate in se stesse come oggetti (fuori della facoltà rappresentativa). Che cosa si intende allora quando si parla di un oggetto corrispondente alla conoscenza, e quindi da essa distinto? È facile riconoscere che tale oggetto deve essere pensato soltanto come qualcosa in generale = x, poiché non abbiamo nulla al di fuori della nostra conoscenza da poter contrapporre a tale conoscenza come corrispondente.[18]

Qui, l'oggetto delle rappresentazioni è una cosa indeterminata (= x), che costituisce il fondamento dell'unità pensata nella molteplicità delle rappresentazioni.[19] Nelle tappe ulteriori della *Deduzione trascendentale*, Kant ha cercato di reintegrare l'oggetto delle rappresentazioni nel quadro del mondo fenomenico: esso diventa allora il prodotto dell'attività sintetica dell'immaginazione (A 118-125); ma questa soluzione non è ancora soddisfacente. Effettivamente, da una parte, in quanto prodotto dell'attività sintetica dell'immaginazione, l'oggetto non può esistere indipendentemente dal soggetto che lo conosce; ma, dall'altra, un fenomeno è lo stesso oggetto di rappresentazioni che appaiono nella coscienza: dunque, in un certo senso, esso deve essere distinto dalle rappresentazioni *qua talia*. Il problema e la relativa soluzione sono rinviati all'*Analitica dei principi*, segnatamente alla *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, soprattutto in B 234-236, che costituisce la ripresa consapevole – come evidente anche dall'impostazione della questione da parte di Kant – della problematica lasciata insoluta nella *Deduzione trascendentale* della prima edizione e completata nella seconda.[20]

Ora, a mia conoscenza, la nozione di oggetto elaborata in B 234-236 non è stata organicamente correlata, dagli specialisti, alla nozione di *Ding außer mir* della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*; e questo a scapito del fatto che, in quel luogo della *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, l'oggetto venga definito da Kant – sia nella posizione del problema sia nella sua risoluzione – in opposizione da un lato alla *Vorstellung* pura e, dall'altro, alla cosa stessa. Ci sono delle ragioni molto precise che spiegano perché questa pista non sia stata battuta, ma vi ritornerò tra poco. Preliminarmente, proporrò invece una breve ricostruzione, in tre punti dell'argomento di Kant:

1. La comprensione del molteplice del fenomeno è sempre successiva: le rappresentazioni si succedono le une alle altre. Ma forse esse si succedono ugualmente nell'oggetto? Questo è un punto ulteriore, che non è contenuto nel primo. Si può certamente chiamare "oggetto", egli dice, qualsiasi cosa, e persino qualsiasi rappresentazione, dal

18. A 104, tr. it., p. 1213.

19. Esso non coincide con l'oggetto trascendentale: nelle sue oltre trenta e più occorrenze nella *KrV*, l'espressione *Objekt/transzendentale Gegenstand* designa sempre la cosa in sé o la realtà in quanto indipendente dal soggetto; e questa è la ragione per cui Kemp Smith ritenne che il suo uso nella *Rekognition* ed in altri luoghi fosse un residuo del pensiero precritico, laddove invece, forse più semplicemente, Kant si vale provvisoriamente di questo concetto di oggetto per costruire il suo. In altre parole, egli passa attraverso il concetto di oggetto in generale per pervenire poi, attraverso le varie tappe della deduzione, nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, a fissare appunto il suo proprio concetto.

20. Wolff 1963: 262.

momento in cui se ne ha coscienza. Tuttavia, su quello che significhi questa parola rispetto ai fenomeni, considerati non in quanto (come rappresentazioni) sono degli oggetti, ma solamente in quanto essi si rapportano a un oggetto, occorre "riflettere ulteriormente" (B 234, tr. it., p. 377).

Bisogna considerare che l'argomento di Kant mira a definire l'oggetto e infatti si conclude con una definizione di esso, ma si sviluppa tramite un'analisi del fenomeno; detto diversamente, Kant si propone di dare una definizione di fenomeno e, sulla base di questa definizione, perviene a definire l'oggetto. Rispetto ai fenomeni, l'autore della *KrV* esamina qui due possibilità: i fenomeni sono o delle rappresentazioni oppure delle cose in sé; Kant, infatti, non è disposto a riconoscere l'esistenza di qualcosa di altro rispetto alle rappresentazioni, da una parte, e alle cose in sé, dall'altra.

2. Sembra dunque di essere in un vicolo cieco. In effetti, se i fenomeni sono considerati semplicemente come rappresentazioni, quali oggetti della coscienza, essi non si distinguono affatto dall'apprensione, ossia da ciò che fa sì che essi siano sottoposti alla sintesi dell'immaginazione, all'interno della quale essi sono rappresentati sempre come successivi. Se, invece, i fenomeni sono considerati quali cose in sé, non sarebbe possibile accertare, a partire dalla successione delle molteplici rappresentazioni, il modo in cui questa molteplicità è connessa nell'oggetto: infatti, abbiamo a che fare solo col molteplice delle nostre rappresentazioni e cade interamente al di fuori della nostra sfera conoscitiva ciò che possono essere le cose in sé considerate in se stesse, ovvero non rapportate alle rappresentazioni mediante le quali esse producono un'affezione su di noi.

3. Distinguo tuttavia, nonostante questo, la mia apprensione, sempre soggettiva, dal suo oggetto: l'apprensione del molteplice contenuto nel fenomeno di una casa davanti a me, per esempio, risulta senz'altro successiva, ma nessuno dirà mai che le parti della casa sono, esse stesse, successive. Ma allora, se da una parte l'apprensione è sempre successiva, ma posso distinguere tra successione dell'apprensione e successione oggettiva, e se, d'altra parte, questa oggettività non può essere né quella della rappresentazione (che, in quanto tale, non si distingue dall'apprensione soggettiva), né quella della cosa in sé, occorrerà necessariamente individuare "quale sia la congiunzione che nei fenomeni stessi spetta al molteplice, tenendo conto che nell'apprensione, la rappresentazione di questo molteplice è sempre successiva" (B 235/A 190, tr. it., p. 379); o, diversamente detto, bisogna indicare in quale senso, ad esempio, l'apprensione del diverso contenuto nel fenomeno di una casa presente dinanzi a noi sia successiva, mentre le parti della casa non sono esse stesse successive. È chiaro, dice Kant, che quando parlo in questa maniera, "io elevo i miei concetti di un oggetto (*bald ich meine Begriffe von einem Gegenstande* [...] *steigere*" B 236-136/A 190, tr. it., p. 379) fino al significato trascendentale: la casa non è affatto una cosa in sé, ma solo un fenomeno, cioè, una rappresentazione il cui oggetto trascendentale è sconosciuto e che non è più considerata come identica all'apprensione.

Ma cosa è, allora, il fenomeno così delineato? La difficoltà si pone, come dicevo poc'anzi per il fatto che Kant non è disposto ad ammettere che ci sia una cosa altra dalle rappresentazioni e dalla cosa in sé. Ne risulta che, se occorre elevarsi alla considerazione dell'oggetto nel senso trascendentale, questo non può esser fatto congedando il livello delle rappresentazioni. La soluzione che Kant propone è allora la seguente:

> Ciò che qui si trova nell'apprensione successiva viene considerato come rappresentazione; ma il fenomeno che mi è dato, per quanto non sia altro che un insieme (*Inbegriff*) di queste rappresentazioni, viene considerato come il loro oggetto, con il quale deve accordarsi il mio concetto, quel concetto che io traggo dalle rappresentazioni dell'apprensione.[21]

Questo significa che, non essendo il fenomeno se non un insieme di rappresentazioni, esso non costituisce una cosa in sé al di là delle rappresentazioni stesse, ma, nondimeno, si distingue da esse: mentre queste sono oggetto della coscienza (si leggeva in B 234: "tutto può essere chiamato oggetto, e [...] addirittura può essere chiamata così ogni rappresentazione di cui si abbia coscienza"), il fenomeno, in quanto insieme di queste rappresentazioni, ne costituisce a un tempo l'oggetto. Detto altrimenti, nelle rappresentazioni bisogna distinguere la sintesi dell'apprensione dal fenomeno: quest'ultimo consiste certamente in queste stesse rappresentazioni, ma considerato come loro oggetto, segnatamente come oggetto con cui il concetto della sintesi immaginativa deve essere in accordo. Non solo, dunque, il fenomeno costituisce l'oggetto delle rappresentazioni, ma, in quanto loro oggetto, esse devono accordarsi con esso, secondo la definizione nominale di verità. Sennonché, la conformità qui riguarda solo la forma, e non anche la materia della conoscenza: "La questione qui può riguardare soltanto le condizioni formali della verità empirica" (B 236/A191, tr. it., p. 379), dacché l'oggetto, come cosa in sé, è al di là della possibilità della nostra conoscenza; di conseguenza, ammesso che si dia un accordo, esso verterà meno sulle condizioni materiali che su quelle formali: la verità sarà empirica e non trascendentale (cioè, non riguardante le cose in sé). Il fenomeno emergerà quale insieme di rappresentazioni che costituisce non solo l'oggetto dell'apprensione dell'immaginazione, ma anche le condizioni formali dell'accordo delle rappresentazioni con esso.

Cosa siano, poi, queste condizioni formali Kant lo chiarisce dicendo che esse consistono in una regola (*Regel*):

> Il fenomeno – contrariamente a quanto accade per le rappresentazioni dell'apprensione – può essere rappresentato come l'oggetto delle rappresentazioni, distinto dall'apprensione, ma solo a patto di sottostare a una regola che la distingua da ogni altra apprensione, e renda necessario un modo di congiunzione (*Art der Verbindung*) del molteplice.[22]

In altre parole, la sintesi immaginativa e il suo oggetto, il fenomeno, sono entrambi delle rappresentazioni; sennonché nel fenomeno queste rappresentazioni sono sottomesse a una regola necessaria, cioè, a un modo necessario di congiunzione della molteplicità. Il fenomeno è dunque, conclusivamente, un insieme di rappresentazioni, le quali costituiscono l'oggetto della sintesi dell'apprensione e sono connesse secondo una regola necessaria.

Si è così pervenuti alla soluzione del problema, chiarendo il significato di oggetto che stavamo cercando: "Ciò che nel fenomeno contiene la condizione di questa regola

21. B 236/A191, tr. it., p. 379.
22. B 236/A191, tr. it., pp. 379, 381.

necessaria è l'oggetto" (B 236/A191, tr. it., p. 381). L'oggetto non è dunque una terza cosa tra la rappresentazione e la cosa in sé, e la sua realtà è interna al fenomeno; salvo che, nel fenomeno, l'oggetto non è la stessa cosa dell'apprensione, dunque della rappresentazione in generale, ma una sintesi necessaria delle rappresentazioni che costituisce il loro stesso oggetto.

5. *SECONDA ANALOGIA DELL'ESPERIENZA* ED ESTERIORITÀ

Il concetto di oggetto così delineato nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza* in B 234-236 possiede le condizioni necessarie per essere accostato alla "cosa fuori di me" della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*: esso è definito, come già ricordato in precedenza, in opposizione sia alla rappresentazione (*Vorstellung*), sia alla cosa in sé (*Ding an sich*). Resta da capire se queste condizioni siano anche sufficienti. La risposta mi sembra affermativa, come si potrebbe mostrare a diversi livelli.

Prima di tutto, se si considera l'oggetto in quanto distinto dalla cosa in sé, secondo la caratterizzazione della *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, non si pone il problema, che grava sull'interpretazione 2), di una violazione dell'inconoscibilità delle cose in se stesse; inoltre, nella misura in cui Kant insiste sul fatto che l'oggetto è un insieme di rappresentazioni, non si pongono i problemi emergenti dall'interpretazione 3): esso, di fatto, non si dà al di fuori del fenomeno. Proprio per questo, tuttavia, occorre comprendere come si possa ascrivere il carattere di esteriorità a un oggetto così definito – che è il problema che grava sull'interpretazione 4) e che può essere formulato, sotto una cifra più generale e complessiva, come il problema del passaggio dalla problematica della *Deduzione trascendentale*, che certamente prolunga ancora le *Analogie dell'esperienza*, a quella della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, che risulta non sovrapponibile alla prima.[23] D'altra parte, Wolff stesso, che pure ha tanto insistito, si è visto, sul testo della *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza* designandola quale chiave di volta della stessa *Deduzione trascendentale*, scriveva che questa costituiva un'analisi più dell'oggettività che dell'oggetto.[24]

In quest'articolo, evidentemente, mi sono proposto di delineare la possibilità di una lettura diversa, la quale richiede, però, per essere completata, il reperimento del carattere dell'esteriorità nella nozione di oggetto introdotta dalla *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*.

Ebbene, a questo proposito, bisogna riconoscere che è vero che, in B 234-236, l'opposizione soggetto/oggetto non è mai presentata in maniera esplicita come un'opposizione interno/esterno; e, tuttavia, il riferimento di Kant alla dottrina della verità come corrispondenza, anche se relativa alle sole condizioni formali, sembra suggerire che egli connoti la nozione di oggetto secondo il concetto di esteriorità:

> […] il fenomeno che mi è dato, per quanto non sia altro che un insieme di queste rappresentazioni, viene considerato come il loro oggetto, con il quale deve accor-

23. Cfr. Allison 2015: 9: "Kant does not deny the Cartesian problem, but he assigns its resolution to the Refutation of Idealism. The specter of a cognitive dissonance or lack of cognitive fit is reserved for the Transcendental Deduction, however, since it is directly concerned with the grounds of the possibility of the experience that we do have".
24. Wolff 1963: 264.

> darsi il mio concetto, quel concetto che io traggo dalle rappresentazioni dell'apprensione. Ma l'accordo della conoscenza con l'oggetto è la verità, e allora si vede subito che la questione qui può riguardare soltanto le condizioni formali della verità empirica.[25]

Ancora più esplicito è B 242-243/A 197:

> Abbiamo in noi delle rappresentazioni di cui possiamo certamente diventare coscienti. Per quanto però questa coscienza possa essere estesa, precisa e puntuale quanto si voglia, esse rimangono sempre e soltanto rappresentazioni, cioè determinazioni interne del nostro animo in una relazione di tempo piuttosto che in un'altra. Ma com'è che arriviamo ad attribuire a queste rappresentazioni un oggetto, ossia ad attribuir loro, oltre alla realtà soggettiva – che esse possiedono in quanto modificazioni –, non so quale realtà oggettiva? Un significato oggettivo non può consistere nella relazione ad una rappresentazione diversa (rispetto a ciò che si voleva dire dell'oggetto), altrimenti si ripropone la domanda: come può questa rappresentazione fuoriuscire nuovamente da se stessa (*aus sich selbst heraus*) e ricevere un significato oggettivo oltre quello soggettivo che gli è proprio, in quanto determinazione dello stato dell'animo? Se ricerchiamo poi quale nuova proprietà conferisca alle nostre rappresentazioni la relazione a un oggetto, e quale sia la dignità che tali rappresentazioni ottengano in questa maniera, scopriamo che essa non fa altro che rendere in un certo modo necessaria la connessione delle rappresentazioni, sottoponendole a una regola; e che, viceversa, solo mediante il fatto che un certo ordine è necessario nella relazione temporale delle nostre rappresentazioni viene conferito a queste ultime un significato oggettivo.[26]

Questo testo autorizza a leggere la problematica rappresentazione/oggetto di B 234-236 nei termini di una problematica di corrispondenza interno/esterno, ovvero consente di tradurre la prima relazione (rappresentazione/oggetto) nella seconda (interno/esterno), come risulta da un'analisi dei quattro momenti in cui si articola:

1. Abbiamo in noi delle rappresentazioni di cui possiamo anche prendere coscienza, ma che, in quanto tali, rimangono semplici rappresentazioni, ossia determinazioni interne della nostra mente in tale o talaltro rapporto temporale (*Vorstellungen, d. i. innere Bestimmungen unseres Gemüts*);
2. Di qui il problema di come si possano assumere queste rappresentazioni come oggetto, ovvero attribuire ad esse, oltre alla loro realtà soggettiva (*subjektive Realität*), che esse posseggono in quanto modificazioni, una qualche realtà obiettiva (*objektive*);
3. Il problema si pone poiché la relazione ad un'altra rappresentazione non può conferire significato obiettivo ad una rappresentazione, anche se è possibile qualificare come 'oggetto' quest'altra rappresentazione. La ragione è che, se la realtà oggettiva si riduce alla corrispondenza di una rappresentazione con un'altra rappresentazione, riemerge la questione di sapere come quest'altra rappre-

25. B 236/A 191, tr. it., p. 379.
26. B 242-243/A 197, tr. it., p. 387.

sentazione, a sua volta, esca da essa stessa (*aus sich selbst heraus*) e acquisisca, al di là del significato soggettivo che ad essa compete quale atto della nostra mente, un significato oggettivo.

4. Ora, la proprietà che la relazione a un oggetto dà alle nostre rappresentazioni consiste precisamente nel fatto che essa conferisce una certa necessità alla connessione delle rappresentazioni e di sottometterla a una regola.

Il punto decisivo è il seguente: la risposta alla questione di come una rappresentazione possa avere una realtà oggettiva,[27] ossia come si possa attribuire a queste rappresentazioni un oggetto, consiste precisamente nella risposta alla seguente questione, posta dallo stesso Kant: "Come può questa rappresentazione uscire nuovamente *fuori* da se stessa [aus sich selbst *heraus*] e ricevere un significato oggettivo" (B 242, A 197, tr. it., p. 387, modificata, corsivo mio)? Il problema relativo alla realtà oggettiva coincide, dunque, con la questione dell'esteriorità; e ancora: la distinzione tra il soggettivo e l'oggettivo è, a un tempo, la distinzione tra l'interno e l'esterno, perché il problema di consiste nel sapere come una rappresentazione possa uscire da essa stessa (*heraus*). Il nuovo senso di oggetto elaborato nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*, dunque, appare connotato senz'altro dall'istanza dell'esteriorità.

Leggo allora complessivamente il testo in questo modo: la realtà oggettiva – cioè: la proprietà per la quale una rappresentazione può uscire da se stessa – non può risiedere in una rappresentazione; eppure, qual è il criterio che permette di dirci che l'oggetto di questa rappresentazione non è, a sua volta (*wiederum*), una rappresentazione? A tale interrogativo si potrebbe rispondere così: tale criterio risiede nel fatto che, nell'oggetto, le rappresentazioni si presentano non in un qualsivoglia ordine, ma in un ordine strettamente necessario, vale a dire secondo una regola. Non solo l'oggettività, ma anche l'esteriorità coincide dunque, per Kant, con la necessità della connessione tra le rappresentazioni.

Un altro passaggio, ripreso dalla prima edizione, nella sezione *Betrachtung* conclusiva dei paralogismi sull'anima, conferma questa lettura:

> Tutto il problema, che ci si è creati con le proprie mani, in fondo si riduce a questo: come, e per quale motivo le rappresentazioni della nostra sensibilità stiano in connessione fra loro, sicché quelle che chiamiamo intuizioni esterne possano essere rappresentate secondo leggi empiriche come oggetti fuori di noi (*als Gegenstände außer uns*).[28]

27. Che è d'altronde lo scopo delle analogie: "La possibilità dell'esperienza, come una conoscenza in cui ultimamente tutti gli oggetti devono poter esserci dati, se la loro rappresentazione deve avere per noi realtà oggettiva / *Die Möglichkeit der Erfahrung, als einer Erkenntnis, darin uns alle Gegenstände zuletzt müssen gegeben werden können, wenn ihre Vorstellung für uns objektive Realität haben soll*" (B 264/A 217, tr. it., p. 413).

28. A 387, tr. it., p. 1295.

6. CONCLUSIONI

In questo breve articolo ho cercato di argomentare la legittimità, sia dal punto di vista dell'analisi concettuale sia dal punto di vista lessicale, di una lettura del concetto di "cosa fuori di noi" della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* alla luce della nozione di oggetto delineato nella *Seconda analogia dell'esperienza*. È chiaro che, sostenendo questa tesi, ritengo concettualmente prossime e non eterogene le due problematiche della *Seconda analogia* e della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo* – al contrario di quello che è stato sostenuto da autorevoli commentatori. Da questa assimilazione, se corretta, segue una conseguenza rilevante dal punto di vista storico.

Allison separa la problematica della *Deduzione trascendentale* da quella della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, poiché vede nei due casi la risposta a due domande diverse: la prima, una problematica propriamente kantiana (ovvero anti-humeana), la seconda di matrice cartesiana – che Kant non negherebbe ma relegherebbe ad un luogo periferico della *Critica*. Su questa stessa linea, anche Beiser ha messo in guardia contro la legittimità di una lettura, proposta da alcuni autori,[29] della problematica dell'Idealismo alla luce di Hume.[30]

Se quello che ho sostenuto è vero, tuttavia, questa opposizione deve essere attenuata. Al contrario, si potrebbe altresì avanzare, come ipotesi ermeneutica da sottoporre a verifica, la pertinenza della connessione, da un lato, tra la problematica humeana e quella della *Confutazione dell'Idealismo*, e d'altra parte, quella della problematica cartesiana e quella della *Deduzione trascendentale*. Forse un'inchiesta storico-lessicale sulla categoria di 'idealismo' nell'età pre-kantiana – la quale attesti, come ho tentato di mostrare altrove, la diffusione di un uso della categoria in questione in riferimento alla problematica cartesiana ed una dissociazione, almeno parziale di quest'ultima della categoria dello scetticismo – potrebbe aiutare a spiegare le scelte di Kant, che con tale diffusione sono certamente coerenti.[31] Ma questo è, evidentemente, un punto che esula dagli obiettivi di questo studio.

29. Così Kuehn 1983; ma anche Gawlick-Kreimendahl 1987: 189-198, secondo una tesi che sarebbe stata poi sviluppata da Kreimendahl 1990.

30. "However seductive, such a conclusion confronts insurmountable difficulties. These become apparent as soon as we raise one question: why does Kant never refer to Hume as a skeptical or problematic idealist? Remarkably, it is always Descartes and never Hume who serves as his example of such an idealist. Why? The answer is strange but simple: Kant does not think that Hume is a skeptical idealist, or indeed an idealist of any kind" (Beiser 2002: 43). E ancora: "Kant's battle against skeptical idealism takes place not in the Transcendental Deduction but elsewhere in the *Kritik* – in the Aesthetic, in the Dialectic (first edition), or in the final chapters of the Analytic (second edition)– and its target is not Hume but Descartes" (Beiser 2002: 47).

31. Cfr. Agostini (in corso di pubblicazione).

ABBREVIAZIONI

KrV = *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*

Le citazioni dalla *KrV* sono indicate con A/B, seguite dalla paginazione originale delle due edizioni del 1781 e 1787, e con il numero di pagina della traduzione italiana: *Critica della ragion pura*, a cura di C. Esposito, Milano, Bompiani, 2004.

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The Kantian Concept of Exteriority and the *Second Analogy of Experience*

Igor Agostini
Università del Salento/Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici
ORCID: 0000-0003-4197-4912
igor.agostini@unisalento.it

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MAJA SCHEPELMANN

Die *labyrinthische* Methode bei Kant

ABSTRACT: Instead of interpreting the nexus between all of Kant's printed works plus the so called *Opus postumum* as kind of an aggregate the whole of his work should better be regarded as a planned system that serves as a dialogue between the author and his readers. Throughout many of his writings he adresses them directly. Kant's writings are certain argumentative steps inside this dialogue which can be seen as a sceptical teaching method. His main target is to teach self-thinking and to shatter dogmatic certainties. This way of reading Kant's writings all together goes hand in hand with identifying several passages throughout his work as purposely irritating sentences, often also as ironic or satiric speech.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Anstatt den Zusammenhang zwischen allen Druckschriften Kants sowie dem sogenannten *Opus postumum* als Aggregat zu interpretieren, sollte sein Gesamtwerk besser als ein geplantes System verstanden werden, das einen Dialog zwischen dem Autor und seinen Lesern/Leserinnen darstellt. Durchgängig spricht Kant diese direkt an. Seine Schriften bilden bestimmte argumentative Schritte innerhalb dieses Dialogs, der im Ganzen als ein skeptisches Lehrwerk fungiert. Kants Ziel ist: das Selbstdenken der Leser/innen zu lehren und dogmatische Gewissheiten zu erschüttern. Diese Lesart des kantischen Gesamtwerks geht Hand in Hand damit, dass bestimmte Passagen in diesem Werk als absichtlich irritierende Sätze, häufig auch als ironische oder satirische, in jedem Falle: uneigentliche, Rede ausgewiesen werden können.

KEYWORDS: Kant's Whole Work; Planned System; Sceptical Teaching Method; Dialogue with His Readers; Self-thinking

Der folgende Beitrag erörtert Einsichten in den Gesamtzusammenhang des kantischen Druckwerkes sowie in aller Kürze damit verbundene editionspraktische Fragen. Kants Gesamtwerk verstehe ich als eine dramaturgisch geplante und im Sinne skeptischen kritischen Denkens inszenierte Einheit eines Argumentationsvorganges.[1] Die prüfende, diskursive Methode hat im Ganzen die Eigenart, zunächst mit mehr oder weniger unbestimmten Begriffen und Einteilungen aus der Tradition zu operieren, um sie im Verlauf der eigenen Schriften zu bestimmen oder zu präzisieren. Zusätzlich kommen bei Kant, so meine These, inszenierte Fehler und Irritationen zum Einsatz, die als Denkanstöße für die Leser/innen fungieren. Vor allem mit Blick auf den zweiten Verfahrensaspekt wäre Kants Methode somit als Lehrmethode zu verstehen, und diese wird hier in Anlehnung an die bekannte Passage in der zweiten Kritik als ‚labyrinthisch' bezeichnet. Dort heißt es: „so daß die Antinomie der reinen Vernunft [...] in der That die wohlthätigste Verirrung ist, in die die menschliche Vernunft je hat gerathen können", indem sie uns antreibe, „den Schlüssel zu suchen, aus diesem Labyrinthe herauszukommen".[2]

1. Vgl. Schepelmann 2017.
2. KdpV (AA V, 107).

Sowohl die Verwendung unterbestimmter oder fehlerhafter Begriffe aus der Tradition als auch die Inszenierung von Irritationen sind bei Kant generell einem „sceptische[n] Polemisiren“ zuzuordnen, mit dessen Hilfe man dem „Dogmatiker [...] das Concept [...] verrücken und ihn zur Selbsterkenntniß [...] bringen“ könne.[3] Der ‚Dogmatiker‘ als Zielperson wäre ganz allgemein jemand, der unter Abwesenheit von Zweifeln oder Skepsis von unhinterfragt als gültig anerkannten metaphysischen Lehrmeinungen ausgeht, oder jemand, der überliefertem Alltagswissen, allen Arten von Vorurteilen oder bestimmten Glaubenssätzen sein Vertrauen schenkt, wobei diese ebenfalls jeweils nicht hinterfragt werden. Letztlich sind wir demnach wohl alle gemeint, je nach Situation und Kontext in unterschiedlicher Weise.

Jemandem das „Concept zu verrücken und ihn [/sie] zur Selbsterkenntniß zu bringen“ bedeutet jemanden in einer produktiven, fruchtbaren Weise zu verwirren, ihn/sie also metaphorisch gesprochen in ein Labyrinth zu schicken, aus dem er/sie selbst herausfinden muss. Wie kann man nun auf die Idee kommen, dass solche Absichten Kants Werk durchgängig begleiten oder sie sogar als grundsätzliche methodische Eigenart seiner Philosophie ausweisen wollen? Nun, in vielen Schriften spricht Kant den ‚selbstdenkenden Leser‘[4] oder den Leser, der die kantischen Sätze prüft[5] oder zu ihrer Prüfung eingeladen werde,[6] direkt an.[7] Das findet sich mit schöner Regelmäßigkeit in so vielen verschiedenen Schriften durch das Gesamtwerk hindurch, dass es als eine wichtige Eigenart des kantischen Verfahrens im Ganzen gelten muss. Diese Sätze sind mitnichten Einzelfälle und sollten also nicht unterschlagen werden, sondern müssten als solche überhaupt erst einmal genauer untersucht werden.

Meiner Einschätzung nach legt Kant mit seinem Gesamtwerk – das sind alle Druckschriften sowie das sogenannte *Opus postumum* – in einem Zeitraum von rund fünfzig Jahren ein direkt an die Leser/innen adressiertes Programm vor, das in der Lage ist, im Denken zu unterrichten. Schrittweise kann man bei Kant das Selbstdenken und das eigene Denken lernen, indem man vom Autor durch diverse Debatten der Philosophiegeschichte geführt wird und dabei gezeigt bekommt, wie man gute von schlechten Herleitungen unterscheidet, wie man fehlerhafte Schlussfolgerungen erkennt und welches methodische Rüstzeug man benötigt, um Begriffe und begriffliche Einteilungen klug zu bestimmen. Fortwährend wird dabei nicht nur philosophisches Gegenstandswissen, sondern zugleich das eigene Methodenwissen geschult. Denn: Kant inszeniert die Abfolge der Argumentationsschritte in einer dramaturgisch und rhetorisch wohlgeplanten Gesamtkomposition, er integriert Verrätselungen und Irritationen und bedient sich häufig der Ironie, des Spottes und der Satire. Philosophische Rätsel oder Aporien

3. KdrV B 791/A 763.
4. AA IV, 256 (*Prolegomena*).
5. Vgl. z. B. KdrV A XV.
6. AA 1 (neu), 201 (*Theorie des Himmels*, Vorrede).
7. Vgl. AA VIII, 218 (*Ueber eine Entdeckung*); AA IV, 376 (*Prolegomena*); AA II, 351; 366 (*Träume eines Geistersehers*) sowie AA II, 383 (*Gegenden im Raume*), und darüberhinaus viele weitere Stellen in verschiedenen Schriften.

werden in späteren Schriften aufgelöst, so dass es unabdingbar ist, alle Druckschriften als Teil eines systematischen Zusammenhanges zu rezipieren.

Die Idee, dass Kant einer solchen skeptischen Methode folgt, ist bislang für das Gesamtwerk nicht erwogen worden. Dieser Ansatz ist somit neu, und er fußt auf der Präsupposition, dass es eine das Gesamtwerk umfassende und seine Ausführung leitende Planung gab. Diese wird aber vom Autor selbst höchstens indirekt thematisiert.[8] Zweitens liegt meiner Interpretation die Feststellung zugrunde, dass in allen Schriften Kants rhetorische Stilmittel zur Anwendung kommen. Die Präsupposition von einem geplanten Ganzen konnte und kann im Rahmen der seit dem 19. Jahrhundert üblichen Kant-Interpretation nicht einmal im Sinne einer heuristischen, probeweisen Untersuchung in den Blick genommen werden. Primär verdankt sich das der bislang dominierenden Idee, dass man das kantische Schaffen in verschiedene Phasen zerlegen muss, womit sich die feste Überzeugung verbindet, Texte aus verschiedenen dieser Phasen seien weder als miteinander verknüpft noch gar als vom Autor geplant miteinander verbundene Schritte desselben Argumentationsganges zu denken.

Des Weiteren hat man den Autor Kant stets als Musterbeispiel philosophischer Integrität begriffen, weshalb man gemäß dem Denken des 19. Jahrhunderts vollständig ausschloss, dass die Schriften in großem Maße rhetorische Strategien und uneigentliche Rede aufweisen. Zur Erklärung bestimmter Irritationen im Werk und generell um ‚Kant zu verstehen' meinte man überdies, den Ansätzen des Historismus folgend, auf historisch gewonnene Einsichten über sein Leben und Arbeiten zurückgreifen zu müssen. Die zu diesem Zweck benutzten Quellen sind jedoch nicht alle in jeder Hinsicht eindeutig; etliche Briefstellen, in denen Kant von der eigenen Entwicklung im Denken oder von seiner eigenen Senilität und Unzulänglichkeit im Denken spricht, können mit guten Gründen als ironische, uneigentliche Rede ausgelegt werden.[9] Davon ausgehend sind aber dann auch andere Quellen und Dokumente zu hinterfragen. Letztlich ergibt sich: Eine über die Jahrzehnte seines Schaffens hinweg immer wieder auftretende angebliche ‚Denkschwäche' Kants als Basishypothese, mittels der man die Verbindung zwischen den Schriften vornehmlich darin bestehen lässt, dass er eigene Denkfehler verbessern resp. philosophische Ansätze und Inhalte revidieren hat müssen, sollte dringend auf den Prüfstand gestellt werden.

Dem bisher bei der Kant-Interpretation Üblichen steht die hier vorgeschlagene Lesart und der hier vorgeschlagene Untersuchungsansatz unvereinbar gegenüber. Eine das gesamte Werk umfassende Planung und Methode, die man als Lehrmethode mit direkter Ansprache an den Leser auffassen kann, und die Einschätzung, dass spätere Gedankengänge, die von Argumenten in früheren Texten abweichen, mit diesen verbunden sind, und dass beide als Bestandteile eines inszenierten diskursiven Prozesses gelten dürfen – beides wurde wie gesagt bislang als unmöglich aufgefasst. Es ist auch etwas vertrackt: Nur wenn man alle Schriften als Teile einer möglichen argumenta-

8. Vgl. aus der Vorrede der *Wahren Schätzung*, Abschnitt VII: „Ich habe mir die Bahn schon vorgezeichnet die ich halten will. Ich werde meinen Lauf antreten und nichts soll mich hindern ihn fortzusetzen" (AA 1 [neu], 8).

9. Vgl. Schepelmann 2018.

tiven Einheit rezipiert und es zudem nicht ausschließt, dass uneigentliche, also etwa spöttische oder ironische Rede bei Kant zum Einsatz kommt, ergibt sich ein neuer Blickwinkel auf Kants Methode. Ein wichtiger Aspekt dabei ist, dass man jede Passage in ganz gleich welcher kantischen Schrift als philosophisch gleichberechtigt gelten lässt und keinen Satz ignoriert oder für unwichtig erklärt, auch keinerlei Ab- oder Aufwertung gemäß der angeblichen Phasen des kantischen Schaffens mehr vornimmt. Wenn man so vorgeht, ergeben sich bislang in ihrer Reichweite nicht erkannte Zusammenhänge zwischen verschiedenen Schriften sowie bislang nicht erkannte Bezüge auf Texte der philosophischen Tradition. Und nur, wenn man das gesamte Werk als eine argumentative Einheit wahrzunehmen bereit ist, rückt für die Interpretation eine von Kant umfassend geplante und im Verlauf von mehr als 50 Jahren realisierte skeptisch-diskursive Lehrmethode in den Bereich des Möglichen.

Zur Rechtfertigung wird sich keiner der beiden Interpretationsansätze rein auf seine Präsuppositionen berufen können – vielmehr sind dazu (in vorurteilsfreier Lesart) einzig und allein die kantischen Texte zu konsultieren. Bestimmte frühe oder späte Schriften als minderwertig beiseite zu legen und so gut wie gar nicht mehr zu rezipieren kann aber aus meiner Sicht nicht als sinnvoll oder gar gerechtfertigt gelten.

Das Ziel des kantischen Verfahrens wäre gemäß meines Ansatzes, dass Leser/innen im Philosophieren geschult werden sollen; es soll keine fertige Philosophie vermittelt werden. Gedanken und Argumente werden nicht als Ware verstanden, die fertig produziert im Regal liegt und nur noch auf eine bestimmte Weise (z.B. ‚more geometrico') zu präsentieren wäre, wie es teils in metaphysischen Traktaten üblich war. Da Kant sich mit in diesem Sinne dogmatischen Ansätzen häufig spöttisch oder satirisch auseinandersetzt, insbesondere in seinen früheren Schriften, diese rhetorischen Strategien als solche aber bislang nicht erkannt wurden, gilt er allgemein als jemand, der selbst mit einem Bein noch fest in dieser Metaphysiktradition steht. Das wiederum trägt dazu bei, dass seine früheren Schriften ihres angeblich dogmatischen Charakter wegen kaum noch gelesen werden, sondern als ‚vorkritische Schriften' für die meisten nur noch mit Bezug auf die angebliche Denkentwicklung Kants von Interesse sind.

Im Folgenden soll etwas genauer erörtert und versuchsweise nachgewiesen werden, inwiefern die kantische, *labyrinthische* Methode im Gesamtwerk skeptischem Denken und skeptischer Denkvermittlung entspricht.

Ein wichtiger Aspekt in der bekannten programmatischen Formel Kants, Aufklärung sei der „*Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit*",[10] liegt in seinem Hinweis darauf, diese sei *selbstverschuldet*. Trifft das zu, dann folgt daraus, dass wir selbst es sind, die unseren Zustand, unmündig zu sein, ändern können. Und tatsächlich geht Kant davon aus, dass es unsere eigene Schuld und also von uns selbst zu ändern sei, dass wir in einer bestimmten Form der Unmündigkeit leben. Diese besteht ihm zufolge darin, dass wir uns weigerten, selbst zu denken, also selbständig, unabhängig von der Führung durch einen anderen Menschen zu denken. Kant fasst vieles, was mit diesem Thema zu tun hat, in metaphorische Beschreibungen eines Le-

10. AA VIII, 35; vgl. die ganze Schrift (*Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?*) in AA VIII, 33-42.

bens in der Versklavung oder sogar in das Bild eines Nutztiers in der Landwirtschaft, etwa wenn er vom „Joch“ des fremdbestimmten Denkens spricht.[11]

Aber liegt in dem programmatischen Aufruf zur Veränderung, zum Aufbruch aus Verhältnissen der Denk-Versklavung, nicht eine Widersprüchlichkeit? Um zu einem selbstdenkenden Menschen zu werden, muss ich doch, wenigstens für den ersten Schritt, bereits selbst denken können – andernfalls hätte ich ja nicht den Wunsch oder den Willen zu einer Veränderung eines Zustandes der geistigen Unmündigkeit. Wenn ich es aber bereits kann, kann ich mich ja nicht im Zustand des unmündigen Nichtselbstdenkenkönnens befinden bzw. befunden haben.

Nun, das Gespür dafür, dass mein Geist sich in einem Zustand befindet, den andere Menschen, aber nicht ich selbst bestimme, verdankt sich meiner Vernunft als Potentialität, die noch nicht vollumfänglich über Fragen der Selbstbestimmung Bescheid wissen und auch sonst noch nicht viele Gedanken oder gedankliche Leistungen vollbracht haben muss, die aber als Vermögen wesentlicher Teil der Kompetenzen des menschlichen Lebens als solches ist. Es gilt nun, den Willen zu einer Umsetzung dessen, was als die eigene Selbstbestimmung optional angelegt ist, zu wecken. Dieses Aufwecken geht einher damit, dass sich die betreffende Person nicht länger weigert, selbständig zu denken. Wenn sie diese Weigerung also selbstständig aufheben kann – wie macht sie das? Und wenn sie noch nicht selbst denken kann – wie lernt sie es denn dann? Und von wem? Kant bemerkt:

> Es ist also für jeden einzelnen Menschen schwer, sich aus der ihm beinahe zur Natur gewordenen Unmündigkeit herauszuarbeiten. Er hat sie sogar lieb gewonnen und ist vor der Hand wirklich unfähig, sich seines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen, weil man ihm niemals den Versuch davon machen ließ.[12]

Würfe er seine Fußfesseln ab, könnte er „dennoch auch über den schmalesten Graben einen nur unsicheren Sprung thun, weil er zu dergleichen freier Bewegung nicht gewöhnt ist. Daher giebt es nur Wenige, denen es gelungen ist, durch eigene Bearbeitung ihres Geistes sich aus der Unmündigkeit heraus zu wikkeln, und dennoch einen sicheren Gang zu thun“.[13]

Um also zu einem aufgeklärten Menschen zu werden, müssen Schritt für Schritt bestimmte Fähigkeiten kultiviert und gefördert werden. In einer Programmschrift von 1765 fasst Kant das in didaktische Erläuterungen und drückt sich in der üblichen psychologischen Sprache seiner Zeit so aus:

> [...] da der natürliche Fortschritt der menschlichen Erkenntnis dieser ist, daß sich zuerst der Verstand ausbildet, indem er durch Erfahrung zu anschauenden Urtheilen und durch diese zu Begriffen gelangt, daß darauf diese Begriffe in Verhältnis mit ihren Gründen und Folgen durch Vernunft und endlich in einem wohlgeordneten Ganzen vermittelst der Wissenschaft erkannt werden, so wird

11. AA VIII, 36 (*Was ist Aufklärung?*); vgl. auch z.B. AA VI, 105 (*Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*).

12. AA VIII, 36 (*Was ist Aufklärung?*).

13. *Ibid.*, Orthographie nach dem Original.

> die Unterweisung eben denselben Weg zu nehmen haben. Von einem Lehrer wird also erwartet, daß er an seinem Zuhörer erstlich den *verständigen*, denn den *vernünftigen* Mann, und endlich den *Gelehrten* bilde.[14]

Bei einem solchen kultivierenden Lehrverfahren ist laut Kant manches zu beachten, unter anderem sind Maßnahmen zu befolgen, die man schon im *Novum Organum* Francis Bacons[15] nachlesen kann, der mahnt, man habe den Weg von den Beobachtungen der Natur zu bestimmten Schlussfolgerungen sehr genau in kleinste Schritte einzuteilen, damit man nicht zu schnell und überschwänglich zu Deutungen und Theorien gelange, die sich schlussendlich als ungerechtfertigt herausstellen könnten. Kant überträgt dies auf Methoden des Lehrens:

> Die Regel des Verhaltens ist also diese: zuvörderst den Verstand zu zeitigen und seinen Wachsthum zu beschleunigen, indem man ihn in Erfahrungsurtheilen übt und auf dasjenige Achtsam macht, was ihm die verglichene Empfindungen seiner Sinne lehren können. Von diesen Urtheilen oder Begriffen soll er zu den höheren und entlegnern keinen kühnen Schwung unternehmen, sondern dahin durch den natürlichen und gebähnten Fußsteig der niedrigern Begriffe gelangen, die ihn allgemach weiter führen; alles aber derjenigen Verstandesfähigkeit gemäß, welche die vorhergehende Uebung in ihm nothwendig hat hervorbringen müssen, und nicht nach derjenigen, die der Lehrer an sich selbsten wahrnimmt, oder wahrzunehmen glaubt, und die er auch bey seinem Zuhörer fälschlich voraussetzt. Kurz, er soll nicht *Gedanken* sondern *denken* lernen; man soll ihn nicht *tragen* sondern *leiten*, wenn man will, daß er in Zukunft von sich selbsten zu *gehen* geschickt seyn soll.[16]

Eine *unmündige* Person muss das Denken in dieser Weise lernen, anhand von Prozessen, durch die sie von konkreteren allmählich zu abstrakteren Urteilen gelangt. Die demgemäße Methode des Unterrichts nennt Kant die *forschende Methode*, und sie wird „nur bey schon geübterer Vernunft in verschiedenen Stücken *dogmatisch*, d. i. *entschieden*".[17] Die forschende Methode wird in einem späteren Text eingehender erörtert, nämlich in den *Metaphysischen Anfangsgründen der Tugendlehre*.[18] Durch Lernen im Sinne der Vermittlung lehrbuchmäßiger Inhalte erwirbt man Kenntnisse dieser Inhalte. Durch Fragen und Hinterfragen übt man hingegen das Denken so ein, dass man zugleich etwas über sich und über das Denkenlernen lernt.

Dieses Einüben wird in der *Tugendlehre* auf das Kultivieren bestimmter Kräfte bezogen, die der Anlage nach in Menschen vorhanden sind, aber deren Tauglichkeit erst durch Übung und Anwendung deutlich werden kann. An dem Umstand, dass Menschen solche Anlagen haben, orientiert sich die gute alte sokratische, mäieutische oder auch: *erotematische* Methode, bei der „der Lehrer das, was er seine Jünger lehren

14. AA II, 305 (*Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbenjahre 1765-1766*), Orthographie nach dem Original.
15. Bacon 1620: *passim*.
16. AA II, 306 (*Nachricht Vorlesungen*), Orthographie nach dem Original.
17. AA II, 307 (*Nachricht Vorlesungen*), Orthographie nach dem Original.
18. AA VI, 375-494. Vgl. auch im Ganzen dazu: Koch 2003.

will, ihnen abfrägt".[19] Dabei leitet der Lehrer „durch Fragen den Gedankengang seines Lehrjüngers dadurch, daß er die Anlage zu gewissen Begriffen in demselben durch vorgelegte Fälle blos entwickelt, (er ist die Hebamme seiner Gedanken); der Lehrling" aber wird „hiebey inne [...], daß er selbst zu denken vermöge".[20] Aufgrund des in aller Regel – im Falle des Aufweckens aus Zuständen der Unmündigkeit beispielsweise – nicht oder nicht hinreichend ausgebildeten Horizonts des Denkens und Erkennens seitens der Schüler/innen, ist es hier stets die Lehrperson, die die Fragen stellt.

Nun kann man in der Tat viele Stellen in Kants Gesamtwerk heraussuchen, die didaktische Überlegungen zum Gegenstand haben. In der *Logik*[21] werden abschließend Reflexionen dazu vorgelegt, und diese Schrift ist es auch, die den Topos vom ‚Horizont unsrer Erkenntnisse' einführt und den Begriff einteilt in einen logischen, ästhetischen und praktischen Horizont, sowie erörtert, inwiefern er erweiterbar ist und erweitert werden sollte.[22] Abgesehen von den Erläuterungen Kants über das Lernen und Erweitern des eigenen Erkenntnishorizonts im Einzelnen ist aber nun das Beeindruckende, dass das kantische Druckwerk im Ganzen selbst ein solches Lehrverfahren, und zwar *in Anwendung* darstellt. Die Ausführungen der *Tugendlehre* über das Potential menschlichen Denkens und menschlicher Vernunft müssen demnach extrapoliert werden; sie gelten für alle möglichen Fragen des menschlichen Lebens und Denkens.

Kant traut den Leser/innen zu, in einem komplexen Prozess des Durchdenkens mannigfacher philosophischer Positionen fortwährend auch das eigene Denken zu durchdenken. Entscheidend ist dabei nicht ihr Alter, ihr Geschlecht, ihre Herkunft oder ihr gesellschaftlicher Stand, ja, nicht einmal das Zeitalter, in dem sie leben – entscheidend ist ihre Geisteshaltung, die in einer grundsätzlichen Bereitschaft besteht, eigenes und fremdes Denken zu hinterfragen. Eine solche Haltung aber kann Kants Zeitgenossen problemlos mit den Leser/innen von heute vereinen, und darum ist sein Werk zeitlos. Es stellt im Ganzen eine auch heute noch wirkungsvolle Anleitung *Wie lerne ich Philosophieren und Selbstdenken?* dar.

Kant lehrt beides, indem er die Denkvermögen der Leser/innen kultiviert, nachdem er ihr Bewusstsein über ihre eigenen Anlagen geweckt und den Willen, sie kultivieren zu wollen, angestachelt hat. Aber wie genau wird das Aufwecken, Anstacheln und Kultivieren des Denkens bewerkstelligt? Wie motiviert ein Autor die Leser/innen dazu, aus einem Zustand geistiger Abhängigkeit entkommen zu *wollen*, und wie kultiviert er die grundlegenden Fertigkeiten, die für selbständiges Denken vonnöten sind?

Ausgehend von den Begriffen und Denkweisen der philosophischen Tradition führt Kant durch diverse Themen der Metaphysik. Im ersten Drittel des Gesamtwerks stehen Beobachtungen und Schlussfolgerungen im Vordergrund, wie sie seinerzeit innerhalb der Naturphilosophie üblich waren. Damit entspricht die Abfolge der Schriften im Ganzen der oben zitierten Verfahrensempfehlung, zunächst den *Verstand* im

19. AA VI, 478 (*Tugendlehre*).
20. *Ibid.*, Orthographie nach dem Original.
21. AA IX, 1-150 (*Immanuel Kant's Logik. Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen*).
22. AA IX, 40-45.

Zusammenhang der Beobachtung der Natur dahingehend zu schulen, dass er in der Lage ist, bestimmte Phänomene adäquat zu deuten und in eine wenigstens vorläufige Theorie einzuordnen. Erst im Anschluss daran dürfen voraussetzungsreichere Gedanken, für die die *Vernunft* zuständig ist, zum Zuge kommen. Zur Vorbereitung dessen werden in den frühen Texten Methodenfragen bearbeitet, indem sachorientierte und wissenschaftliche Verfahrensweisen von solchen abgegrenzt werden, in denen von ungeklärten Begriffen und im weitesten Sinne unphilosophischen Annahmen ausgegangen und ohne Umschweife zu unwissenschaftlichen Erklärungen fortgeschritten wird.

Kant zielt mit bestimmten rhetorischen und logischen Mitteln zum einen auf das oben kurz skizzierte *Aufwecken* des Bewusstseins eines versklavten Geistes ab, der sich im Moment des Wachwerdens bestimmter Umstände und seines Wunsches, diesen entkommen zu können, bewusst wird, und der Autor zielt mit denselben Mitteln darauf ab, das oben erwähnte *Aktivum* des Denkens und Philosophierens bei den Lesern und Leserinnen zu fördern. Entscheidend ist: Kant wendet eine Methode an und unterrichtet sie zugleich im Verlaufe ihrer Anwendung. Dieser methodologische Witz des kantischen Gesamtwerks konnte im Rahmen der bisher üblichen Kant-Interpretation nicht gesehen werden. Man folgte hinsichtlich der frühen Schriften eher der Hypothese, Kant habe über bestimmte naturphilosophische und mathematische Kenntnisse eben nicht verfügt, er habe in den frühen Texten noch üben müssen und sich erst allmählich zur Form und Qualität seiner kritischen Schriften vorarbeiten können. Aber auch in diesen fänden sich viele Fehler und Unstimmigkeiten, die von den Interpreten nicht als vom Autor absichtlich eingebaute und somit als strategisch zu verstehende Elemente einer letztlich didaktisch-methodischen Textgestaltung angesehen, sondern die als Fehler des Autors selbst aufgefasst wurden.[23]

Was kann man sich nun unter strategisch geplanten Elementen einer didaktisch-methodischen Textgestaltung vorstellen, die a) das Aufwecken des Geistes und Bewusstseins bewirken, die b) dazu motivieren, selbstständig denken lernen zu *wollen*, und die c) das Selbstdenken und das selbständige Philosophieren befördern können?

Nun, es handelt sich dabei um eben die angedeuteten irritierenden, ironischen und satirischen Passagen, um fehlerhafte Schlussfolgerungen, um hochtrabende Behauptungen, die durch nichts gerechtfertigt sind, um anmaßende Ausdrücke, die einen Inhalt versprechen, der gar nicht gerechtfertigt werden kann, und um Bemerkungen, die den einige Seiten zuvor gemachten Bemerkungen direkt widersprechen. Sehr häufig handelt es sich um unterbestimmte Begriffe, die aus anderen philosophischen Theorien oder auch aus einer unhinterfragten alltäglichen Verwendung aufgenommen, zum Teil miteinander kontrastiert und im Sinne einer Problematisierung subtil karikiert, aber im weiteren Verlauf dann profund untersucht und Schritt für Schritt besser und schärfer gefasst und bestimmt werden.

Mit diesen strategischen Elementen einer didaktisch-methodischen Textgestaltung reichert Kant seine Argumentation im Ganzen auf eine Weise an, die die Leser/innen fortwährend herausfordert, weil diese unablässig zur Beurteilung aufgefordert

23. Vgl. für einen Überblick über die Interpretationsgeschichte Schepelmann 2017: vor allem 17-37 und 363-377.

sind: Ist diese oder jene Passage so gemeint oder nicht? Wird hier ein Begriff oder Ausdruck karikiert und somit kritisiert oder ist er so gut gerechtfertigt, dass man für den weiteren Gedankengang auf ihn bauen kann? Lässt sich eine Behauptung rechtfertigen oder ist sie völlig abwegig? Papier ist geduldig, und hinschreiben kann man vieles. Mit unkritischen Köpfen, die alles unhinterfragt glauben und alles brav mitschreiben, was sie irgendwo lesen, ist auch heutigen Gesellschaften nicht gedient und man konnte und kann mit ihnen niemals Aufklärung in die Welt bringen.

Wesentlich für die kantische *labyrinthische* Methode ist, was auch in jedem anderen Prozess des Lernens von zentraler Bedeutung ist, dass die Leser/innen kantischer Schriften sich merken müssen, was in den früheren Schriften verhandelt wurde (auch: wie es verhandelt wurde), und mit welchem Ergebnis. Keinesfalls darf man kantische Texte unabhängig von allen anderen rezipieren, sondern man sollte bei der ersten Schrift anfangen und dem Ganzen Schritt für Schritt folgen; sollten später Fragen aufkommen, muss man gegebenenfalls, wie es auch beim Lernen mit einem handelsüblichen Lehrbuch vorkommt, zurückblättern zu früheren Stellen, die man vielleicht nicht mehr gut genug in Erinnerung hat, um sich so Klarheit zu verschaffen. Sollte man vor einem Rätsel stehen und nicht in der Lage sein, zu beurteilen, ob eine Stelle einen richtigen oder falschen Satz enthält, ob etwas *recte* oder spöttisch gemeint ist, so muss man sich teils gedulden bis zu einer späteren Schrift, in der diese Problematik aufgelöst wird.

Obwohl also die einzelnen Texte Kants jeweils in separate Buchdeckel eingebunden und zu ganz verschiedenen Zeiten veröffentlicht wurden, muss man sie sich alle in einen Gesamt-Buchdeckel eingefasst denken, als Teile eines einzigartigen Lehrwerks der Philosophie, das auf einer skeptischen Methode fußt, und das performativ im Denken und im Selbstdenken unterrichtet.

Vorausgesetzt wird bei den Lernenden Vernunft, ein gesunder Menschenverstand und ein gutes Gedächtnis, basales Wissen in Mathematik, Physik, Geographie und deutscher Sprache. Diese Voraussetzungen erfüllten im 18. Jahrhundert Gelehrte an den Universitäten, Privatgelehrte, einige Theologen und Vertreter des Klerus, der gebildete Adel sowie das gebildete Bürgertum. Das bedeutet, dass der Kreis der durch Kants Werk im Denken unterrichteten Personen nicht deckungsgleich mit dem Kreis der Studenten war, die Kants Vorlesungen hörten (wobei es aber natürlich eine Schnittmenge gab). Beiden wurde durchaus teils derselbe Inhalt vermittelt, aber die Methoden und die Genauigkeit der Arbeit am Begriff sowie die philosophische Bezugnahme auf Theorien Anderer unterschieden sich grundlegend.

Im Folgenden sollen Ausschnitte der Vorgehensweise aus dem Programm des Gesamtwerks vorgestellt werden, anhand denen deutlich werden kann, in welcher Weise Kant zum Selbstdenken auffordert und es zugleich unterrichtet und fördert. Um das zu präsentieren, muss zunächst geklärt werden, worin genau überhaupt der Inhalt eines solchen Unterrichts besteht. Üblicherweise wird beim Lehren ein Gegenstandswissen vermittelt: macht man den Führerschein, lernt man alles Nötige über Verkehrs- und Verhaltensregeln, um für die Fahrpraxis gerüstet zu sein; lernt man eine Sprache, so kann man sie anschließend sprechen und verstehen; lernt man Chemie, weiß man schlussendlich Bescheid über nötige Begriffe, Stoffe, Formeln und Experimente. Im

Allgemeinen wird in solchen Schulungsprozessen weder die Methode des Faches diskutiert noch über die Methode des Lernens als solche reflektiert.

Die Philosophie aber ist diejenige Disziplin, die beides zusammen vermitteln sollte: Gegenstands- und Methodenwissen verschränken sich hier. Wenn nun zudem *Philosophieren* im Sinne des *Selbstdenkens* gelehrt werden soll, muss man den Schüler/innen beibringen, sich nicht mehr von einer Autorität im Denken beeinflussen zu lassen, sondern vielmehr die Beurteilung dessen, was inhaltlich gelehrt wird, selbstständig vornehmen zu können. Die Schulung dieser Selbständigkeit kann ein Lehrbuch im herkömmlichen Sinne nicht leisten.

Geeignet wären vielmehr dialektische Lehrformen, wie sie in der Scholastik üblich waren, sowie philosophische Dialoge, die die Tradition in großer Fülle vorgelegt hat. Zweifel an Inhalten wurden darin auf bestimmte Dialogpartner verteilt, so dass im Verlauf eines scholastischen Streitgesprächs oder im Verlauf der Lektüre eines philosophischen Dialogs jegliches *Für* und *Wider* unmittelbar mit- oder nachvollzogen werden kann. Auch das bedeutet aber noch nicht, dass wirklich das Selbstdenken angeregt und gefördert wird. Dieses geschieht im Grunde erst dann, wenn ein *Zweifel* geweckt und genährt wird. Die *tätige* und beim Leser das eigene Denken in den Fokus rückende Erzeugung eines tiefgreifenden philosophischen Zweifels kann dann am eindrucksvollsten gelingen, wenn man beim Lesen damit konfrontiert wird, dass die eigenen Überzeugungen oder auch das, was man eben noch beim Autor gelernt zu haben meint, durch die Textlektüre erschüttert werden, ohne dass sofort eine Lösung griffbereit ist. In einem solchen Falle gerät man beim Lesen in eine Aporie, eine ausweglose Situation – eben wie in einem Labyrinth; man weiß nicht genau, wie es weitergehen soll, und sieht sich gezwungen, eigene Überlegungen anzustellen, da ja offensichtlich seitens des Autors dieses Textes nicht viel Erhellendes zu erwarten ist, oder jedenfalls keine direkte Lösung angeboten wird.

Einzig unter dieser Voraussetzung ist sichergestellt, dass die Leser/innen nicht in einer gewissen Distanz zum philosophischen Geschehen verbleiben – wie es der Fall wäre, wenn sie etwa anderen Personen, zum Beispiel in philosophischen Dialogen, beim Denken zusehen –, sondern dass sie in eine unmittelbare Auseinandersetzung mit dem eigenen Überlegen und Lernen treten.

Nun findet dies Wecken und Fördern bei Kant im Kontext aller möglichen philosophischen Gegenstandsbereiche statt, und um das jeweils beispielhaft zu erörtern, müsste zunächst über viele Termini informiert und es müssten generell Problemlagen in den einzelnen Theorien erläutert werden. Da das hier aus Gründen des eingeschränkten Platzes nicht gut möglich ist, werde ich mich auf einen Bereich konzentrieren, in dem seit alters her das Denken der Menschen in Abhängigkeit von Autoritäten gehalten wurde: den Bereich der Religion. Daraus wiederum werde ich im wesentlichen nur den Gottesbegriff herausziehen und im Zusammenhang seiner vorwiegend metaphysischen Funktion betrachten. Zu diesem Themenkomplex ist mit Blick auf Kant in den vergangenen zweihundert Jahren Vieles geschrieben worden, allerdings aus Blickwinkeln oder im Rahmen von Fragestellungen, die für das hier Auszuführende nicht entscheidend sind.[24]

24. Vgl. u.a. Wundt 1924; Sala 1990; Langthaler 2014; Gerhardt 2016.

Ich werde im Folgenden zu skizzieren versuchen, dass und wie Kant durch sein gesamtes Werk hindurch an einer philosophisch profunden, mit fortwährend geschärften, geprüften Begriffen vorgenommenen Dekonstruktion dessen arbeitet, was man über Gott und Glauben zu wissen meint, sowie an einer Desavouierung der Reichweite des Zutrauens in die Kompetenz der Religion resp. der Kirche für die Leitung und Ausrichtung des einzelnen Lebens. Da Autoren zu Kants Zeit mit rigiden Einschränkungen ihres Schreibens etwa durch Zensurbehörden zu kämpfen hatten, konnte man bestimmte Erörterungen nicht einfach unverblümt publizieren. Problematisierungen rhetorisch einzukleiden und sie überdies auf verschiedene Schriften zu verteilen, war gerade auch in dieser Hinsicht ein kluges Vorgehen.

Eine wichtige Umwälzung Kants enthält schon die frühe Schrift *Nova dilucidatio*, und sie besagt: nicht die Seinsnotwendigkeit, sondern die Denknotwendigkeit (Möglichkeit) ist das Entscheidende bei dem Wesen, das die Ursache von ‚aller Dinge Möglichkeit' ist. Dieses Wesen wird *Gott* genannt („Vocatur Deus").[25] Seine Denknotwendigkeit aber bestimmt sich letztlich durch die Instanz, die denkt. Die Erörterungen in dieser Schrift stimmen mit den Ausführungen überein, die Kant in seiner das Werk beschließenden, nicht mehr zu Lebzeiten publizierten Schluss-Schrift[26] abfasst; beide rahmen das Projekt einer Neubestimmung der Begriffe von Gott konsonant ein. Um auch noch in späteren Jahren nicht mit dem unseligen Vorwurf des Atheismus konfrontiert zu werden, lag, so meine These, weder die veritable Fertigstellung des *Opus postumum* noch eine erneute Publikation der *Nova dilucidatio* im Interesse Kants.[27]

Die wichtigsten Stationen seiner Arbeit am Gottesbegriff und an damit verknüpften Theorien finden sich in den folgenden Schriften: *Theorie des Himmels, Nova dilucidatio, Optimismus, Deutlichkeit, Beweisgrund, De forma*, die 3 Kritiken, *Theodicee, Religion, Ende aller Dinge, Opus postumum*. Dabei legt der Autor sich verschiedene Ansätze der philosophischen Tradition vor, etwa den Begriff Gottes als ens necessarium, unbewegter Beweger oder causa sui sowie die Theorie, dass Ordnung und Zweckmäßigkeit in der Welt auf einen fürsorgenden Gott verweisen. Nachdem Kant in der *Theorie des Himmels* Gott und die Geometrie sowie Gott und die Naturgesetze miteinander harmonisiert hatte, konfrontiert er in der *Nova dilucidatio* die Idee der Selbstverursachung (causa sui) eines höchsten oder göttlichen Wesens damit, dass eine Verursachung nicht anders zu denken sei, als dass eine Ursache in der Zeit vor ihrer Wirkung vorhergehen müsse, und eine Selbstverursachung vor dem Hintergrund dieser Zeitbedingung also widersprüchlich sei und abzulehnen ist.[28] Kant legt seiner Bearbeitung also einen metaphysisch-logischen, keinen im eigentlichen Sinne religiösen oder biblischen Begriff des höchsten Wesens zum Grunde, und er ist bestimmte theologische Inhalte, die etwa mit den Prädikaten des allmächtigen, allwissenden, allgütigen etc. Wesens verknüpft sind, nicht geneigt, zu übernehmen.

25. AA 1 (neu), 390; vgl. die gesamte Prop. VII.
26. AA XXI, XXII (*Opus postumum*).
27. Vgl. seinen Brief an J. H. Tieftrunk vom 13.10.1797 (AA XII, 207 f., hier: 208).
28. AA 1 (neu), 389 (*Nova dilucidatio*); vgl. die ganze Prop. VI.

1759 erscheint die Schrift *Versuch einiger Betrachtungen über den Optimismus*; Kant fährt hier mit Blick auf das Theodizee-Problem und den Topos der besten aller möglichen Welten fort, Behauptungen über Gott in Frage zu stellen. Er irritiert direkt zu Beginn mit einer Kette logischer Schlüsse, in der nicht alles so lupenrein ist, wie man es erwartet.

> Wenn keine Welt gedacht werden kan über die sich nicht noch eine bessere denken ließe, so hat der höchste Verstand unmöglich die Erkenntniß aller möglichen Welten haben können; Nun ist das letztere falsch, also auch das erstere. Die Richtigkeit des Obersatzes erhellet also: wenn ich es von einer jeden einzelnen Idee, die man sich nur von einer Welt machen mag, sagen kan, daß die Vorstellung einer noch bessern möglich sey, so kan dieses auch von allen Ideen der Welten im göttlichen Verstande gesagt werden; also sind bessere Welten möglich als alle, die so von Gott erkannt werden, und Gott hat nicht von allen möglichen Welten Kenntniß gehabt.[29]

Mehrere Fehler sind hier eingebaut. Zum einen ist es nicht korrekt, dass aus der Falschheit des Consequens die Falschheit des Antezedens folgt; aus ihr folgt nur, dass der Schluss insgesamt problematisch bzw. falsch ist. Dann liegt gleich zweimal der Fehler vor, dass die in den Sätzen der Schlusskette verwendeten Begriffe in mehr als einer Bedeutung genommen werden (quaternio terminorum): zum einen ist von Vorstellungen bzw. Ideen im jeweiligen Verstand die Rede, die man sich machen kann, zum anderen von Erkenntniß bzw. Kenntniß, die man also in gewisser Weise erst gewinnen muss. Außerdem sind einige dieser Vorstellungen auf mögliche Welten bezogen, und da fragt sich doch auch der weniger logisch geübte Leser: wie kann man denn von möglichen Welten eine Erkenntniß haben?

Die zentrale Idee in dem von Kant präsentierten Syllogismus besteht darin, festzustellen, dass zu einer bestimmten Vorstellung immer eine relative denkbar ist, die einen höheren Grad an Vollkommenheit aufweist. Dies sei von Vorstellungen generell möglich, also auch von allen Vorstellungen im göttlichen Verstande. Der Ausdruck „im göttlichen Verstande" wird also hier, witzigerweise, als lokative Bestimmung aufgefasst und nicht – wie sonst in entsprechenden Traktaten allgemein üblich – als besondere logische Auszeichnung einer übergeordneten (göttlichen) Rationalität, der alles zu denken möglich ist.

In dieser Schrift fährt Kant fort, bestimmte in Theologie und Metaphysik übliche resp. selbstverständliche Aussagen über Gott, seinen höchsten Grad an Vollkommenheit und Realität, und darüber, dass Gott die beste Welt erschaffen habe, zu karikieren und so zu problematisieren. Er irritiert damit Lese-Erwartungen und fordert indirekt dazu auf, die gewohnten Begriffe und Ausdrucksweisen zu hinterfragen. Dies geschieht in allen genannten Schriften sowie generell im Werk jeweils, ohne dass es eigens angekündigt wird. Im *Optimismus* kommt es etwas später zu der folgenden, ähnlich holprigen Schlussfolgerung:

29. AA II, 30 (*Optimismus*), Orthographie nach dem Original.

> Es gibt Größen von denen sich keine denken läßt daß nicht eine noch größere könte gedacht werden. Die größeste unter allen Zahlen, die geschwindeste unter allen Bewegungen sind von dieser Art. Selbst der göttliche Verstand denket sie nicht, denn sie sind wie Leibniz anmerkt betrügliche Begriffe (notiones deceptrices), von denen es scheinet daß man etwas durch sie denket, die aber in der That nichts vorstellen.[30]

Auch hier fällt dem mit einem gesunden Menschenverstande ausgestatteten Leser auf, dass die Behauptung, der göttliche Verstand denke solche Größen oder Zahlen nicht, völlig aus der Luft gegriffen und durch nichts zu belegen ist, insbesondere nicht mit der angefügten Leibnizschen Begründung. An dieser Stelle besteht die Funktion einer solchen haltlosen Behauptung sicher auch darin, die Leibnizsche Theorie zu kritisieren.

Es ist in den skizzierten Fällen sowie darüberhinaus in beinahe jeder anderen Schrift Kants unbedingt geboten, so aufmerksam wie möglich zu lesen und stets auf der Hut zu sein, denn jeder Satz, jeder Schluss, jede Passage kann einen Sinn entpuppen, mit dem man bei schnellem, flüchtigen Lesen nicht rechnen würde. Ohne dass Kant seinen Texten eine Art Aufgabenbuch mit Fragestellungen zum Text hinzufügt, die anhalten, diesen tiefer zu durchdenken, seine Inhalte mit verwandten Problemen zu verknüpfen und Ideen für die mögliche Lösung von Problemen zu entwickeln, entsteht ein solches Aufgabenbuch – im besten Falle – in den Köpfen der mitdenkenden bzw. überhaupt zum eigenen Denken angeregten Leser/innen. Selbst wenn die Lektüre einer Schrift kein eindeutiges positives Ergebnis im Sinne einer Lösung der vorgelegten Probleme zeitigt, so ist doch auch das kritische Zerlegen hergebrachter Begriffe, ihrer Begründungen oder der Ansprüche, die in aller Regel mit Begriffen, Erklärungen und Theorien verbunden sind, von großem Nutzen. Es sind erste Schritte auf dem Weg zum Selbstdenkenlernen.

Die skizzierten Passagen sind Kant bislang nicht als lehrmethodisch beabsichtigte Irritationen, sondern als unabsichtlich begangene Fehler ausgelegt worden.

Auch in den Schriften der Werkmitte fährt Kant mit dem didaktischen Programm zur Weckung und Förderung des kritischen Denkens beim Leser fort, allerdings finden sich in der ersten Kritik deutlich seltener irritierende Passagen als in anderen Schriften. Insofern nun gerade der Stil wie auch der philosophische Gehalt dieser ersten Kritik als mustergültig erachtet wurde, wurden folgerichtig andere kantische Schriften demgegenüber als mangelhaft eingeordnet.

Die *Critik der practischen Vernunft* bietet weitere Irritationen in Sachen Gottesbegriff, die daher rühren, dass jeweils die Prämisse zugrunde gelegt wird, Gott sei die notwendige hervorbringende Ursache, von wo aus aber abenteuerliche Schlussfolgerungen aufgestellt werden, weil die Termini in den übrigen Prämissen und Voraussetzungen entweder ungeklärt oder unterbestimmt sind oder ihre Bedeutung bereits in früheren Schriften als mindestens problematisch offengelegt worden war. So sei das Attribut Gottes, dass er „*die Ursache* auch *der Existenz der Substanz*" sei, notwendig für den Begriff Gottes als „Wesen aller Wesen"; gebe man das erste auf, müsse man auch Gottes Vollkommenheit und Allgenugsamkeit aufgeben und damit falle dann

30. AA II, 32 (*Optimismus*), Orthographie nach dem Original.

im Grunde die gesamte Theologie.[31] Der Ausdruck „Existenz der Substanz" spielt mit bestimmten Ansprüchen insbesondere der Leibnizschen Theorie, ist aber als solcher keinesfalls geklärt oder irgendwie hinreichend bestimmt.[32] Er kommt hier zur Anwendung innerhalb der hypothetischen Überlegung, ob unsere Handlungen aus Freiheit, denen praktische Vernunft zugrunde liegt, auf Gott zurückzuführen seien, aber das Ganze entlarvt sich bereits aufgrund der Mangelhaftigkeit der verwendeten Begriffe als unbrauchbar.[33] Die nächste irritierende Feststellung, die im Grunde anschließt an die oben skizzierten Ausführungen in der *Nova dilucidatio*, lautet: Gott könne zwar die Ursache des Daseins der endlichen Dinge sein, aber (als ihre Ursache) nicht „die Ursache der Zeit (oder des Raums) selbst [...] (weil diese als nothwendige Bedingung a priori dem Daseyn der Dinge vorausgesetzt seyn muß), seine Causalität folglich in Ansehung der Existenz dieser Dinge selbst der Zeit nach bedingt seyn muß".[34] Die Richtigkeit dieser Behauptungen hängt natürlich davon ab, was unter „hervorbringender Ursache" verstanden wird. Ganz ohne Frage sei es vorstellbar, dass Gott Raum und Zeit hervorgebracht habe, aber man könne ihn sich dann nicht als eine wirkende Ursache in der Zeit denken. Diese letzte Bedeutung legen wir aber allgemein zugrunde, wenn wir von Verursachen sprechen. Es liegt auf der Hand: Für Gott gelten die Bedingungen des Hier und Jetzt nicht. Dann aber ist es äußerst zweifelhaft, ob man überhaupt etwas über ihn wissen kann – diese Fragen erörtert Kant eingehender in der *Critik der reinen Vernunft* und der *Critik der Urtheilskraft*.

Das Fazit dieser Erörterungen, denen man noch viele weitere zu anderen Passagen im kantischen Gesamtwerk hinzufügen müsste, lautet: dieses Werk ist in der Tat voll von Stellen, die den mitdenkenden Leser zu Ausrufen des Erstaunens und Unverständnisses veranlassen (müssten). Es ist so voll davon, dass man im Zuge einer zusammenhängenden Lektüre nicht mehr auf die Idee kommen kann, es könnte sich um vereinzelte Irrtümer oder Fehler des Autors handeln, deren Korrektur unterblieben ist.

Neben solchen das Denken anregenden und Selbstverständlichkeiten erschütternden Passagen legt Kant Elemente seines eigenen, kritischen, transzendentalphilosophisch begründeten Systems der Metaphysik vor, die weder in doppelbödiger Manier noch sonstwie rhetorisch eingekleidet präsentiert werden oder anders gemeint sein könnten als sie sich auf den ersten Blick lesen. Bei einem dieser Theoriestücke handelt es sich um das im Rahmen der kantischen Metaphysik neben der Denknotwendigkeit und der moralischen Vorbildlichkeit wesentliche Merkmal Gottes: die *Allgenugsamkeit*. Die Allgenugsamkeit wird eingeführt und als Ersatz für die Vorstellung der Vollkommenheit oder der Unendlichkeit Gottes erörtert im *Beweisgrund*.[35]

31. KdpV (AA V, 100 f.).

32. KdrV B587-593/A559-565; auch: AA VIII: 223 f. (*Ueber eine Entdeckung*).

33. Auch im Abschnitt *Das Daseyn Gottes, als ein Postulat der reinen practischen Vernunft* werden in der zweiten Critik Schlussketten präsentiert, die hanebüchen sind, weil mit einem ganz und gar ungeklärten Begriff vom *höchsten Gut* in Verbindung mit der Vorstellung Gottes als oberster hervorbringender Ursache der Natur operiert wird. Siehe KdpV, AA V, 124-132.

34. KdpV (AA V, 101).

35. AA II, 63-163 (*Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseyns Gottes*); Kant führt das Attribut so ein: „Es existirt etwas schlechterdings nothwendig. Dieses ist einig in seinem Wesen, einfach in seiner Substanz, ein Geist nach seiner Natur, ewig in

Zwischen philosophischen Begriffen dieser Art, die Kants eigene Schöpfungen sind, und seiner Prinzipienbegründung und Ausformung der eigenen kritischen Philosophie einerseits und andererseits den verschiedenen Weisen der Karikatur, Diskussion und Zerlegung ungeklärter Begriffe und überzogener semantischer Ansprüche, die tradierte philosophische Begriffe und Einteilungen mit sich bringen, hat man als Leser/in unterscheiden zu lernen; Kant ermöglicht dies durch deutlich unterscheidbare Stilmittel sowie an den entsprechenden Stellen durch Hinweise auf den ‚denkenden Leser' oder auf enthaltene Schwierigkeiten, die ‚jetzt noch nicht' gelöst werden könnten.

Viele der Lehrstücke der Kultivierung des aufgeklärten Denkens sind bei Kant so konzipiert, dass sie im Zusammenhang, in einem größeren Bogen über eine ganze Reihe von Schriften hinweg gelesen und durchdacht werden müssen. So heißt es etwa eingangs der zuletzt genannten Schrift: „die wichtigste aller unserer Erkenntnisse" sei: „Es ist ein Gott".[36] Schritt für Schritt werden in den verschiedensten Schriften Kants aber die Ansprüche, die sich mit solchen Sätzen verbinden, desavouiert. Das Dasein ist gar kein Prädikat, so dass es sich gar nicht um sinnvolle und als solche gegenprüfbare Aussagen handelt, wenn man etwa aussagt „Gott ist". Besser sollte man sich so ausdrücken: etwas existiert, und dem können gerechtfertigter Weise bestimmte Merkmale oder Prädikate zugesprochen werden, die man in der Gesamtheit mit dem Wort „Gott" ausdrückt.[37] Gott ist aber an keinem Orte und selbst weder räumlich noch zeitlich zu denken.[38] Gott kann nicht Gegenstand der Erfahrung sein, eine Aussage über ihn stellt daher kein theoretisches Wissen, keine theoretische Erkenntnis dar.

Das hiermit angesprochene Thema der Gottesbeweise zieht sich als Gegenstand der kritischen Erörterung durch weite Teile des kantischen Gesamtwerks, kann hier aber nicht eingehender erläutert werden. Es ergibt sich im Ganzen bei Kant, nachdem ein vorbildliches und durch noch das allerletzte hypothetische Argument geführtes Prüfverfahren durchlaufen wurde, als Resultat: Man könne lediglich fordern: jeder Mensch müsse sich in moralischer Hinsicht einen Gott machen. Nur der Mensch selbst könne sich moralisch gut machen; das höchste Gut, nach dem zu streben sei, sei die

seiner Dauer, unveränderlich in seiner Beschaffenheit, allgenugsam in Ansehung alles Möglichen und Wirklichen. Es ist ein GOtt" (AA II, 89, Orthographie nach dem Original); in der achten Betrachtung dieser Schrift, des Titels *Von der göttlichen Allgenugsamkeit*, findet sich des Weiteren: „Es ist auch dieser über alles Mögliche und Wirkliche erweiterte Begrif der göttlichen *Allgenugsamkeit* ein viel richtigerer Ausdruck, die gröste Vollkommenheit dieses Wesens zu bezeichnen, als der des *Unendlichen* dessen man sich gemeiniglich bedient. Denn ob man diesen letztern zwar auslegen kan wie man will, so ist er seiner eigentlichen Bedeutung nach doch offenbar mathematisch" (AA II, 154, Orthographie nach dem Original). Vgl. auch *Theorie des Himmels*, AA 1, 192 (neu): hier wird „allgenugsam" gewissermaßen als Steigerung von „mächtig" vorgestellt.

36. AA II, 65.

37. AA II, 73-75.

38. Kant, *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral* (1764), AA II, 297.

Weisheit und nicht Gott.[39] Das synthetisierende Subjekt sei es, das Welt und Gott denke und beides miteinander in Übereinstimmung bringe, indem es sie denkt. Gleichwohl sei es von großem Nutzen, sich die Erhabenheit der Autonomie reiner praktischer Vernunft in Analogie zu der Erhabenheit eines göttlichen Wesens vorzustellen.[40]

Nur einige wenige Stellen aus dem Gesamtwerk Kants wurden betrachtet, um deutlich zu machen, inwiefern der Autor durch Irritationen der Lese-Erwartung und strategisch einkomponierte Fehler oder Schwächen a) des Ausdrucks, b) des Begriffs, c) des Schlusses bei den Leser/innen das dringende Bedürfnis weckt, selbst über diese Stellen nachzudenken. Da dies stets unangekündigt geschieht und die entsprechenden Sätze bei unbedachtem Lesen so wirken können, als handele es sich um Kants eigene Überzeugungen, kann mit Bezug auf diese Passagen mit Fug und Recht von Ironie, besser noch: von argumentativer Ironie gesprochen werden. Der direkte Zusammenhang dieses Stilmittels zu der labyrinthischen Methode ist offensichtlich, denn durch diese Präsentationsform eignen sich die jeweiligen Inhalte und Argumente dazu, die Leser/innen dazu anzuregen, in eine gewisse Distanz zum Text zu treten und mit dem Selbstdenken zu beginnen.

Nun fragt man sich, warum Kant es überhaupt rhetorisch so kompliziert macht. Könnte er das Aufwecken aus einem unmündigen Zustand, den Autoritäten bestimmen, und könnte er den Effekt, dass man sich seines eigenen Zweifelns und Denkens bewusst wird, und könnte er die Kultivierung der Kompetenzen im selbstständigen Denken nicht auch auf einem direkteren Wege herbeiführen? Er hätte ja jeweils in Randbemerkungen erläutern können, wo begriffliche Schwierigkeiten liegen, dass die zugrunde gelegten Ausdrücke hergebrachten Theorien entstammen und klarerweise erst einmal geprüft und hinterfragt werden müssen, bevor sie guten Gewissens im weiteren Gedankengang verwendet werden dürfen. Die philosophischen Probleme hätte er als eine Art Liste anfügen können, die die Leser/innen zu durchdenken haben. Fehlerhafte oder abenteuerliche Syllogismen wie auch unhaltbare Behauptungen hätte er ja hinschreiben, aber ihre logische Beurteilung doch direkt dazu anmerken können. Im Verlaufe solcher oder ähnlicher Verfahren der Textgestaltung hätten doch die Leser/innen ebensogut das selbstständige Denken gelernt, oder nicht?

Nun, zum einen ist es beeindruckender und nachhaltiger, wenn man vom Autor einer Schrift aufs Kreuz gelegt oder in die Irre geführt wurde und darauf hereingefallen ist. Sicherlich prägt sich eine auf solchem Wege gewonnene Einsicht bleibender ein und wird weniger rasch vergessen. Zum zweiten sind aufeinander bezogene Lehrinhalte, etwa in Form eines Textes, zu dem derselbe Autor oder ein weiterer dann Anmerkungen und Beurteilungen ergänzend hinzufügt, auch nichts anderes als dem Status nach herkömmliche Lehrsätze. Diese verbleiben ihren Inhalten und ihrer Methode nach stets in einer Distanz zu den Lernenden; wie auch eine Unterrichtsperson stets in solcher Distanz zu den Schüler/innen bleibt, die sie in aller Regel nur zum Preis des Verlustes ihrer Autorität aufgeben kann.

39. Vgl. *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (AA VI, 168), Anm.; vgl. *Opus postumum*, AA XXI, 83; vgl. AA VII, 119 (*Streit der Facultäten*); AA VIII, 441 (*Vorrede zu Jachmanns Prüfung der Kantischen Religionsphilosophie*).

40. AA XXI, 23 und 37.

Zum dritten, und damit knüpfe ich an das oben Gesagte zu der Wirkungskraft der Erzeugung tätigen Zweifels an, muss es in einem bestimmten Maße die lernende Person selbst sein, die sich im Selbstdenken unterrichtet. Sie kann dies, jedenfalls eine geraume Zeit lang, nur unter der Leitung des Lehrers, bevor sie so darin geschult sein wird, dass ihr das von einer fremden Beeinflussung unabhängige, selbständige Denken zur Gewohnheit wird. Aber zuvor *muss* sie einen Teil dieses Unterrichts im Denkenlernen selbst leisten, und das wird ihr dadurch ermöglicht, dass sie dazu gebracht wird, in Aporien zu geraten und so stark an bestimmten Inhalten zu zweifeln und so weit von einem Lösungsangebot entfernt zu sein, dass sie nicht anders kann, als Zuflucht zu eigenem, nicht von außen beeinflusstem Denken zu nehmen.

Wenn, zum vierten, ein auf diese Weise im aufgeklärten Denken und im selbstständigen Denken geschulter Mensch es nun unternimmt, andere Menschen aufzuklären, wird er aufgrund der Tatsache, dass er im Zuge des Denkenlernens auch Einsicht in die Methodik des frei von Beeinflussung gelehrten Selbstdenkens erhalten hat, seine eigenen Unterrichtsmethoden daran ausrichten. So wäre die kritische Methode des Aufweckens und Kultivierens des selbstständigen Denkens – also im Grunde: die *Aufklärung* – in eine lange Zukunft fortgesetzt weiter nutzbar, womit es gerade verhütet werden könnte, dass Aufklärung nicht mehr als Prozess in zeitloser Aktualität, sondern nur noch als historische Epoche verstanden wird.

Zu den konkreten Elementen einer *labyrinthischen* Methode gehören, wie skizziert, absichtlich in die Texte eingebaute Irritationen oder ‚Fehler', und zwar sowohl in Form fragwürdiger Herleitungen als auch etwa in Form unpassender oder dem eigentlich erwarteten Inhalt widersprechender Begriffe. Bisher wird mit Blick auf bestimmte ‚Fehler' in kantischen Texten nicht die Möglichkeit in Betracht gezogen, dass es sich bei ihnen um Elemente der Methode handeln könnte, um Impulsgeber für das zu schulende Selbstdenken der Leser/innen. Während Kant, wie skizziert, an verschiedenen Stellen in verschiedenen Texten diese selbstdenkenden Leser explizit anspricht, findet sich diese Methode mit Bezug auf das eigene Werk nirgends eigens thematisiert – mit Ausnahme des Textes der *Physischen Geographie* von 1802. Da hier Friedrich Theodor Rink kantische Vorlagen für die Veröffentlichung bearbeitete, es aber keine Quellen und Belege dafür gibt, wie man sich diese Mitarbeit Rinks im Einzelnen vozustellen hat, und da man allgemein von Kants Senilität in den späten Jahren ausgeht, wird diese Schrift im Allgemeinen nicht als direkt aus kantischer Feder stammend und schon gar nicht als aussagekräftig mit Blick auf kantische Methodenideen erachtet.

Es liegt aber auf der Hand, dass gerade auf dem Gebiete der Geographie eine Didaktik, die absichtlich irritiert, als sinnvolle Lehrmethode plausibel ist, da Verifikationen und Falsifikationen, etwa durch einen Blick auf eine Karte, recht einfach vorgenommen werden können, wobei sich gleichzeitig eine durch Irritationen und Rätsel zwangsläufig erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit und Freude am Lernen einstellt.

Zu einer entsprechenden Didaktik würden die die *Physische Geographie* von 1802 einleitenden Worte Rinks passen, der bedauert, dass er selbst der Herausgeber der „in frühern Zeiten […] niedergesetzten Hefte seyn" *müsse* – dieses Bedauern scheint doch in einer Vorrede eines Herausgebers ein wenig fehl am Platz zu sein. Sollten sich aber die direkt daran anschließenden Worte Rinks, dass die von Kant „gewählte und eingeschlagene Methode im Vortrage der physischen Geographie" in der Natur der Sache liege und auch schon Nachahmer gefunden habe,[41] wobei ‚diese Methode' offenkundig etwas sei, das neben der „Reichhaltigkeit, Neuheit, Vollständigkeit und zweckmäßige Anordnung der Materialien" eben den Vortrag selbst ausmache,[42] sollten sich Rinks Worte über ‚diese Methode' also auf den methodisch-didaktischen Einbau absichtlicher Fehler in die Details der Vermittlung beziehen, könnte man durchaus Verständnis für Rinks Bedauern aufbringen – denn in der Tat ist es bei unzureichendem Methodenbewusstsein späterer Leser als sehr wahrscheinlich anzunehmen, dass in diesem Falle alle eingebauten Fehler dem Herausgeber selbst und zwar im Sinne versehentlich im Text enthaltener Unrichtigkeiten angekreidet würden. So kommt denn auch Rink in den abschließenden Sätzen seiner Vorrede auf die Frage zu sprechen, wie mit inhaltlichen Korrekturen umzugehen sei. Da heißt es, es mögen sich kompetente Richter finden, die Verbesserungen zur Vorbereitung einer künftigen Auflage vorlegen wollten, und mit denen er, Rink, „selbst nicht ganz unkundig", eine solche dann bearbeiten könnte.[43]

Nun bliebe der Nachweis der Richtigkeit einer solchen methodologisch bislang nicht in Erwägung gezogenen Hypothese weiteren Untersuchungen vorbehalten. Angedeutet werden kann hier immerhin, dass in der Art und Weise vieler Fehler, vor allem in der *Physischen Geographie* von 1802, eine gewisse Besonderheit festzustellen ist: viele können vergleichsweise rasch, entweder durch einen Blick auf eine Karte oder – und das ist didaktisch gesehen entscheidender – durch die Berücksichtigung des zuvor im Text Gelesenen, als solche identifiziert und verbessert werden. Hat der Autor es geschafft, dass der Leser die Sache überprüft und Korrekturen von Behauptungen selbsttätig vornimmt, ist es ihm zugleich gelungen, zu vertieftem Durchdenken zu motivieren. Außerdem hat er bei den Leserinnen, indirekt, Methodenbewusstsein geschaffen und möglicherweise Freude am Lernen erzeugt. Denn ein Leser, der einen ihm vorgelegten Fehler selbstständig erkannt hat, fühlt sich, wie oben skizziert, in sehr viel stärkerer Weise in den Lernvorgang eingebunden als einer, der nur passiv Lerninhalte aufnimmt. Konsequenterweise sollte aber der in dieser Weise Lehrende im Sinne der Methode nicht permanent auf mögliche Fehler in seinem Vortrag hinweisen, denn die didaktische Idee wäre ja, eine Situation zu schaffen, in der ein Lerninhalt zunächst sowohl richtig als auch falsch sein kann. Eingebaute Fehler überhaupt zu bemerken, soll ja die Leistung der Lernenden sein und nur die ihrige.

Entsprechende Stellen in der *Physischen Geographie*, die Anlass zu korrigierendem Eingreifen geben, bei denen es sich in Wirklichkeit um absichtlich eingebaute Irritationen handeln könnte, wären unter anderem die folgenden:

1. Zum Thema der Längen- und Breitengrade: Längengrade würden auf dem Äquator abgezählt, „und zwar von Westen nach Osten hin".[44] Es sei, so heißt es dann

41. Rink 1802: 153, Orthographie nach dem Original.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Rink 1802: 155.
44. AA IX, 173 (*Physische Geographie* 1802).

weiter, zwar zu wünschen, dass man hierbei nur diese eine Richtung befolge, de facto fänden sich aber, teils weil es bequemer ist, sowohl westliche als auch östliche Längenangaben.[45] Hier wird nun einige Male statt ‚östlich' „westlich" geschrieben (was zum Teil schon Hartenstein in seiner Ausgabe verbessert). Diese angeblichen ‚Fehler' sind von einer so einfach reparierbaren Art, da ja das nötige Werkzeug eingangs der Passage im Text selbst steht, dass man ihren didaktisch absichtlichen Einbau plausibel machen kann.

2. Zu den Meerbusen, Meerstraßen und Meerengen: Es beginnt

a) mit der Lagebeschreibung des kleinen und großen Belts, zweier Meerengen im Norden Europas. Der erste, also der kleine Belt, liege „zwischen der Insel Seeland und Fünen" – das ist korrekt. Zum großen Belt heißt es jedoch (im Original), er finde sich „zwischen Amack und der Halbinsel Jütland".[46] Statt „Amack", der Name einer kleinen Insel südlich von Kopenhagen, muss hier eigentlich ‚Fünen' stehen – ein vermutlich sogar mit dem Schulwissen der damaligen Zeit leicht zu verbessernder ‚Fehler'.

b) In Nordamerika sei (laut Original) eine der berühmtesten Meerstraßen die „Hudsonbay"[47] – gemeint ist hier aber natürlich die ‚Hudsonstraße', denn eine Bay zählt zu den zuvor behandelten Meerbusen, nicht aber zu den Meeresstraßen. Da die ‚Hudsonbay' zuvor unter den Meerbusen aufgelistet wird,[48] ist den Leser/innen somit auch hier in den vorherigen Passagen des Textes das Handwerkszeug zur Verbesserung des ‚Fehlers' an die Hand gegeben.

c) Eine weitere Irritation ist, dass als Land, das gegenüber Labrador, auf der anderen Seite der Hudsonstraße, gelegen ist, im Original „Mainland" statt ‚Baffinland' angegeben ist; Mainland kann aber sinnvoll nur auf die Shetland- oder die Orkneyinseln bezogen werden.

d) Eine der berühmten Meeresstraßen in Südamerika, die Straße le Maire, verläuft zwischen del Fuego (Feuerland) und der Staaten-Insel,[49] wobei im Original steht: „zwischen del Fuego und den Falklands-Inseln". Die letzteren sind viel zu weit vom Festland, also von Feuerland, entfernt, als dass man hier von einer Meerenge sprechen könnte; es ist eine Irritation der mit Hilfe z. B. einer Karte einfach zu reparierenden Sorte.

3. Dass „fast alle Flüsse in Amerika, Europa und dem größesten Theile Asiens sich in das atlantische Meer ergießen",[50] ist nur zum Teil korrekt; statt, wie im Original, „Asiens" muss es hier natürlich ‚Afrikas' heißen, da die Flüsse Asiens nicht in den Atlantik münden.

4. Die berühmte Sandbank „Doggersbank" erstreckt sich in der Nordsee von England bis Jütland;[51] im Original steht statt ‚Jütland' „Gothland"; Gotland aber ist eine schwedische Insel in der Ostsee – ebenfalls ein vermutlich sogar mit dem Schulwissen der damaligen Zeit leicht zu verbessernder ‚Fehler'.

45. *Ibid.*
46. AA IX, 189 (*Physische Geographie* 1802).
47. *Ibid.*
48. AA IX, 188 (*Physische Geographie* 1802).
49. AA IX, 190 (*Physische Geographie* 1802).
50. *Ibid.*
51. AA IX, 191 (*Physische Geographie* 1802).

Wie soll man nun editorisch mit solchen, hier nur mit Blick auf einige exemplarische Fälle skizzierten Elementen einer den tätigen Zweifel anregenden Lehrmethode in Texten umgehen? Lässt man die Irritationen stehen, können sie als veritable Fehler gelesen werden; würde man eingreifen und die Stellen jeweils korrigieren, würde man erstens nicht mehr originalgetreu edieren und zweitens die Methode als solche unkenntlich machen. Die beste Lösung ist: Man belässt den originalen Wortlaut und ordnet diesen in einem zur Edition gehörigen Bericht mit Blick auf die Gesamtzahl solcher Fälle in einer Schrift oder sogar unter Berücksichtigung einer möglichen diesen zugrundeliegenden Lehrmethode ein. Bevor man sich ausschließlich daran orientiert, einen kantischen Text von derartigen ‚Fehlern' zu befreien, könnte geprüft werden, ob nicht die Annahme einer im vorliegenden Beitrag als *labyrinthisch* bezeichneten Methode bei Kant plausibilisiert werden kann, die als derartige Irritationen in den Texten mit sich bringt.

Häufig werden in den zweiten oder späteren Auflagen größerer Schriften bestimmte Stellen, die ‚Fehler' oder Irritationen enthalten, verbessert. Sollte also eine zweite Auflage zur Grundlage eines Editionstextes einer kantischen Schrift gemacht werden, ist natürlich die Verbesserung zu übernehmen; gleichwohl wäre eine einordnende Erörterung der Abweichung des Wortlauts zwischen erster und zweiter Auflage im Bericht des Herausgebers/der Herausgeberin dann jeweils wünschenswert.

Im Ganzen ist somit eine konservative Wiedergabe der Originale geboten. Diese garantiert, dass Eigenarten der kantischen Texte, insbesondere solche, die in vorliegendem Beitrag als zu einer *labyrinthischen* Methode zugehörig vorgestellt wurden, in den Texten erkennbar bleiben können; angebliche ‚Fehler' und Irritationen, auch mögliche Polemik, Ironie und Satire müssen ebenso wie die den Hintergrund kantischer Argumentationen bildenden Theorien der philosophischen Tradition der heutigen Leserschaft erläutert, erklärt und aufgeschlossen werden, und zwar in geeigneter Form in den editorischen Berichten und Sacherläuterungen, die eine Textedition begleiten. Solche Einordnungen sind, zusammen mit der Haltung editorischer Vorsicht und Zurückhaltung im Umgang mit den Originalen des 18. Jahrhunderts, Kennzeichen einer gelungenen, modernen Edition eines philosophischen Klassikers.

ABKÜRZUNGEN

AA = Kant, I. 1900 ff. *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. v. der Königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 Bde., Berlin, De Gruyter.

Der Band 1 der AA liegt bereits als Neuedition (2023) vor: die daraus oben angegebenen Seiten 8, 192, 201, 389 und 390 entsprechen den Seiten 10, 223, 234, 394 und 395 in der bisherigen AA. Im Falle der KdpV sind die Seitenzahlen mit denen der bisherigen AA identisch.

Wo es erheblich ist, wird die Abkürzung AA mit der Abkürzung des besonderen Werks in AA ersetzt:

KdrV = *Critik der reinen Vernunft* (A/B: erste und zweite Auflage), Seitenangaben nach dem Original.

KdpV = *Critik der praktischen Vernunft*, in AA V.

Soweit möglich, werden stets die originalen Wortlaute und Schreibweisen kantischer Texte wiedergegeben.

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Kant's *Labyrinthine* Method

Maja Schepelmann
Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften
ORCID: 0009-0002-5601-8755
maja.schepelmann@gmx.de

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RUDOLF MEER

Wie physiologisch ist Kants kritische Philosophie? Annäherungen an ein schwieriges Verhältnis

ABSTRACT: The concept 'physiology' appears in Kant's writings in a variety of usages. Thereby, the central distinction is made between 'rational' and 'empirical physiology'. If the former represents a central and architecturally localizable doctrine of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the latter forms an important concept of 'empirical natural research'. Despite a multitude of detailed investigations, it is astonishing that the concept of physiology has remained underexposed in its systematic function and different usages. This article analyses the concept starting from the *Critique of Pure Reason* and attempts to reconstruct systematically its comprehensive function. It is argued that the concept of physiology covers the transcendental and critical as well as the empirical and historical domain of Kant's thinking. Consequently, the central distinctions (such as natural history / rational natural science, empirical / transcendental apperception, etc.) can be reconstructed starting from this concept. Not merely the *Critique of Pure Reason* is consequently 'physiological', but all of Kant's critical thinking – albeit in its specificity often misunderstood.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Der Begriff ‚Physiologie' tritt bei Kant in einer Vielzahl von Verwendungsweisen auf, insbesondere aber als ‚rationale' und ‚empirische Physiologie'. Stellt die erste ein zentrales architektonisch lokalisierbares Lehrstück der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* dar, bildet zweitere ein wichtiges Konzept der empirischen Naturforschung. Erstaunlich ist dabei, dass – trotz einer Vielzahl von Detailuntersuchungen – der Begriff der Physiologie in seiner systematischen Funktion und seinen vielseitigen Ausprägungen bisher unterbelichtet geblieben ist. Der vorliegende Beitrag nähert sich dem Begriff ausgehend von der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* an und versucht, dessen umfassende Funktion systematisch zu rekonstruieren. Dabei wird argumentiert, dass durch die Breite des Physiologie-Begriffes sowohl der transzendentale und kritische als auch der empirische und historische Bereich von Kants Denken gedeckt wird und sich folglich die zentralen Distinktionen (wie Naturgeschichte / rationale Naturwissenschaft, empirische / transzendentale Apperzeption etc.) von ihm ausgehend rekonstruieren lassen. Nicht nur die *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* ist folglich ‚physiologisch', sondern das gesamte kritische Denken Kants – allerdings in einer seiner Spezifizität oft missverstandenen Weise.

KEYWORDS: *Critique of Pure Reason*; Physiology; Anthropology; Psychology; Natural History

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1. EINLEITUNG

In Kants Druckschriften kommt der Begriff ‚Physiologie' trotz seiner systematisch zentralen Stellung nur vereinzelt vor. In der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* findet er sich 12-mal nominal gebraucht und 3-mal adjektivisch.[1] Erstaunlicherweise ist die Bezeichnung in der gesamten vorkritischen Phase kein einziges Mal in Kants Texten nachweisbar. Darüber hinaus tritt der Begriff proportional oft in den Anthropologievorlesungen (von 1772/1773 bis 1795/1796[2]) und der *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*[3] auf. Gehäuft findet er sich zudem im handschriftlichen Nachlass[4] und in den unpublizierten Konvoluten des sogenannten *Opus postumum*.[5]

Physiologie wird bei Kant dabei weitgehend übereinstimmend als Begriff für *Physis/Natur* oder *Körper* verwendet. Kant bezieht sich als etymologischen Ursprung auf das Griechische φύσις (*phýsis*), allerdings mit Latein *natura* (Körper) als Gebrauchssprache. Trotz dieser Übereinstimmung in der Definition findet sich eine Vielzahl von Verwendungsweisen gekennzeichnet durch spezifische Adjektive (wie reine, transzendentale, immanente etc.) bzw. einer Adjektivierung von Physiologie. All diese Differenzierungen, so die These dieses Beitrags, lassen sich auf eine Unterscheidung in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* zurückführen – jener von „Physiologie reiner Vernunft"[6] und „Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes".[7]

Mit Blick auf die Forschung ist es erstaunlich, dass es zwar eine Vielzahl von Einzeluntersuchungen gibt, der Begriff in seiner grundlegenden Bedeutung aber weitgehend unterbelichtet geblieben ist. So gibt es im Anschluss an Kant einige wenige Denktraditionen, die Aspekte von Kants physiologischer Perspektive aufgegriffen haben, wie etwa der sogenannte physiologisch ausgerichtete Neukantianismus, insbesondere bei Hermann von Helmholtz und Friedrich Albert Lange, aber auch der kritische Realismus rund um Alois Riehl, Oswald Külpe etc.[8] Diese Traditionen bleiben aber eher lose auf Kant bezogen und selektiv bezugnehmend. Im *Kant-Lexikon* (2015) kommt der Begriff ‚Physiologie' zwar vor, wird dort aber nur in etwas mehr als einer Spalte expliziert.[9] Im *Cambridge Kant Lexicon* (2021) findet sich kein Lemma zur Physiologie, der Begriff wird allerdings in den Beiträgen zur Kosmologie,[10] Naturgeschichte[11] und

1. Siehe u.a. auch Prol, AA IV, 306, 308, 325; MAdN, AA IV, 484; KU, AA V, 277; MS, AA VI, 378; SF, AA VII, 102; ÜGTP, AA VIII, 181.
2. Zu den Vorlesungsmitschriften von Kants Schülern siehe die Einleitung von AA XXV.
3. ApH, AA VII, 119, 166, 176, 214.
4. HN, AA XVIII, 9, 191, 197, 542 etc.
5. OP, AA XXI, 57, 69, 99, 172; OP, AA XXII, 254 etc.
6. KdrV, A 845/B 873.
7. KdrV, A IX, A 86-87/B 118-119.
8. Motta 2023.
9. Naragon 2015: 1792. Erwähnung findet der Begriff darüber hinaus auch im Eintrag ‚Metaphysik'.
10. Höffe 2021: 229.
11. Sturm 2021: 219.

Metaphysik[12] mitthematisiert. Einschlägige Forschungsbeiträge finden sich hauptsächlich zu Fragen der Differenzierung von physiologischer und pragmatischer Anthropologie[13] sowie des Zusammenhangs zur empirischen Psychologie (der Wolff-Schule) und der physiologischen bzw. medizinischen Anthropologie (Ernst Platners).[14] Die im Folgenden untersuchte Differenzierung von ‚Physiologie reiner Vernunft' und ‚Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes' setzt hingegen bereits an einer geltungstheoretisch fundamentaleren Stelle an – jener der *Transzendentalen Methodenlehre* der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Ihre Marginalisierung im Rahmen der Forschung ist vor allem unter der Voraussetzung erstaunlich, dass mehr als die Hälfte der gesamten *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* unter ‚Physiologie reiner Vernunft' firmiert. Von dort ausgehend hat sie eine wichtige Bedeutung für Kants Metaphysik der Natur. Zudem hat Kant nirgends explizit die Geltung empirischer Physiologie bestritten, auch wenn sie für seine eigene pragmatische Anthropologie irrelevant ist. Es stellt sich folglich nicht die Frage, ob Kants Denken physiologisch ist, sondern nur in welchem spezifischen Sinne.

2. BINNENDIFFERENZIERUNG DER PHYSIOLOGIE

Kant differenziert in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* die „Physiologie reiner Vernunft"[15] von der „Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes".[16] Diese Differenzierung der *Transzendentalen Methodenlehre* lässt sich wie folgt skizzieren:

Kritische Metaphysik						
Transzendentalphilosophie		**Physiologie der reinen Vernunft** (A 845–847/B 873–875)				**Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes** (A IX, A 86–87/B 118–119)
Ontologie		Spezielle Metaphysik				
		Rationale Physiologie				Empirische Physiologie
System aller Verstandesbegriffe und Grundsätze, sofern sie auf Gegenstände bezogen sind		Transzendente Physiologie		Immanente Physiologie (rationale Physiologie)		Empirisch-psychologische Genese der Begriffe
		Mutmaßliche Erkenntnis erfahrungstranszendenter Gegenstände		Vernünftige Erkenntnis von denkenden und körperlichen Wesen, sofern diese empirisch gegeben sind		
Begriffe	Anschauung	Welt	Gott	Rationale Psychologie	Rationale Physik	
		Rationale Kosmologie	Rationale Theologie	Gegenstände denkender Natur	Gegenstände körperlicher Natur	

Abbildung 1

12. Fugate 2021: 297.
13. Wood 1999: 196-197; Wood 2003: 39-46; Kim 1994: 95; Zammito 2001: 298; Sturm 2008: 495-505.
14. Sturm 2008: 495-505; Kim 1994: 95; Olsen 2016: 77-84.
15. KdrV, A 845/B 873.
16. KdrV, A 86-87/B 118-119.

‚Physiologie reiner Vernunft' ist neben der Transzendentalphilosophie ein essenzieller Teil der in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* konzipierten ‚kritischen Metaphysik'.[17] Diese bietet eine ‚Propädeutik' einer Physiologie der Vernunft. In Abgrenzung davon spricht Kant von der „Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes"[18] und versteht darunter eine ‚empirische Physiologie'. An der Schnittstelle von Physiologie reiner Vernunft und Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes findet sich folglich auch die für die *Metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* zentrale Unterscheidung zwischen ‚rationaler Naturlehre' und ‚Naturgeschichte' sowie die daran geknüpfte Differenzierung zwischen ‚eigentlicher' (Physik) und ‚uneigentlicher' Naturwissenschaft (Psychologie sowie Chemie).[19]

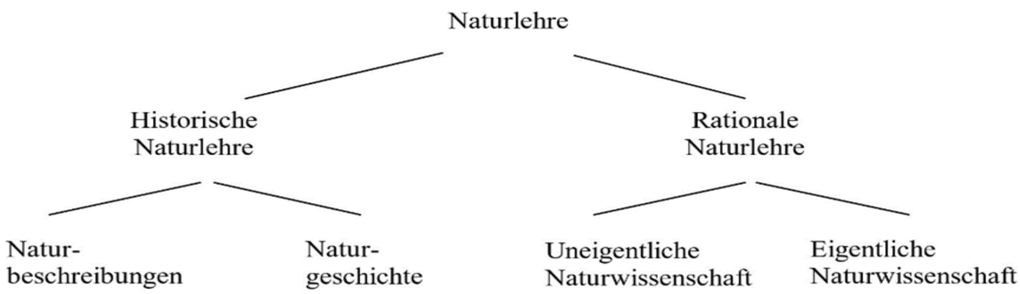

Abbildung 2

Neben dieser positiven Bedeutung von Physiologie im Rahmen der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* findet sich aber auch eine kritische Distanzierung von Lockes empirischer Physiologie. Diese macht deutlich, dass Kant den Begriff auch in Abgrenzung zum eigenen kritischen Geschäft verwendet:[20] Im Verhältnis dazu ist die *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* gerade nicht als ‚physiologisch' zu verstehen.[21] Dieser augenscheinliche Widerspruch im Begriff ‚Physiologie' lässt sich mit der Begriffsdifferenzierung der *Transzendentalen Methodenlehre* und der dort entwickelten Verwendungsweise auflösen. Kant gewinnt dort ein Konzept, das sowohl im transzendental-kritischen als auch empirisch-historischen Bereich seines Denkens Anwendung findet.

17. KdrV, A 845/B 873.
18. KdrV, A 86-87/B 118-119.
19. MAdN, AA IV, 471.
20. Sturm 2009: Kap. 5.
21. Darüber hinaus findet sich eine Vielzahl verwandter Stichwörter in unterschiedlichen Schriften, wie physische Geografie, physikotheologische Gottesbeweise, Physiognomie.

3. PHYSIOLOGIE REINER VERNUNFT

‚Physiologie reiner Vernunft' übernimmt in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* den Platz der ‚allgemeinen' oder ‚speziellen Metaphysik'[22] im Gegensatz zur Transzendentalphilosophie, die anstelle der ‚Ontologie'[23] ausgeführt wird. Betrachtet letztere nur „den Verstand, und Vernunft selbst in einem System aller Begriffe und Grundsätze, die sich auf Gegenstände überhaupt beziehen, ohne Objekte anzunehmen, die gegeben wären",[24] so betrachtet erstere die „Natur, d. i. den Inbegriff gegebener Gegenstände [...] und ist also Physiologie (obgleich nur rationalis)".[25] ‚Rationale Physiologie' umfasst alle gegebenen Gegenstände, sie „mögen nun den Sinnen, oder, wenn man will, einer anderen Art von Anschauung gegeben sein".[26] Sie umfasst folglich sowohl mutmaßliche Erkenntnis erfahrungstranszendenter Gegenstände als auch die vernünftige Erkenntnis von denkenden und körperlichen Wesen und differenziert sich in eine transzendente und immanente Physiologie.

3.1 Transzendente Physiologie

‚Transzendente Physiologie' basiert auf einem ‚hyperphysischen Gebrauch der Vernunft'. Dabei richtet sie sich auf „diejenige Verknüpfung der Gegenstände der Erfahrung, welche alle Erfahrung übersteigt".[27] Unterschieden wird diese zweifach: eine innere Verknüpfung, wodurch sie „Physiologie der gesamten Natur" oder „transzendentale Welterkenntnis"[28] ist;[29] und eine äußere Verknüpfung, wodurch sie den Zusammenhang der gesamten Natur mit einem „Wesen über der Natur" herstellt und „transzendentale Gotteserkenntnis"[30] ist.

Zentrale Elemente von Christian Wolffs und Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Metaphysik sind damit in Kants Konzeption eines ‚Systems der Metaphysik' integriert. Er wendet diese allerdings regulativ und erläutert die kritische Verwendungsweise von Ideen im Anhang zur *Transzendentalen Dialektik* abermals anhand der Physiologie, genauer an der „Physiologie der Ärzte".[31]

22. Die Differenzierung zwischen allgemeiner und spezieller Metaphysik (metaphysica generalis/specialis) findet sich bei Kant in den Reflexionen und Nachschriften seiner Vorlesungen (Refl, AA XVIII, 8-11; HN, AA XXVIII, 617, 622, 656) und nur der Sache nach in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (AA IV).

23. „[D]er stolze Name einer Ontologie, welche sich anmaßt, von den Dingen überhaupt synthetische Erkenntnisse a priori in einer systematischen Doktrin zu geben (z.E. den Grundsatz der Kausalität), muß dem bescheidenen einer bloßen Analytik des reinen Verstandes Platz machen" (KdrV, A 247/B 303).

24. KdrV, A 845/B 873.

25. *Ibid*.

26. *Ibid*.

27. *Ibid*.

28. KdrV, A 846/B 874.

29. Die rationale Kosmologie schließt hier die rationale Psychologie mit ein.

30. KdrV, A 846/B 874.

31. KdrV, A 688/B 716.

> Denn obzwar ein Zergliederer eines Irrthumes überführt werden kann, wenn er irgend ein Gliedmaß eines thierischen Körpers auf einen Zweck bezieht, von welchem man deutlich zeigen kann, daß er daraus nicht erfolge: so ist es doch gänzlich unmöglich, in einem Falle zu beweisen, daß eine Natureinrichtung, es mag sein welche es wolle, ganz und gar keinen Zweck habe.[32]

Kant entwirft hier eine Spannung zwischen einem falschen Vernunftgebrauch („ignava ratio"/„perversa ratio"[33]), bei dem einzelne Fälle bzw. Teile auf einen gegebenen Zweck bezogen werden, und einem kritischen Gebrauch der Vernunft, bei dem die Einheit als „heuristische Maxime"[34] bzw. „focus imaginarius"[35] fungiert. Deren gemeinsame transzendentallogische Struktur findet sich in der Einleitung und dem ersten Buch der *Transzendentalen Dialektik*.[36] Kant weist allerdings den falschen Vernunftgebrauch im Rahmen der drei Hauptstücke des zweiten Buches der *Transzendentalen Dialektik* zurück. Um den regulativen Vernunftgebrauch im Rahmen des Anhangs zur *Transzendentalen Dialektik* greifbar zu machen, rekurriert er expressis verbis auf eine scholastische Terminologie, jene von „nexus effectivus" und „nexus finalis".[37] Angewandt auf das Beispiel heißt dies: Die Physiologie (der Ärzte) erweitert „ihre sehr eingeschränkte empirische Kenntniß von den Zwecken des Gliederbaues eines organischen Körpers" vermittelst eines „Grundsatz[es], welchen bloß reine Vernunft eingab".[38] Diesem Grundsatz der Vernunft zufolge nimmt man „ganz dreist und zugleich mit aller verständigen Einstimmung"[39] an, dass alles an einem „Thiere seinen Nutzen und gute Absicht"[40] habe.[41] Würde diese Voraussetzung konstitutiv gebraucht werden – als nexus effectivus –, würde sie alle mögliche Erfahrung weit überschreiten und ‚vernünftelnde Begriffe' erzeugen. In ihrem regulativen Gebrauch hingegen ist diese Voraussetzung der Physiologie „die Schule und selbst die Grundlage der Möglichkeit des größten Gebrauchs der Menschenvernunft",[42] und damit Teil der ‚positiven Seite' des kritischen Geschäfts.

32. *Ibid.*
33. KdrV, A 689/B 717.
34. KdrV, A 666/B 694.
35. KdrV, A 644/B 672.
36. Meer 2018; Willaschek 2018.
37. KdrV, A 686/B 715; siehe auch: KU, AA V, 372, 387. Ein Organismus entzieht sich der mechanischen Erklärung, da seine Teile sowohl Ursachen als auch Wirkungen des Organismus als Ganzes sind. Er lässt sich daher nicht durch die in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* und den *Metaphysischen Anfangsgründen der Naturwissenschaft* aufgestellten mechanischen Prinzipien erfassen (siehe u. a. Ginsborg 2004: 231-258).
38. KdrV, A 687/B 716.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. Anatomie ist in diesem Sinne rationale Naturlehre, sie folgt teleologischen Gesetzmäßigkeiten. Sie ist aber keine eigentliche rationale Wissenschaft, da sie sich nicht auf mathematisierbare Verhältnisse ihrer Teile berufen kann (Fisher 2007: 101-121; siehe dazu Olsen 2016: 83).
42. KdrV, A 694/B 722.

3.2 Immanente Physiologie

‚Immanente Physiologie' basiert im Gegensatz zur transzendenten auf dem ‚physischen Gebrauch der Vernunft'. Sie richtet sich auf die „Natur, so weit als ihre Erkenntnis in der Erfahrung (in concreto) kann angewendet werden".[43] ‚Natur' wird dabei in zweifacher Hinsicht genommen: erstens in formaler Bedeutung, wenn „das erste, innere Princip alles dessen" betrachtet wird, „was zum Dasein eines Dinges gehört", und zweitens in materialer Bedeutung als „Inbegriff aller Dinge, so fern sie Gegenstände unserer Sinne"[44] bilden. Betrachtet werden die Gegenstände, wie sie den Sinnen gegeben sind, allerdings unter den „Bedingungen a priori, unter denen sie uns überhaupt gegeben"[45] werden. Letzteres macht die Betrachtung dieser Gegenstände allererst zur „eigentlichen Wissenschaft"[46] im strengen kantischen Sinne: Eine ‚Wissenschaft' ist die immanente Physiologie, da sie Erkenntnis der Prinzipien der Notwendigkeit des zu diesem Dasein in Raum und Zeit Gehörigen liefert.[47]

Diese Prinzipien sind metaphysische Prinzipien a priori: aus diesem Grund setzt „eigentliche Naturwissenschaft Metaphysik der Natur voraus".[48] ‚Metaphysik der Natur' wiederum ist eine begriffliche Neuprägung Kants, die als „Metaphysik der speculativen Vernunft […] nur das, was man im engeren Verstande Metaphysik zu nennen pflegt",[49] bezeichnet. Neu daran ist, dass auch die Moralphilosophie – als ‚Metaphysik der Sitten' – als gleichberechtigtes Gegenstück angesehen wird. In ersterer wird „alles, sofern es ist", und in zweiterer „das, was sein soll, aus reinen Begriffen a priori"[50] erwogen.[51] Der Metaphysik der Natur stellt Kant die „Metaphysik der körperlichen Natur"[52] (bzw. „metaphysisches System […] der körperlichen Natur") gegenüber, die in den *Metaphysischen Anfangsgründen der Naturwissenschaft* elaboriert wird.[53] Die dort betrachteten Gegenstände wiederum sind zweifach: jene der „äußeren Sinne, mithin der Inbegriff derselben, die körperliche Natur",[54] und jene des „inneren Sinnes, die Seele, und, nach den Grundbegriffen derselben überhaupt, die denkende Natur".[55] Die „rationale Physik", wie Kant sie in den *Metaphysischen Anfangsgründen der Naturwissenschaft* expressis verbis ausführt, hat die ‚körperliche Natur' zum Gegenstand.[56] Die

43. KdrV, A 845/B 873.
44. MAdN, AA IV, 467.
45. KdrV, A 847/B 874.
46. MAdN, AA IV, 470.
47. Baum 2015: 1541.
48. MAdN, AA IV, 469.
49. KdrV, A 842/B 870.
50. KdrV, A 845/B 873.
51. HN, AA XX, 293.
52. MAdN, AA IV, 473.
53. Zum Übergang von KrV und MAdN siehe Van den Berg 2011: 11-16; Meer 2020: 59-160.
54. KdrV, A 847/B 874.
55. *Ibid*.
56. Siehe dazu auch die Verwendung im *Opus postumum* (Howard 2023: 39-41).

„rationale Psychologie“[57] hingegen hat die ‚denkenden Natur‘ zum Gegenstand – von ihr behauptet Kant allerdings 1786, dass es metaphysische Anfangsgründe einer empirischen Seelenlehre nicht geben kann.[58] Er tradiert damit einen Topos weiter, der sich bereits in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* findet:

> Wenn wir die Seelenlehre als die Physiologie des inneren Sinnes mit der Körperlehre als einer Physiologie der Gegenstände äußerer Sinne vergleichen: so finden wir außer dem, daß in beiden vieles empirisch erkannt werden kann, doch diesen merkwürdigen Unterschied, daß in der letzteren Wissenschaft doch vieles a priori aus dem bloßen Begriffe eines ausgedehnten undurchdringlichen Wesens, in der ersteren aber aus dem Begriffe eines denkenden Wesens gar nichts a priori synthetisch erkannt werden kann.[59]

Trotz dieser Unterschiede im konkreten Status der jeweiligen Wissenschaften bildet die immanente rationale Physiologie eine Schnittstelle bzw. Überkategorie von Psychologie und Physik: die „Seelenlehre als die Physiologie des inneren Sinns“; die „Körperlehre als eine Physiologie der Gegenstände äußerer Sinne“.[60]

4. PHYSIOLOGIE DES MENSCHLICHEN VERSTANDES

Von der ‚Physiologie reiner Vernunft‘ unterscheidet Kant die ‚Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes‘ und damit die empirische Physiologie. Kant versteht unter ‚Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes‘ die empirisch-psychologische Genese von Begriffen. Dies habe „ohne Zweifel großen Nutzen, und man hat es dem berühmten Locke zu verdanken, daß er dazu zuerst den Weg eröffnet hat“.[61] Durch sie werde eine „Erklärung des Besitzes einer reinen Erkenntnis“ und damit eine Antwort auf die *questio facti* Frage gegeben. Die Metaphysik – ‚Königin der Wissenschaften‘[62] – werde aber fälschlicherweise genealogisch „aus dem Pöbel der gemeinen Erfahrung“[63] abgeleitet.

> In neueren Zeiten schien es zwar einmal, als sollte allen [...] Streitigkeiten [in der Metaphysik] durch eine gewisse Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes (von dem berühmten Locke) ein Ende gemacht [...] werden; es fand sich aber, daß, [...] weil die[] Genealogie [aus dem Pöbel der gemeinen Erfahrung] [...] [jener vorgegebenen Königin, der Metaphysik,] in der Tat fälschlich angedichtet war, sie ihre

57. Die rationale Psychologie wird hier nicht im Sinne der *Paralogismen der reinen Vernunft* verstanden, sondern als Disziplin, die die Prinzipien a priori der empirischen Erkenntnis der denkenden Natur enthält.

58. MAdN, AA IV, 471; KdrV, A 848/B 876, A 347/B 405. Dies ist ein vieldiskutierter Aspekt, siehe u.a.: Hatfield 1998: 423-428; Nayak & Sotnak 1995: 133-151; Sturm 2008: 495-505.

59. KdrV, A 381.

60. KdrV, A 381; siehe auch: HN, AA XXVIII, 221-222.

61. KdrV, A 86/B 119.

62. KdrV, A VIII.

63. KdrV, A IX.

> Ansprüche noch immer behauptete, wodurch alles wiederum in den veralteten wurmstichigen Dogmatism und daraus in die Geringschätzung verfiel, daraus man die Wissenschaft hatte ziehen wollen.[64]

Die empirische Physiologie trägt nach Kant nicht zur Geltung von Begriffen bei. In Ansehung der reinen Begriffe a priori handelt es sich um „nichts als eitle Versuche",[65] die daher auch nicht Teil des kritischen Geschäfts sind.

Lockes Versuche werden von Kant als ein Projekt der Zergliederung des menschlichen Verstandes[66] gesehen. Dieser gehe dabei vor wie ein Anatom: Er seziert die Seele, um zu zeigen, wie ihre Teile und ihre Struktur zu ihrem Verhalten beitragen. Er macht eine physiologische Ableitung der Begriffe aus Sinneseindrücken.[67] Kant schließt also bereits 1781 die empirische Physiologie aus seinem kritischen Geschäft aus und distanziert sich dezidiert von Lockes empirischer Physiologie. Diese bilde nur eine Zergliederungskunst (oder Anatomie). Gleichzeitig bestreitet er aber – im Gegensatz zur empirischen Psychologie – an keiner Stelle deren prinzipielle Wissenschaftlichkeit bzw. Potential zur strengen Wissenschaft.

Darüber hinaus bleibt eine Analogie zum kritischen Geschäft stets aufrecht: Wie Locke die menschliche Seele zergliedert, habe die Transzendentalphilosophie Begriffe zu ihrem Gegenstand.[68] Diese Unterscheidung zwischen der ‚Zergliederung der Seele' und der ‚Begriffe' greift Kant viele Jahre später und in einem etwas anderen Kontext erneut auf – im Nachwort zu Soemmerrings Schrift „Das Organ der Seele" (1796).[69] Trotz aller Unterschiede geht es ihm auch hier um die zentrale Differenzierung und Aufgabenteilung zwischen empirischer und rationaler Physiologie: Soemmerring ist nach Kant der „erste philosophische Zergliederer des Sichtbaren am Menschen".[70] Sich selbst hingegen beschreibt Kant als jemanden, der „mit der Zergliederung des Unsichtbaren"[71] beschäftigt ist. Auf der Basis dieser Unterscheidung und Aufgabenteilung tadelt Kant Soemmerring in seiner insgesamt wohlwollenden Kritik gerade da, wo er das

64. KdrV, A IX-X.

65. KdrV, A 87/B 119.

66. Siehe auch Logik, AA IX, 32.

67. Guyer 2008: 84.

68. Zu dieser widersprüchlichen Einschätzung Kants mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Anatomie siehe Olsen 2016: 77-84. Die Philosophie zeichnet sich über die ‚Zergliederung' durch die Fähigkeit aus, die Elemente auch in ihrem systematischen Zusammenhang zu sehen. In ihr wird die Gültigkeit der Begriffe, Urteile und Prinzipien nur dann gesichert, wenn die systematische Organisation der Elemente erkannt und verstanden wird.

69. Im Frühjahr 1795 hatte Soemmerring Kant das Buchmanuskript „zur Prüfung" überlassen. Kant antwortet darauf in zwei Briefen: Im Brief vom 10. August 1795 findet sich eine ausführliche Stellungnahme mit der Aufforderung, davon „allen beliebigen, allenfalls öffentlichen, Gebrauch zu machen" (Briefe, AA XII, 30-35). Der zweite Brief (Briefe, AA XII, 41-42), datiert mit 17. September, stellt lediglich einen kürzeren Nachtrag dar. Die Entwürfe zum Nachwort finden sich in Briefe, AA XIII, 397-414. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Nachworts siehe u. a. McLaughlin 1985: 194.

70. Briefe, AA XII, 30.

71. *Ibid.*

Immaterielle zu materialisieren und zu verräumlichen versucht und damit im äußeren Sinn verortet, was nur in der Zeit (d. h. im inneren Sinn) zugänglich ist.[72] Im Konkreten richtet sich die Kritik gegen Soemmerrings Behauptung, dass die entdeckten ‚Hohlräume im Gehirn' und die darin enthaltene Flüssigkeit als materieller Grund für die transzendentale Einheit der Apperzeption fungieren. Soemmerring schließt davon ausgehend auf die Möglichkeit einer ‚transzendentalen Physiologie'. Für Kant hingegen hat die empirische Physiologie nichts über das Transzendentale zu sagen.[73] Kant lehnt also alle metaphysischen Ansprüche Soemmerrings ab, unterstützt und ergänzt aber die physiologischen Elemente in seiner Studie.[74] Auch wenn Soemmerring in dieser Kritik den Versuch sieht, seine Abhandlung „zu erweitern und zu verfeinern und so zu vervollkommen",[75] ist der schwerwiegende Einwand aus der Perspektive der Transzendentalphilosophie unübersehbar: Soemmerring müsse sich hüten, „in die Metaphysik über[zu]schreiten […], die es mit dem reinen Bewußtseyn und der Einheit desselben a priori in der Zusammensetzung gegebener Vorstellungen (mit dem Verstande) zu thun hat".[76] Soemmerring könne folglich die Prozesse der empirischen Apperzeption beleuchten, aber die ursprüngliche oder transzendentale Apperzeption lasse sich nur durch eine *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* untersuchen. Wieder befestigt Kant also die in der *Transzendentalen Methodenlehre* der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* formulierte Differenzierung von Physiologie – zwischen empirischer und rationaler bzw. zwischen ‚Physiologie der reinen Vernunft' und ‚Physiologie des menschlichen Verstandes'.

5. RESÜMEE

Physiologie ist bei Kant zweifach differenziert: Erstens nach ihrer Erkenntnisart, das heißt als rationale und empirische Physiologie. Erstere bildet einen immanenten Teil der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* – ersetzt als Physiologie der reinen Vernunft die spezielle Metaphysik –; zweitere ist verdienstlich, aber kein Gegenstand der kritischen Untersuchung. Zweitens kann Physiologie aber auch nach ihrem Gegenstand differenziert werden, der entweder erfahrungstranszendent oder empirisch gegeben sein kann. Im ersten Fall handelt es sich um die transzendenten Gegenstände Welt und Gott, im zweiten Fall um geistige oder körperliche Gegenstände. Diese grundlegende Differenzierung von Physiologie im Rahmen der Methodenlehre der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* bildet die Voraussetzung sowohl zur Bestimmung des kritischen Geschäfts als physiologisch, als auch zur kritischen Distanznahme gegenüber anderen physiologischen Unternehmungen.

72. Briefe, AA XII, 32. Kant lehnt mit unterschiedlichen Begründungen die Frage nach dem ‚Sitz der Seele' bereits in den *Träumen eines Geistersehers* (1766) ab. Siehe u.a. Sturm 2008: 500; Hagner 1996-: 33-36.

73. Briefe, AA XII, 31.

74. Zammito 2021: 676.

75. Zitiert nach Briefe, AA XIII, 398.

76. Briefe, AA XII, 32.

ANERKENNUNGEN

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ABKÜRZUNGEN

AA = Kant, I. 1900. *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. v. der Königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 Bde., Berlin, de Gruyter.

Wo es erheblich ist, wird neben der Abkürzung AA auch die Abkürzung des besonderen Werks in AA angegeben:

Anth = *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, in AA VII, *Der Streit der Fakultäten,* 117-335.

ApH = *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, in AA VII.

Briefe = *Briefe*, in AA X-XVII, *Briefwechsel*.

HN = *Reflexionen*, in AA XIV-XIX, *Handschriftlicher Nachlaß*.

KdrV = *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (A/B: erste und zweite Auflage) in AA III und AA IV.

KU = *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in AA V, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft. Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 165-487.

Logik = *Logik*, in AA IX, *Logik. Physische Geographie. Pädagogik*, 1-151.

MAdN = *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, in AA IV, 465-567.

MS = *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, in AA VI, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft. Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, 203-494.

OP = *Opus postumum*, in AA XXI und AA XXII, *Opus postumum*.

Prol = *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*, in AA IV, 253-380.

Refl = *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik (1776-1789)*, in AA XVIII, *Metaphisik,* 2 Theil, 4847-6205.

SF = *Der Streit der Facultäten*, in AA VII, *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, 1-116.

TG = *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik*, in AA II, *Vorkritische Schriften* II 1757–1777, 315-374.

ÜGTP = *Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Principien in der Philosophie*, in AA VIII, *Abhandlungen* nach 1781, 157–184.

V-Anth = *Vorlesungen über Anthropologie*, in AA XXV, *Vorlesungen Wintersemester*.

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How Physiological is Kant's Critical Philosophy?
Approaches to a Difficult Relationship

Rudolf Meer
Ruhr-Universität Bochum
ORCID: 0000-0001-5349-9210
rudolf.meer@ruhr-uni-bochum.de

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COREY W. DYCK, L. EDWARD ALLORE

Reason and the Idea of the Highest Good

ABSTRACT: In this paper, we reconstruct Kant's notion of the practically conditioned, introduced in the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason, by drawing on Kant's general account of the faculty of reason presented in the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. We argue that practical reason's activity of seeking the practically unconditioned for a given condition generates two different conceptions of the practically unconditioned and identify these as virtue and (the ideal of) happiness. We then account for how and why reason proceeds to combine these two distinct ideas into the composite idea of the highest good. Last, we draw on our discussion to determine more precisely what Kant intends by the 'supremacy' of virtue within reason's idea of the highest good.
KEYWORDS: Kant; Practical Conditioning; Highest Good; Unconditioned; Happiness

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the many interpretative challenges posed by the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason is the fact that it relies on an account of the faculty of reason that is largely presupposed rather than made explicit. This account, which Kant had introduced in the first *Critique* and which is vital for understanding Kant's aims in the Transcendental Dialectic, is invoked at the very outset of the second book of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, when he notes that "[p]ure reason always has its dialectic, whether it is considered in its speculative or in its practical use".[1] In the paragraphs that follow, we find a familiar cast of characters as Kant refers to practical reason's search for the "unconditioned",[2] with this resulting in a representation distinctive to reason, namely an idea, where this becomes a temptation to dialectical error that is exposed, much as it had been in the speculative context, through a "*conflict* of reason with itself".[3] Strangely, however, scholars largely have yet to follow up on these unmistakable allusions by drawing on Kant's original account of reason in order to fill in the missing details of practical reason's activity that leads to its dialectical misuse.[4]

1. *CPrR* 5: 107.
2. *CPrR* 5: 108.
3. *CPrR* 5: 107.
4. There are a couple of notable exceptions on this score, such as Watkins 2010 and Pasternack (unpublished manuscript).

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The aim of this paper will be to redress just this deficiency. As we will argue, supplying the missing context serves to highlight a number of otherwise unnoticed argumentative steps in the first two chapters of the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason, and reveals the rationale for aspects of Kant's discussion whose relevance might not be entirely obvious at first. To this end, we will first outline Kant's general account of the faculty of reason as presented in the first *Critique*, largely in accordance with some recent interpretations that recognize the centrality of Kant's account for the aims and arguments of the Transcendental Dialectic. Then, we will show how this account applies to the activity of practical reason, offering an account of how it proceeds from the 'practically conditioned' (a notion that Kant introduces but which, as far as we can tell, has been completely unaccounted for in the extant scholarship) to the conception of the practically unconditioned. We will then contend that practical reason can be understood to generate two distinct conceptions of the practically unconditioned, corresponding to the two ways in which reason can conceive of a 'totality of conditions', where these are identified as virtue (or morality or the good will) on the one hand and (the 'ideal' of) happiness on the other. Finally, we turn to accounting for why and how reason proceeds to combine these two distinct ideas into the composite idea of the highest good, and draw on the foregoing discussion to determine more precisely what Kant intends by the 'supremacy' of virtue within reason's idea of the highest good.

2. A PRIMER ON THE FACULTY OF REASON

Though it had been neglected for some time, Kant's account of the faculty of reason has recently received more detailed, and more sympathetic treatment at the hands of a number of commentators.[5] Following on these, we will draw attention to those aspects of Kant's account that are relevant for the discussion to follow. First, and most generally, reason is identified as a faculty of cognition by means of principles, understood (at least initially) in terms of propositions that are universal in scope. What this involves is perhaps best understood in contrast with the operation of the faculty of the understanding, which attains to cognition of particulars through the subsumption of a directly experienced object (or its intuition) under a concept. The cognition yielded by reason, however, is not gained by means of direct experience but through the relation of concepts asserted in the principle. We can, for instance, cognize that "Caius is mortal" directly, through the subsumption of Caius under the concept mortal insofar as he possesses features characteristic for that concept; alternatively, we can reach the same cognition by means of the principle "All humans are mortal" taken along with the cognition that "Caius is human".[6] This characteristic of reason is reflected, according to Kant, in (speculative) reason's logical use, which Kant takes as reason's most familiar employment. Kant claims that this way of gaining cognition finds its formal expression in the syllogism (*Vernunftschluß*), where the major premise expresses a rule,

5. Here, we have in mind particularly the treatments of the Transcendental Dialectic in Grier 2001: 109-139; Allison 2004: 307-332; and Willaschek 2018: esp. 71-102.

6. Cf. A 321-22/B 378.

or principle, the minor subsumes a cognition (the subject term) under the 'condition of the rule' (or the middle term), and the conclusion determines that cognition through the predicate of the rule (the predicate term).[7]

Kant's own interest in reason's logical use at this stage of the first *Critique* is to gain insight into its putative 'pure' or 'transcendental' use, in accordance with which it serves as the source of synthetic cognition known *a priori*. Yet, reason's employment in this logical use provides little help in this regard as the cognition that results is always only analytic, inasmuch as a valid conclusion in a syllogism contains only what is expressed in the premises. Even so, Kant notes that this progressive application of reason (from premises to conclusion) does not exhaust its employments in its logical use as it also admits of a 'regressive' application:

> If, as happens for the most part, the conclusion is a judgment given as the problem [*aufgegeben*], in order to see whether it flows from already given judgments [...], then I seek whether the assertion of this conclusion is not to be found in the understanding under certain conditions according to a universal rule.[8]

The process Kant outlines here involves setting out from some cognition – for instance, "Caius is mortal" – and searching for the rule or principle from which it would follow (this is what is intended when we take this cognition as "given as a problem"). This involves working backwards through the procedure sketched above, requiring that we find a middle term (here, human) that will serve to connect the subject and predicate by bringing the subject (Caius) under the 'condition' of the rule. Accordingly, Kant frequently refers to this as a search for a condition (here the middle term) for the cognition regarded by reason (for the sake of the search) as 'conditioned'. The result of this procedure (when properly conducted) is the posit of a 'new' rule or principle, that would serve to introduce a unity into the already given cognitions (i.e., the conclusion and minor premise). Moreover, this principle, once discovered, can in turn be taken to be "given as a problem", and a further condition sought for the connection of terms expressed in it. In fact, this is just what reason, as the faculty of principles, does until it finds a highest principle, or a condition that cannot be regarded as also conditioned, which is to say, until it finds something 'unconditioned'. Kant thus identifies reason's "logical maxim", or the (prescriptive) principle that governs its activity as follows: "to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed".[9]

It is in this regressive application of reason in its logical use that Kant finds a clue for understanding the putative pure use of speculative reason. In this use, reason does not apply to judgments or propositions but rather to things or objects, and regressively seeks for their real conditions, such as their causes insofar as they are regarded as effects. In this use, reason's activity is likewise governed by the same logical maxim in that it continues to seek for further conditions for a given conditioned thing until it

7. A 304/B 360-361.
8. A 304/B 361.
9. A 307/B 364.

comes to a condition that is itself unconditioned. However, in pursuing this maxim within the domain of objects, reason must further assume the actual givenness of the conditions up to and including the unconditioned, that namely they are not merely posited as the end of reason's labours but are actually there to be found.[10] This results in a further "principle of *pure reason*", proper only to reason's pure employment, in accordance with which "we assume that when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given".[11] This principle is itself synthetic, since according to Kant it asserts the relation of a conditioned thing to the unconditioned and not simply to some condition,[12] but more importantly it is the source of further (alleged) cognition insofar as the unconditioned condition that is thereby presumed as 'given' (which presumption Kant identifies with "transcendental illusion"[13]) is subsequently determined in light of the pure concepts of the understanding, and thus gives us "material for many synthetic propositions *a priori*".[14]

Accordingly, Kant proceeds to a derivation of the three ideas of reason, each of which amounts to a particular conception of the unconditioned, and which serve as the objects of this dialectical application of the categories. The ideas are distinguished (i) through the distinct conditioned objects (inner representations, appearances as such, or things in general) from which reason sets out,[15] and (ii) by the specific conditioning relational function (substance/accident, cause/effect, community) through which reason infers to the unconditioned in each case.[16] Reason's procedure in each case is broadly similar; in the case of the idea of the soul, for instance, reason attains to this representation by taking the condition of thinking in general, the "I think", apart from the conditioning manifold of inner appearances, and so as the "I itself" in its "unconditioned unity".[17] However, things change somewhat when it comes to the second idea, the idea of the world as the sum-total of all appearances. In connection with this idea, Kant notes that the conception of the unconditioned proper to reason can be taken in two, equally legitimate ways, namely, either as the unconditioned condition considered as the absolute first member of a series of conditions, or as the totality of conditions in the series, where no member of that series is without a further condition but where the series itself lacks any further condition. As Kant writes,

> Now one can think of this unconditioned either as subsisting merely in the whole series, in which thus every member without exception is conditioned, and only their whole is absolutely unconditioned, or else the absolutely unconditioned is

10. On the need to presuppose the supreme principle as a condition of the application of reason's logical maxim, see Allison 2004: 312, 330.
11. A 307-308/B 364.
12. A 308/B 364.
13. See Grier 2001: 117-130.
14. A 308/B 365.
15. Cf. A 333-334/B 390-391.
16. Cf. A 323/B 379.
17. A 398. For more see Dyck 2014: 71-81.

> only a part of the series, to which the remaining members of the series are subordinated but that itself stands under no other condition.[18]

According to the second way of conceiving the unconditioned, the regress in the series of conditions terminates at a first member, whereas in the first case, the regress is never complete, in the sense of arriving at an unconditioned member, but the series of conditions itself, taken as a totality, has no further condition and so is unconditioned.[19] In any case (and for reasons Kant does not fully explicate),[20] this twofold conception of the unconditioned only becomes significant in the application to the idea of the world where it generates two apparently contradictory conceptions of the unconditioned, such that, for instance, reason at once posits a beginning of the world, as a first member of a temporal series, but also denies that the world has a beginning inasmuch as every moment in the temporal series is bounded by an earlier one without end. This conflict constitutes the famous Antinomy of Pure Reason and, crucially, Kant emphasizes that it cannot be avoided by denying the legitimacy of the opposing conception of the unconditioned, since both are equally legitimate ways of conceiving the unconditioned and indeed both are equally natural to reason (at least as far as the cosmological idea is concerned).[21] This point will be important to keep in mind as we will return to it below.

Turning to the opening section of the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason, it is clear that Kant carries over much of his previous account of the faculty of reason. So, he characterizes reason as seeking "the absolute totality of conditions for a given conditioned thing"[22] in an echo of the logical maxim identified above. He also claims that the unconditioned reason seeks is never met with in the regression through the series of conditions itself, but is posited or projected by reason itself, in an effort to introduce a systematic unity into appearances.[23] Moreover, where reason gets into trouble is precisely when it makes the additional presumption, in accordance with its pure use, that the unconditioned is not merely given as a problem but is actually given as an object in its own right. Thus, he identifies the source of reason's antinomial conflict with itself "in the application to appearance of its basic principle of presupposing the unconditioned for everything conditioned".[24] As in the speculative context, the antinomial conflict provoked by this "illusion" proves salutary as it makes necessary

18. A 417/B 445.

19. See A 417-418/B 445n: "The absolute whole of the series of conditions for a given conditioned is always unconditioned, because outside it there are no more conditions regarding which it could be conditioned".

20. Cf. A 406/B 433.

21. For more on this, see Dyck 2021.

22. *CPrR* 5: 107.

23. See also *ibid.*, where Kant refers to the series of appearances "in whose series of the conditioned and [its] conditions the unconditioned can never be found [*in deren Reihe des Bedingten und der Bedingungen das Unbedingte niemals angetroffen werden kann*]".

24. *CPrR* 5: 107.

a "complete critical examination of the whole pure faculty of reason"[25] and permits of resolution only through Kant's own doctrine of transcendental idealism. In any case, the key point is that Kant indicates that his theory of reason elaborated in his previous discussion of pure speculative reason is still in place at the outset of his treatment of pure practical reason.

3. FROM THE PRACTICALLY CONDITIONED TO THE UNCONDITIONED

There is, in any case, an important difference that arises in the transition to the sphere of practical reason, albeit not in the general theory of reason but rather in the conception of the 'conditioned' from which practical reason sets out. Kant signals just this in the following passage:

> As pure practical reason it likewise seeks the unconditioned for the *practically conditioned* [*zu dem praktisch Bedingten*] (that which [*was*] rests on inclinations and natural needs), not indeed as the determining ground of the will, but even when this is given (in the moral law), it seeks the unconditioned totality of the object of pure practical reason.[26]

This passage is notable as Kant points to a sense of the relation between the conditioned and its condition that applies specifically in the practical context. Explicating precisely what Kant intends here is difficult, as this is apparently the only time in his works that Kant refers to such a relation (in this context).[27] However, given how little Kant has to say about it here, it seems safe (or at least natural) to presume that he does not have in mind something wholly different from his account of speculative reason's regress from the conditioned to the unconditioned. In any case, we can note that Kant, unsurprisingly, suggests a different starting point for this regress; as opposed to setting out from an object or appearance taken as conditioned, practical reason sets out from something that "rests on inclinations and natural needs". Kant most frequently connects inclinations and needs with the faculty of desire,[28] and so that which "rests [*beruht*]" on inclinations and needs, is presumably some object or state of affairs that we seek or resolve to bring about on the basis of desire, broadly speaking.

25. *Ibid*.

26. *CPrR* 5: 108, emphasis added.

27. Kant does refer to a 'morally conditioned' consequence at *CPrR* 5: 119 "it is only the morally conditioned yet necessary result [*daß diese nur die moralisch bedingte, aber nothwendige Folge*]", though it is not clear that this is to be understood as a form of practical conditioning. There is also an unrelated use of practical conditioning in the context of imputation in the lectures on moral philosophy, as at AA 27: 153 (PP-Powalski): "Die *Imputatio facti* beruhet auf dem Verhältniß der Handlung zu einer practischen Bedingung, die Bedingung ist practisch so ferne sie eine Freyheit ist".

28. We take it that the "needs" Kant is referring to here, as the starting points for reason's regress are sensible needs (or needs "based on inclination") rather than a need "of reason" (cf. *CPrR* 5: 144n). Of course, this regress itself can be, and is, characterized in terms of a result of a need of reason; see for instance AA 8: 280n and *Rel* 6: 7n. For discussion of this latter, see Kleingeld 1998: esp. 47-48.

Nonetheless, practical reason considers such inclinations and needs themselves as 'conditioned', and accordingly enacts a search (in accordance with the faculty's logical maxim) for further conditions for these. It is possible, but unlikely, that Kant simply has in mind here the metaphysical or real conditioning relation[29] applied narrowly to inclinations and needs – that is, that in taking an inclination as conditioned reason is taking it as a predicate and seeking its subject, or taking it as an effect and searching for its cause. This is because the relation of an inclination (as a mental representation) to a subject or, considered as an effect (as an inner appearance), to another cause is presumably already taken up by speculative reason and included in its inference to the ideas of the soul and world, respectively. Nonetheless, there is a potentially instructive parallel to be found in the speculative context, where the conditions sought were, at least initially, homogenous with the given conditioned, that is, the conditions were other objects which, for instance, served as causes for the conditioned object regarded as an effect. By parity of reasoning, in the practical context these conditions would be other inclinations or needs by which our conditioned inclinations or needs are further conditioned.

One way in which an inclination or need might be taken to condition another would be insofar as it serves to restrict or determine that inclination, that is, insofar as the pursuit or satisfaction of one inclination or need might impact the pursuit or satisfaction of another. So, one's inclination to drink heavily at a party might be restricted by another inclination to retain the esteem of one's colleagues. Moreover, this should not be taken to rule out the possibility that inclinations and needs may mutually condition – mutually restrict or determine – one another, as when one's inclination (or need) to maintain a state of physical fitness practically conditions and is conditioned by one's inclination (or need) for intellectual stimulation. This conception of the relation of practical conditioning arguably finds an analogue in the metaphysical or real conditioning relation at the basis of the First Antinomy, where parts of space are taken to mutually condition (in the sense of restricting, or bounding) one another, and indeed not as subordinated to one another in a succession (as with causal conditioning), but as co-ordinated with one another.[30] Despite having this analogue, the practical conditioning relation remains distinct from any real conditioning relation inasmuch as it relates to the satisfaction or pursuit of inclinations or needs (as opposed to the conditions of their existence).

Assuming this is a plausible interpretation of what Kant intends by the 'practical' conditioning relation, a picture begins to emerge of how Kant might conceive of reason's regress in the practical sphere. Much as pure reason sets out from empirical objects (appearances) in the speculative context (at least with respect to the cosmological idea), so in the practical context pure reason begins with the empirical, in this case the inclinations and natural needs, and the ends grounded upon them, of the sensibly-

29. For a detailed discussion of real conditions, see Watkins 2018. Watkins (rightly) notes that "Kant also clearly uses the notion of a condition in his practical philosophy" (p. 1135), but does not seem to have the above passage specifically in mind.

30. Cf. A 412/B 439-A 413/B 440.

affected human will. Taking these as conditioned, practical reason enacts a search for a condition, which is to say, another inclination, need, or end that such a being has to which that conditioned inclination or need is subordinate (or with respect to which it is subject to restriction). Yet, this conditioning inclination or need, can itself be regarded as 'conditioned', and a further condition sought for it, and so on, and because practical reason abides by the faculty's logical maxim, it will continue this search until it arrives at a condition that is not itself conditioned. Furthermore, and again as was the case in the speculative context, practical reason also projects the end of this iterative application in its presupposition of an unconditioned object at the end of the series, that is, of the "unconditioned totality of the object of pure practical reason".[31]

Kant proceeds immediately to identify this object as the highest good, which has a fairly determinate content and which we will consider in more detail below. However, for now we might consider this object, as Kant sometimes does, more generically in terms of the "final end" (or purpose) (*Endzweck*), that is, that end which conditions all other ends but which is not itself subordinate to any higher end. The representation of the final end can be understood to result from a similar application of reason to practically conditioned inclinations and needs inasmuch as Kant claims that an "*end* is always the object of an *inclination*",[32] such that something that conditions an inclination will at the same time constitute a condition of the end that is the object of that inclination. Focusing on ends specifically, one end can condition another when the pursuit or achievement of that end is restricted by some other end, especially if the latter end "contains" the former in the sense of the former being subordinate to it. So, one's end in making a profit might be subordinate to one's end (for prudential reasons) of serving one's customers honestly.[33] Significantly, just as in the speculative context, the result of this activity on the part of practical reason is the introduction of a kind of systematic unity into our inclinations and needs. Insofar as one end is conditioned by another, those higher ends can be said to "contain", "order", or "unite" lower ends within it. In this way, and again closely following Kant's previous characterization of reason's activity, the higher ends serve reason as a sort of 'rule' under which disparate inclinations, needs, and ends can be brought.[34] Indeed, Kant himself characterizes the final end in just this way, for instance, in the third *Critique*, where he identifies a final end as "an end that requires no other end as the condition of its possibility",[35] and the *Religion*, where he claims that the "end that contains the inescapable, and at the same time sufficient, condition of all other ends is the *final*

31. *CPrR* 5: 108.
32. *Rel* 6: 6n.
33. This is of course the example Kant considers at *G* 4: 397.
34. For Kant's mention of 'rule' in this context, see for instance *R* 6621, 19: 114; *R* 7029, 19: 230; *R* 7063, 19: 240; AA 27: 116 (PP-Powalski); *MP-Co* 27: 245; AA 27: 1399 (Moral Mrongovius).
35. *CJ* §84, 5: 434.

end".[36] Interestingly, on this point, Kant's otherwise idiosyncratic conception of the faculty of reason and its employment in the practical sphere links up helpfully with classical accounts. So, in Cicero's *De finibus*, in which the respective merits of the Epicurean and Stoic conceptions of the highest good are debated (and as such constitutes an essential frame for the initial sections of the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason), where Cicero identifies "the end, [...] the final and ultimate goal" as that for which "everything else is a means to it, while it is not itself a means to anything".[37]

4. VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS AS TWO CONCEPTIONS OF THE PRACTICALLY UNCONDITIONED

While this suffices for a generic notion of the practically unconditioned, there are nonetheless two more distinct ways of conceiving it. As might be expected, this is in line with the two conceptions of the unconditioned in the speculative context, namely, as the unconditioned considered as the first member of the series, and the series itself, taken as a totality that lacks any further condition. Kant identifies, or so we contend, the former as virtue (or sometimes simply as "morality"), whereas the latter is connected with happiness itself taken as an idea of reason. Beginning with virtue, as it turns out Kant offers some insight into the basis for its identification as one conception of the practically unconditioned in a discussion that is not, at first glance, obviously relevant, namely, the famous account of the good will at the outset of the *Groundwork*. As is well known, Kant there offers an argument to the effect that there is nothing in the world, or beyond it, "that could be considered good without limitation [*ohne Einschränkung*] except a *good will*".[38] Kant proceeds to contend that talents of mind (understanding, wit, and judgment) and talents of temperament (courage, resolution, and perseverance), while both "good and desirable for many purposes" are nonetheless only good when accompanied by a good will. The same goes for the so-called gifts of fortune (power, riches, honour, and health), which "produce boldness and thereby often arrogance as well unless a good will is present".[39] As a result, neither internal goods (talents of mind and of temperament) nor external goods (gifts of fortune) can be good in the absence of the good will. Conversely, the good will is good "without limitation", inasmuch as the addition of any of these goods adds nothing to its value and their removal does not detract from its goodness: "Usefulness or fruitlessness can neither add anything to this worth, nor take anything away from it".[40]

As it relates to the present context, Kant phrases the results of these considerations in a way that suggests a connection; thus, he characterizes the good will as having

36. *Rel* 6: 6n. See also *Met-Mr* 29: 847: "that to which all ends are subordinated is called the final end".

37. Cicero 2001: 6, 13.

38. *G* 4: 393.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *G* 4: 394.

"*unconditional* worth"[41] while being "the *condition* of every other" good.[42] Indeed, in a parallel presentation recorded in the *Moral Mrongovius*, the same argument is cast explicitly in terms of conditions (and an investigation into the highest good):

> What is the highest good? Among all that we call good, the major portion is good in a conditional sense, and nothing is good without restriction, save the good will. Understanding, bodily strength, and prudence are good, but united with a bad will are exceedingly harmful. Health, enjoyment [*Vergnügen*], and well-being and constant cheerfulness of heart are good only provided that the agent has a good will [...]. Thus a good will is simply good without restriction, for itself alone, in every respect and under all circumstances. It is the only thing that is good without other conditions.[43]

Framed in this way, we might take these considerations concerning the unconditioned goodness of the good will to bear on reason's search for the practically unconditioned. Setting out from an inclination or need, practical reason takes this as conditioned, that is, as good or desirable only on account of some further inclination or need, and initiates a search for this, coming to rest only when it reaches the unconditioned. Reason scans the various sorts of external goods and ends (such as the development of our innate talents) that we take to be good, and discovers in each case that the various goods are themselves further conditioned, in each case, on the possession of the good will. Given that the goodness of the good will is not itself further conditioned on or restricted by anything else, practical reason takes it as the 'unconditioned', in this case, the first member of the series "to which the remaining members of the series are subordinated but that itself stands under no other condition".[44]

In fact, that Kant identifies virtue as the unconditioned in just this sense is made clear early in the Dialectic of the second *Critique* itself. In the context of disambiguating what is intended by the concept of the 'highest', Kant notes that one sense – the supreme – refers to "that condition which is itself unconditioned, that is, not subordinate to any other", and proceeds to identify virtue as "the *supreme condition* of whatever can even seem to us desirable".[45] It might, however, be thought problematic to consider virtue (or morality, or the good will) in terms of the unconditioned, and so as a kind of 'idea' of reason, and indeed as something potentially misleading, in the same way as the ideas of speculative reason present us with potentially misleading illusions. However, these concerns are unfounded as Kant is quite clear not only that virtue is an idea of reason but also that whatever potential it has to mislead us is grounded in the denial of its ideal status. So, in his account of ideas in the first book of the Transcendental Dialectic ("On the Ideas in General"), Kant writes

41. *Ibid*., emphasis added.

42. *G* 4: 396, emphasis added.

43. AA 29: 599. Cf. as well *R* 6890, 19:194-195.

44. A 417/B 445.

45. *CPrR* 5: 110. Cf. *G* 4: 396: "This [good] will need not, because of this, be the sole and complete good, but it must still be the highest [sc. *supreme*] good, and the condition of every other".

> we are all aware that when someone is represented as a model of virtue, in regard to which all possible objects of experience do service as examples (proofs of the feasibility of, to a certain degree, of what the concept of reason requires), but never as archetypes. That no human being will ever act adequately to what the pure idea of virtue contains does not prove in the least that there is something chimerical in this thought.[46]

That virtue is an idea of reason, then, does not at all detract from its capacity to serve as an effective basis for our appraisal of the actions of others, and a determining ground for our own; indeed, inasmuch as the substitution of any conditioned good in its place would result in heteronomy of the will, it follows that this ideal character is essential.[47] And while virtue, like any idea, has the potential to mislead – as Kant notes, as far as admitting a dialectical misuse, "reason in its practical use is no better off" than in the speculative[48] – this potential lies precisely in the presumption that virtue (as a component of the highest good) can be attained in this world. This is an illusion which, for instance, Kant charges the ancients of falling prey to, and which assumption motivates the Antinomy of practical reason (in the same way in which the illusory givenness of the world of appearances lies at the basis of the Antinomy of pure speculative reason), though we do not have space to pursue this in detail here.

As we have seen above, however, the identification of virtue as the practically unconditioned in this sense (i.e., as the first member in the series) still leaves room for another conception of the unconditioned on the part of practical reason. This conception involves, namely, taking the series of conditions in its totality, and so as itself unconditioned by any further conditions, in spite of lacking a first member. Interestingly, Kant frequently (if not unfailingly) describes happiness as the practically unconditioned, and so as an idea of reason, in just this way. This much is suggested, for instance, when he refers to the notion of happiness as including the (satisfaction of the) "sum-total" or the "whole" of inclinations, as when Kant writes in the *Groundwork* that the human being "sums up under the name of happiness" "the entire satisfaction [*die ganze Befriedigung*]" of its "needs and inclinations".[49] Likewise in the *Groundwork*, Kant claims that it is in the "idea" of happiness "that all inclinations unite in one sum [*zu einer Summe vereinigen*]"[50] and that "for the idea of happiness an absolute whole [*ein absolutes Ganze*] is required".[51] It is, then, through reason's activity that our inclinations are brought

46. A 315/B 371-372. On virtue as an idea, see also *MP-Co* 27: 463 and *Rel* 6: 23-24n.

47. See *CPrR* 5: 109: "if one assumes any object under the name of a good as a determining ground of the will prior to the moral law and then derives from it the supreme practical principle, this would always produce heteronomy and supplant the moral principle". Cf. A 314/B 371.

48. *CPrR* 5: 108.

49. *G* 4: 405. See also *G* 4: 393, where Kant indicates that 'happiness' designates "the entire well-being and contentment [*das ganze Wohlbefinden und Zufriedenheit*] with one's condition".

50. *G* 4: 399.

51. *G* 4: 418. For other passages along these lines, see *CJ* §83, 5: 430: "The concept of happiness is not one that one abstracts (say) from his instincts [...]; rather, it is a mere *idea*"; and

together into a single whole, with the result being not merely the complete collection of our inclinations (and their satisfaction) but the thought of them together as a whole or totality. Thus Kant draws attention to the intellectual component of the idea of happiness in a lengthy *Reflexion* from the 1780s, writing that "[t]he material of happiness is sensible, the form of the same however is intellectual",[52] and further that "[h]appiness is not something sensed [*empfundenes*] but rather thought".[53] As such, and just as was the case in the speculative context, practical reason introduces its distinctive unity into the material of one's inclinations, thinking them together as an ideal whole even if none of these inclinations themselves constitutes a first, unconditioned condition.

Even so, Kant indicates that he takes the idea of happiness to amount to more than the mere thought of the complete collection of all one's inclinations. This is because, as we have already seen, one inclination can condition, or restrict, another (with the same presumably being the case for our natural, and artificial, needs). Given this, the thought of the complete collection of one's inclinations will not (necessarily) be internally consistent as some inclinations and needs will have to be restricted or even eliminated for the sake of the satisfaction of others. The idea of happiness is, therefore, not the thought of the satisfaction of all of one's inclinations, but rather of the satisfaction of a maximum of inclinations, that is, the satisfaction of the greatest number of (mutually consistent) inclinations.[54] Thus, Kant refers to happiness as the idea of "one's own greatest well-being",[55] and as a "maximum of well-being".[56] In order, then, to think of these inclinations as a unity, the activity of reason is required in order to determine the extent, and degree, to which one inclination may be compossible with another. In this case, reason is used "only to take care of the interest of inclinations [...] in their greatest compatibility with one another".[57] This results in the refinement of the thought of all of one's inclinations into a narrow set of compossible inclinations, which is to say, it results in a more determinate representation of what specific combination of inclinations (and in what degrees) constitutes the content of the idea of happiness for an individual.

This internal refinement of an idea into a more determinate representation, however, is just what Kant understands as an 'ideal' of reason, as he explains in connection with the "transcendental ideal". In that case, the (indeterminate) idea of the sum-total of all possible predicates of things in general is refined into a determinate representation of a maximum of compossible predicates:

Mor-Mr 29: 899: "Happiness has two meanings [the first being] the sum of all agreeable sensations [...]".

52. *R* 7202, 19: 276.

53. AA 19: 278. See also *R* 6610, 19: 107: "*Neigungen vereinigt durch die Vernunft, stimen zur Glükseeligkeit*." Cf. Wood 1970: 53: "happiness is an *idea*, and thus requires reason for its formulation". Cf. also Wood 1970: 81.

54. Again, cf. Wood 1970: 53.

55. *G* 4: 416.

56. *G* 4: 418.

57. *G* 4: 406.

> Now although this idea of the *sum total of all possibility*, insofar as it grounds every thing as the condition of its thoroughgoing determination in regard to the predicates which may constitute the thing, is itself still indeterminate, and through it we think nothing beyond a sum total of all possible predicates in general, we nevertheless find on closer investigation that this idea, as an original concept, excludes a multiplicity of predicates [...]; and that it refines itself into a concept of an individual object that is thoroughly determined merely through the idea, and then must be called an *ideal* of pure reason.[58]

The eventual result of the refinement of this idea in the speculative context is the ideal of the most real being or *ens realissimum*, that is, God, inasmuch as it is the idea of the maximum of possible predicates of things in general. In the practical context, the idea of happiness likewise refines itself into an ideal, that is a determinate representation of the maximum of inclinations that constitute happiness in an individual case. So, while Kant explicitly designates the idea of happiness as an ideal, he also notes that it differs from the transcendental ideal inasmuch as it sets out not from (intellectual) predicates of things in general, but from (sensible) inclinations: "happiness is not an ideal of reason, but of the imagination, which rests merely on empirical grounds".[59] Kant also makes clear that, in spite of the involvement of "understanding and reason"[60] in its generation, a fact that has misled otherwise "intelligent men",[61] the ideal of happiness is unsuitable as a basis for practical law – not only does it rest on empirical grounds (inclinations), but there is no *a priori* guarantee that the set of inclinations from which reason sets out in generating the ideal will not differ between individuals. So, while "the concept of happiness *everywhere* underlies the practical relation of *objects* to the faculty of desire", "where each has to put his happiness comes down to the particular feeling of pleasure and displeasure in each",[62] and indeed what constitutes happiness for the same individual might even change over time on account of changes in our inclinations.[63] But, while the content of the idea might vary among (and within) individuals, the inference of the idea of happiness, and its refinement into a determinate ideal, remain wholly natural to practical reason.

58. A 573/B 601.
59. *G* 4: 418.
60. *CPrR* 5: 24.
61. *CPrR* 5: 28.
62. *CPrR* 5: 25.
63. *CJ* §83, 5: 430: "Man himself formulates this idea [of happiness], and since his understanding is tied to imagination and the senses, he formulates the idea so diversely and even changes the concept so often that nature, even if it were subjected completely to man's choice, still could not possibly adopt a definite and fixed universal law that would keep it in harmony with that wavering concept".

5. THE IDEA OF THE HIGHEST GOOD

Of course, that there are two conceptions of the practically unconditioned puts practical reason in a similar situation to that faced in the speculative domain. In the speculative context, this resulted immediately in a set of antinomies as reason was constrained to think the unconditioned for a given conditioned thing in incompatible ways (at least insofar as it conceived the conditioned as a thing in itself). In the practical context, the conflict between these two conceptions is all the more acute given the apparent incompatibility between the two sets of conditions upon a given inclination. While the threat of an antinomy of practical reason obviously looms, Kant indicates that there is a more immediate dialectical potential that needs to be addressed, namely, that reason would not be satisfied with two conceptions of the practically unconditioned but would continue its systematizing activity by reducing one of these ideas to the other. One tempting resolution might be to contend for the identity of these two ideas – that the ideas of virtue and happiness, properly understood, amount to the same thing. Indeed, there is more than just the potential for such a dialectical misstep as Kant accuses ancient moral philosophers of just this sort of mistake, as he notes that the ancients sought to reduce virtue and happiness to a single idea. He observes already in an early *Reflexion*, that the "[a]ncients did not co-ordinate happiness and morality but subordinated them",[64] and much later, in the Vigilantius lectures he explicitly traces this error to a misuse of a maxim of reason:

> But instead of unifying the two principles, so as thereby to define the highest good, the [ancient] sects in fact separated them from one another, in that they proceeded by reason's maxim, to the effect, that a thing may only be derived from a single principle (*entia, i.e., principia praeter necessitatem non sunt multiplicanda*), and subordinated one to the other.[65]

Kant has in mind the efforts of the Epicureans on the one hand and the Stoics on the other to assert the identity between these two conceptions of the practically unconditioned (by either taking virtue as nothing more than prudence in the choice of the means to happiness, or by taking happiness as just the consciousness of attaining virtue).[66] As Kant will point out, however, this amounts to a mis- (or over-)use of reason in seeking a unity between "extremely heterogeneous concepts",[67] or a "unification of heterogenous grounds",[68] even if it is one that is "in keeping with the dialectical spirit of their times".[69] Otherwise put, happiness and virtue as conceptions of the practically unconditioned cannot be brought together in a conceptual unity, but must be taken to constitute heterogenous ideas of reason.

64. *R* 6607, 19: 106.
65. AA 27: 483.
66. *CPrR* 5: 111-112.
67. *CPrR* 5: 111. Cf. also *CPrR* 5: 112-113.
68. *CPrR* 5: 112.
69. *CPrR* 5: 111.

That reason cannot bring the ideas of virtue and happiness into a larger unity by means of conceptually reducing one to the other does not mean that it abandons its efforts altogether. Rather, as Kant has already suggested, reason attempts to think these two ideas together by co-ordinating rather than subordinating them (or reducing one to the other). This is to say that reason takes the ideas of virtue and happiness to together compose a whole and because taken together virtue and happiness exhaust all possible human desires, the resulting composite representation amounts to the representation of the highest good in the sense of the complete good. Thus Kant distinguishes a sense of 'highest' as designating "that whole which is not part of a still greater whole of the same kind (*perfectissimum*)",[70] and proceeds to identify virtue and happiness together as "the whole and complete good".[71] That happiness cannot be removed without making the resulting representation incomplete is something Kant frequently emphasizes, as when he denies that virtue is the "sole and complete good",[72] emphasizes that for the whole and complete good "*happiness* is also required",[73] and claims more expansively in the first *Critique* that "[h]appiness alone is far from the complete good for our reason" but that "morality alone (...) is also far from being the complete good".[74] It is, then, only insofar as the ideas of virtue and happiness are co-ordinated in this way that they can together constitute the representation of "the totality of human ends",[75] which is to say an 'idea' (if of a composite sort), namely, the representation of "the unconditioned totality of the object of pure practical reason, under the name of the highest good".[76]

Even so, virtue and happiness are not just completely heterogenous concepts, but also frequently inconsistent with one another. Accordingly, in order to think them as constituting a single whole, reason must assign one priority over another. As Kant writes, virtue and happiness are otherwise "so far from coinciding that they greatly restrict and infringe upon each other in the same subject",[77] but provided that the supremacy of virtue is recognized, then these two parts of the highest good "not only do not contradict each other but can also be united".[78] Kant is explicit that while virtue and happiness jointly compose the highest good, virtue enjoys special status as solely constituting the 'supreme' good:

> That *virtue* (as worthiness to be happy) is the *supreme condition* of whatever can even seem to us desirable and hence of all of our pursuit of happiness and that it is therefore the *supreme* good has been proven in the Analytic.[79]

70. *CPrR* 5: 110.
71. *Ibid*.
72. *G* 4: 396.
73. *CPrR* 5: 110.
74. A 813/B 841.
75. *Met-V* 27: 482.
76. *CPrR* 5: 108.
77. *CPrR* 5: 112.
78. *Mor-Mr* 29: 602.
79. *CPrR* 5: 110.

Rather than having a specific section or argument in mind, Kant is likely referring to the principal conclusions of the Analytic, namely, that only morality (as involving a formal principle as the determining ground of the will), and not (the principle of) happiness, is consistent with the character of a practical law in issuing a command that holds universally and necessarily.[80] Whatever the case, the foregoing suggests a way in which we can determine more precisely what is intended by the supremacy of virtue. Clearly, what virtue's supremacy cannot mean is that the idea of happiness is itself subordinated to virtue in the sense of being practically conditioned by it, as Kant sometimes wrongly suggests.[81] This would violate the 'unconditioned' character of the idea of happiness, and so would amount to a version of the dialectical mistake of the ancients. Rather than expressing a direct (subordinating) relation between the two components of the highest good, the supremacy of virtue should instead be understood in terms of the priority of virtue in conditioning our inclinations and natural needs. That is, our inclinations and natural needs are first considered insofar as they may be restricted by virtue as the practically unconditioned. Subsequent to this initial screening, those (suitable restricted) inclinations and needs are then taken up by reason and refined into a coherent totality. Kant seems to indicate just this understanding of virtue's supremacy when, in the above quote, he identifies virtue as the "*supreme condition* of whatever can even seem to us desirable",[82] as well as in the corresponding discussion in the *Groundwork*, where he claims that virtue's supremacy is a condition "even of all demands for happiness".[83] Significantly, the result of reason's activity here continues to be an 'ideal' of happiness, albeit one in which all of the inclinations and needs whose satisfaction is identified with happiness have already been deemed to be morally permissible. This is, properly speaking, the "*ideal of the highest good*".[84] It is, in any case, only when virtue is given priority in this way that the two components of the highest good can be taken together to form a coherent whole.

In the foregoing, we have offered an account of the origin of reason's idea of the highest good. This account traced the idea back to practical reason's activity in seeking the (practically) unconditioned for a given conditioned inclination or need, and demonstrated how the practically unconditioned is conceived by reason in two distinct ways. Practical reason (in contrast with the speculative context) was nonetheless able to find a way to co-ordinate these two heterogenous conceptions of the unconditioned – virtue and happiness – into a single composite idea, albeit only through recognizing the supremacy of virtue. In the end, this account amounts to what Kant would call a "metaphysical deduction" of the idea of the highest good, or an account of the origin of

80. For representative passages in the Analytic, see for instance *CPrR* 5: 35; 5: 61-62; 5: 92-93; Cf. also *G* 4: 396.

81. In *CPrR* 5: 119, Kant refers to the 'subordination' of happiness to morality.

82. *CPrR* 5: 110.

83. *G* 4: 396.

84. A 810/B 838. Properly speaking, in terms of the division introduced in the first *Critique*, this is the ideal of the highest 'derived' good; see A 810/B 839-A 811/B 840 as well as *CPrR* 5: 125.

the idea (and of our possession of it) that is *a priori* or does not rely on the acquisition of the concept through experience (and our reflection upon it).[85] What remains undetermined, however, is whether what is thought through this idea, namely, the rationally determined agreement between virtue and happiness, represents something that is *possible*, that is, whether one can "*produce the highest good through the freedom of the will*".[86] Since, as we have seen, the combination of elements into the idea of the highest good is not in virtue of their identity but is rather a synthetic connection between heterogenous concepts, this is a question that requires a transcendental deduction to answer, in the course of which the threat of a novel Antinomy will have to be dispelled. With all this in hand, then, we are brought to the threshold of this transcendental deduction though, regrettably, no further.

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ABBREVIATIONS

All citations from Kant refer to the volume and page numbers from the Akademie-Ausgabe (AA): *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, 29 vol., ed. Berlin-Brandenburgische (originally Königlich Preussische, and then Deutsche) Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Reimer, 1900-19, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1920-.

Where it is relevant, the AA-abbreviation is replaced by the abbreviation for the particular text within the AA. References included in the abbreviation list below are to the English versions of the texts, which were consulted in conjunction with the German texts.

A/B = Kant, I. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. and ed. by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

CJ = Kant, I. 2000. *Critique of the Power of Judgment,* tr. by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, ed. by P. Guyer ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

CPrR = Kant, I. 1997. *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. A. Reath, ed. M. J. Gregor ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

G = Kant, I. 2012. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. by M. J. Gregor, ed. by J. Timmermann ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

R = Kant I. 2005. *Notes and Fragments*, tr. by C. Bowman, P. Guyer, and F. Rauscher, ed. by P. Guyer ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rel = Kant, I. 2018. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, tr. and ed. by A. Wood and G. di Giovanni ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

85. Cf. B 159, and Kant's metaphysical deduction of the ideas of (speculative) reason at A 333/B 390-A 336/B 393.

86. *CPrR* 5: 113.

Met-Mr = Kant, I. 1997. "Metaphysik Mrongovius", in *Lectures on Metaphysics,* tr. and ed. by K. Ameriks and S. Naragon ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 109-288.

Met-V = Kant, I. 1997. "Metaphysik Vigilantius", in *Lectures on Metaphysics,* tr. and ed. by K. Ameriks and S. Naragon ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 417-506.

MP-Co = Kant, I. 1997. "Part 2 – Moral Philosophy: Collins's Lecture Notes", in *Lectures on Ethics,* tr. P. Heath, ed. by P. Heath and J. B. Schneewind ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 37-222.

Mor-Mr = Kant, I. 1997. "Part 3 – Morality according to Prof. Kant: Mrongovius's Second Set of Lecture Notes (Selections)", in *Lectures on Ethics,* tr. P. Heath, ed. by P. Heath and J. B. Schneewind ("The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant"), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 223-248.

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Corey W. Dyck
Western University
cdyck5@uwo.ca

L. Edward Allore
Western University
lallore@uwo.ca

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MICHAEL WALSCHOTS

Moral Necessity, Possibility, and Impossibility from Leibniz to Kant

ABSTRACT: In all three of his major works on moral philosophy, Kant conceives of moral obligation, moral permissibility, and moral impermissibility in *modal* terms, namely in terms of moral necessity, moral possibility, and moral impossibility respectively. This terminology is not Kant's own, however, but has a rather long history stretching back to a group of Spanish Jesuit theologians in the early seventeenth century, and it was used in two contexts: in the context of divine and human action to explain how volition can be both metaphysically and physically free and yet *morally* necessary, and in a deontic context to refer to moral obligation, permissibility, and impermissibility. In this paper, my first and primary aim is to sketch the way in which four of Kant's most important German predecessors, namely Leibniz, Christian Wolff, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, and Christian August Crusius, used the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility in *both* the context of action *and* obligation. My second, more limited aim is to suggest that Kant's use of these terms can be clarified by taking this background into consideration.
KEYWORDS: Moral Impossibility; Moral Necessity; Moral Possibility; Obligation; Free Choice

1. INTRODUCTION

In all three of his major works on moral philosophy, Kant conceives of moral obligation, moral permissibility, and moral impermissibility in decidedly *modal* terms, namely in terms of moral necessity, moral possibility, and moral impossibility respectively. A particularly clear example is from the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where Kant claims that by means of "categorical imperatives certain actions are *permitted* or *forbidden*, that is, morally possible or impossible, while some of them or their opposites are morally necessary, that is obligatory" (6: 221). Kant implies this terminology in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as well, where, under the "Table of the categories of freedom", he lists "The *permitted* and the *forbidden*", "*Duty* and what is *contrary to duty*", and "*Perfect* and *imperfect* duty" under the category of "modality" (5: 66). Finally, the same language is implicit in the *Groundwork*, where, in a famous passage discussing the "canon" of moral judgment, Kant refers to both the "inner impossibility" of maxims that "cannot even be thought without contradiction as a universal law of nature", as well as those maxims that lack this inner impossibility but are nevertheless "impossible to will" (4: 424). In the *Mrongovius II* lecture notes on moral philosophy, which stem from the same period as the *Groundwork* (namely the Winter semester of 1784-85), these two kinds of impossibility are explicitly cast in terms of two ways in which an action is "morally impossible", namely "1. if its maxim cannot take place as a universal law" and "2. if its maxim actually can, but we cannot will this" (29: 608). Kant therefore uses modal language to describe a central feature of his moral philosophy, namely his conception of obligation, as well as one of its more controversial features, that is, the idea that moral impermissibility is decided by the presence of contradiction.[1]

The terminology of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility is not Kant's own, however, but has a rather long history. The language of 'moral necessity' in particular was invented by a group of Spanish Jesuit theologians in the early seventeenth century, such as Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (1578-1641), who introduced the concept in order to explain how God's will could be both metaphysically and physically free and yet must choose the best with *moral* necessity (*necessitas moralis*).[2] Thus, in the first instance this language was used in the context of the metaphysics of action to describe a compatibilist conception of divine free will. The language of moral necessity was historically used in a second context as well, namely in a deontic sense to describe moral obligation. It has been argued that the use of the language of moral necessity in this deontic context has its roots in the same Jesuit tradition mentioned above, but at the very latest it can be found in the writings of Francisco Suarez, Hugo Grotius, and Samuel Pufendorf, the latter of whom, for instance, defines obligation as "that by which a Man is bound under a moral Necessity to perform, or admit, or undergo any thing" (1729 [1672], I.I.XXI).[3]

A good deal of scholarship exists on how the above-mentioned Jesuits used the language of moral necessity in their writings, especially within the context of the metaphysics of action.[4] There is also a small body of scholarship that discusses the extent to which Leibniz was familiar with this tradition as well as evaluates whether or not his use of the language of moral necessity can be clarified in light of it.[5] Additional literature discusses how the language of moral necessity was used by eighteenth-century British philosophers in the debate concerning liberty and necessity.[6] By contrast, there is very little discussion of how eighteenth-century German philosophers after Leibniz understood this terminology in these two contexts.[7] The hypothesis of this paper is

1. For a helpful overview of the various ways to interpret the contradiction(s) at issue, see Galvin 2009.

2. See Murray 1995: 106. Knebel 2000 is the most complete study of how these Jesuit thinkers used this terminology.

3. See Knebel 2000: 128, 256 and the sources mentioned there.

4. See especially Knebel 1991; 2000 and Murray 2004. Knebel 2000: 195, for instance, explicitly states that it is "only for the sake of completeness" that he briefly deals with the deontic sense of these terms.

5. See Murray 1995; 1996; 2004; 2014; Adams 2005; Sleigh 2009.

6. See Harris 2005: 6-7 for a summary of how the language of moral necessity was understood by many eighteenth-century British philosophers.

7. To my knowledge, the existing literature deals with this terminology only in the context of a larger discussion of how Kant and his predecessors understood obligation. See e.g., Klemme 2018; 2024; Schwaiger 2009.

that we cannot fully understand Kant's use of the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility until we have a better understanding of the ways in which his most important German predecessors understood these terms.[8] Accordingly, I have two aims in the following: my first and primary aim is to sketch the way in which four of Kant's most important German predecessors, namely Leibniz, Christian Wolff, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, and Christian August Crusius, used the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility in *both* the context of action *and* obligation. My second, more limited aim is to suggest that Kant's use of these terms can be clarified by taking this background into consideration.

I proceed as follows. In section 2 I summarize Leibniz's use of this terminology, which can be seen as the starting point of the subsequent discussion in eighteenth-century Germany.[9] I show that Leibniz uses modal language in the context of both the metaphysics of action and obligation, but it is unclear whether, and if so how, the two contexts are related to one another. In section 3 I show how this changes for Wolff who makes an effort to systematically connect his philosophy of action and theory of obligation, and thereby unites the two contexts in which the language of moral necessity and impossibility are used. In section 4 I consider how Baumgarten further develops Wolff's theory. I illustrate that Baumgarten distinguishes between the "broader" and "stricter" senses of these modal terms to explicitly distinguish the two contexts from each other, and that he makes a sustained effort to show how various modalities (logical, physical, and moral) are related to one another. In section 5 I turn to Crusius who rejects the compatibilist conception of free choice common to Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten, and therefore their conception of free action in terms of moral necessity as well. I illustrate, however, that Crusius preserves the language of moral necessity in the context of obligation but thereby radically changes its meaning. I conclude in section 6 by considering how my analysis in the previous sections illuminates Kant's use of this terminology. I do not pretend to offer a full interpretation of Kant's use of this modal language in this paper. Rather, I outline one important example of how better understanding the way in which his predecessors used this language can illuminate his conception of moral obligation, permissibility, and impermissibility.

8. To be clear: understanding how these German figures used the modal language that is the subject of this paper is a worthwhile undertaking in its own right and not only as a means to better understanding Kant. I structure my discussion around Kant due to the focus of this special issue. I should also mention that my discussion is far from complete: a full discussion would have to consider how numerous other eighteenth-century German figures use the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility, such as G. F. Meier (see e.g., 1764: §§65-69 and §§137-138); I. G. Canz (see 1752: §69), and J. A. Eberhard (see 1781: §35). Thanks to Stefano Bacin for the reference to Canz.

9. Indeed, Knebel 2000: 129 argues that it is because of Leibniz that this language was used in post-Scholastic philosophy.

2. LEIBNIZ

The primary way in which Leibniz uses the concept of 'moral necessity' is in the context of the metaphysics of action. The terminology appears over the course of his attempt to explain how God's will can both necessarily choose the best, such as the creation of the best of all possible worlds, but is nonetheless free in doing so. In the *Theodicy*, for instance,[10] Leibniz states that one of his aims is to illustrate that "absolute necessity, which is called also logical and metaphysical and sometimes geometrical [...] does not exist in free actions, and that thus freedom is exempt not only from constraint but also from real necessity" (T 62-63). As this passage indicates, one of the strategies[11] Leibniz employs to explain how divine choice can be both necessary and free is to argue that the kind of necessity involved in God's choice of the best is distinct from *absolute* necessity. Leibniz defines absolute necessity as that whose opposite implies a contradiction, and thus whose opposite is (absolutely) impossible (T Prel. Disc. §2, §174, §367; see also UOT 150 [Ger. VII, 302]). The kind of necessity involved in God's choice of the best, on the other hand, is what Leibniz calls *moral* necessity.[12] Leibniz argues that this kind of necessity is compatible with freedom because although "God fails not to choose the best" (T §45), it is not *absolutely* impossible for God to do so since God choosing less than the best does not involve a (logical) contradiction. Thus, God necessarily choosing the best is merely "certain" (see e.g., T §234, §310, §67 and DM §13). As long as the opposite of what God chooses is absolutely possible, then God's choice is "contingent" (T §367, see also DM §13), which Leibniz defines simply as "that whose opposite is possible" (see T §282). Accordingly, only *metaphysical* necessity is opposed to freedom (T §232, §237), for Leibniz, whereas the *moral* necessity involved in God's choice of the best is neither fatal (T §231), nor constrained (T §45, §230), metaphysically forced (T §201), nor compelled (T §235), and is exempt from coercion (*coaction*) (LC 194 [Ger. III, 401]). A main argument of the *Theodicy* is therefore that those who claim that the necessity involved in God's choice precludes freedom make the mistake of confusing *moral* and *metaphysical* necessity (see T §168, §180, and §§249-250).[13]

10. While I refer to several of Leibniz's other writings in this section, I focus on the *Theodicy* for two reasons. First, the *Theodicy* was one of the few texts that Leibniz's eighteenth-century contemporaries, such as the ones I discuss in the following sections, would have had access to. Second, the language of 'moral necessity' is especially prominent in this text. Indeed, as Murray 2004: 2 and 2014: 168-169 has argued, Leibniz first begins using this language in the context of action shortly before the *Theodicy*.

11. Leibniz employs several strategies to account for the 'contingency' involved in freedom; contingency being one of the three conditions that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for freedom, according to Leibniz, the other two being 'intelligence' and 'spontaneity'. See Jolley 2020: 151-156 for an overview of these strategies.

12. Sample passages where Leibniz uses this language in the context of the metaphysics of action are: T §124, §128, §132, §158, §168, §175, §180, §201, §§230-231, §234, §310, §344, §350, §367, §374, and LC 195 [Ger III, 402].

13. Leibniz's compatibilist conception of divine free choice is interconnected with a number of other positions, especially the idea that divine foreknowledge of the future is compatible

Leibniz's primary, and thus more familiar, distinction is that between *absolute* and *hypothetical* necessity, and moral necessity is a version of hypothetical necessity (see e.g. T §124 and §132). As indicated above, that which is absolutely necessary is defined as that whose opposite is not possible because it involves a contradiction. That which is merely hypothetically necessary, by contrast, is that whose opposite does not imply a contradiction and thus is only necessary "*ex hypothesi*" (DM §13), that is, necessary on the assumption of (i.e. on hypothesis of) something else, such as a condition or ground (see LC 193 [Ger III, 400]). In the case of moral necessity, Leibniz makes the condition explicit: assuming that the best is necessarily chosen by God, what is morally necessary is only necessary on condition that God recognizes a given course of action as best (see OC 30 [A VI.4.1652]). Interestingly enough, God's choice of the best is also the condition or 'hypothesis' of physical necessity as well: for Leibniz, what is *physically* necessary is only necessary on the assumption of the laws of nature governing movement, and Leibniz is explicit that these laws are only morally necessary, that is, contingent on the world that God has created because he recognized it to be best (see T §349 and §351). Thus, for Leibniz "physical necessity is founded on moral necessity".[14]

As the discussion so far indicates, Leibniz's primary focus when discussing the concept of moral necessity is on the way in which *divine* choice necessarily chooses the best but is nonetheless free. It is important to note that Leibniz holds that *human* choice functions in the same way. The difference is that whereas God has "infallible intuition" (OF 97) and thus wills in accordance with the *true* best, human beings are fallible and thus choose merely in accordance with what *appears* best (DM §13; LC 194 [Ger III, 402]; see also T §310). In fact, Leibniz argues that God created all rational creatures, both humans and angels, in this way.[15] The main point for my purposes is that the kind of necessity at issue in both divine and human choice is the same, namely both God and human beings necessarily choose either the true or apparent best with *moral* necessity.

An important point that has been implicit in the discussion so far is that, at least in the context of the metaphysics of action, Leibniz primarily speaks of moral necessity and not of moral possibility or impossibility. Based on the above analysis, however, we can reconstruct what moral impossibility might mean in this context: morally impossible is any choice other than that which is represented (by either the human or divine mind) as best. For example: if a human being were to deem it best to cheat on an exam (even though this might not be what is *truly* best) it would be *morally* impossible for them to act otherwise, even though alternative courses of action are not absolutely or even physically impossible. Similarly, it would be *morally* impossible for God to choose to create anything other than the best of all possible worlds, even though other worlds are absolutely possible.

with freedom. See T §132, FP 22 [A VI.4.1448], DM §13, and LC 193 [Ger III, 400], as well as Murray 1995 for a discussion.

14. T Prel. Disc. §2. See also A VI.1.86 where Leibniz calls God the "founder [Conditor]" of the world. Thanks to Åsne Grøgaard for this reference.

15. See OC 29 [A VI.4.1651], DM §13, and T §45. This is consistent with Leibniz's claim that the human mind is a mirror of God (see Jolley 2020: 5).

The category of moral possibility in the context of action, however, is more complicated. In the first instance, this concept seems to have no meaning, for as soon as a course of action is represented as best, no other courses of action are morally possible. As we will see below once we turn to Baumgarten, however, there is one way to make sense of this concept: morally possible (in the context of the metaphysics of action) is any course of action that is *possible* for an agent to represent as best. If this is what the concept means, however, it applies to human beings only: as we have seen, the divine mind has insight into the *true* best, that is, the divine mind cannot but recognize the one true best option as the best and (necessarily) choose accordingly. This implies, however, that the morally possible and the morally necessary are coextensive, i.e., it is not possible for the divine mind to recognize other options as best.[16] In the case of the human mind, however, because it chooses only in accordance with what *appears* best, it is morally possible for it to recognize other options as best, and these other possible 'bests' are what we might call 'morally possible.'

The second context in which Leibniz uses the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility is *deontic*, namely in the sense of what is morally obligatory, morally permissible, and morally impermissible. In a number of places, Leibniz conceives of the morally necessary as "what must be done" (A VI.4.2838), as well as what is "due" (see A VI.4.2778). He therefore regards obligation "as a kind of moral necessity" (A VI.4.2838), in the sense that it is "a necessity imposed on him who wants to keep the name of 'a good man'" (Gr 608, see also A VI.4.2856-7).[17] Similarly, Leibniz refers in various places to that which is "possible, impossible, and necessary for a good man, if he wishes to protect his name" (A VI.4.2863). What is morally possible in this sense is therefore that which is "lawful [Licitum]" (see A VI.4.2778), that is, possible for one to do without damaging one's standing as a good person. And morally impossible is that which is "unlawful [Illicitum]" (see A VI.4.2778), that is, "that which it is not possible to do without committing a sin" (A VI.1.471). Leibniz also describes as morally impossible "those things which are done contrary to good manners" (A VI.4.2856-7) or "such things as are impossible for me to do rightly and as befits a good man" and thus as "unjust" (A VI.4.2855).[18] Accordingly, in the deontic context, what is morally necessary, possible, and impossible refer to what is morally required, permissible, and impermissible. This fits well with the idea that moral necessity is a type of hypothetical necessity, for what is morally necessary, possible, and impossible in this sense only

16. This raises the issue of whether Leibniz's concept of divine choice really does allow for contingency. For a description of this issue, though approached from a different angle, see Jolley 2020: 153-156.

17. For a discussion of Leibniz's conception of the 'good man' or '*vir bonus*', see Johns 2014.

18. Leibniz provides the interesting example of a protestant either asking or obtaining permission to marry from the pope. Leibniz argues that since it would be impious for a true protestant to ask for or receive "dispensation" from the pope, it would be morally impossible for them to do so, and thus that such marriages are valid without such dispensation (see A IV.1.471).

holds on a specific supposition, namely so long as one wishes to be a good person and does not want to sin.[19]

By way of conclusion to this section, it is important to note that, at least at first glance, the two contexts in which Leibniz uses the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility seem distinct.[20] In the case of human choice, at least, the two contexts can come apart: what a human being chooses with moral necessity (i.e., what appears to be best) might in fact be that which is morally impossible in the sense of the morally impermissible; in other words, that which appears best might be truly bad, as in the above example of cheating on an exam. In the case of divine choice, however, the two contexts always overlap: since God's intellect cognizes not merely what appears to be best but what is truly best and he acts in line with such cognition with (moral) necessity, God always acts in accordance with perfect goodness, and thus in line with what a "good man" would do. It is therefore no surprise that Leibniz describes duty (*officium*) as "whatever is necessary in the perfectly just" (Leibniz 1903: 517); put differently, human beings *ought* to do what God *necessarily* does.

Much more can be said about Leibniz's conception of obligation, as well as the way in which that which is obligatory is instantiated in the divine and human mind.[21] For my purposes, the important point to emphasize here is that the two contexts in which Leibniz uses the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility seem distinct in the human case, but not in the divine case. In the next section we will see that Wolff's conception of obligation brings the two contexts into systematic connection with one another, especially with respect to human choice.[22]

3. WOLFF

To see how Wolff uses the language of moral necessity and impossibility in the context of the metaphysics of action, we need to take a brief look at his conception of willing and choice. In contrast to Leibniz, Wolff focuses on human choice and defines the will as the "inclination of the mind towards a thing, on account of the good that we think to find in it" (DM §492). Representing something as good therefore functions as a reason for action (*Bewegungs-Grund*) or motive (*motivum*).[23] Merely representing something as good and being inclined towards it is not sufficient for *choice*, however, that is, actually pursuing the attainment of what we represent as good and thus *acting*. In order for the latter to be possible, we not only need to represent something as *good*,

19. For further discussion of Leibniz's understanding of these modal concepts in the deontic context see Johns 2006-2007.

20. Murray 2004: 1, for instance, argues that the contexts of action and obligation are "two quite different contexts, with two quite different meanings".

21. For a recent discussion of Leibniz's conception of obligation, see Brown 2016.

22. It should be noted here that Wolff is not necessarily the first one to accomplish this. Knebel 2000: 257, for instance, argues that Suarez's doctrine of prudence makes it possible for him to systematically connect the two contexts.

23. In the first Index (*Register*) of the *German Metaphysics* Wolff lists *Bewegungs-Grund* as his German translation for the Latin *motivum* (DM, unpaginated).

but as *better* or *best* compared to the other options available to us. Wolff makes this idea clear with his analogy of the scale (*Wage*): if our reasons for acting (representations of the good) are equal on both sides (two alternative choices), the scales do not tip, and we do not act (DM §509). In order to act, the scales must be tipped on one side. One way in which this could take place is if a given option is represented as not only good, but as *better* than the other course of action. Similarly, representing something as *worse* than an alternative course of action leads to us 'nilling' or 'not-willing' (*nicht wollen*) something, that is, positively seeking to avoid or avert it.

As the physical analogy of the scale makes apparent, Wolff, too, holds that representing an object as better or best results in a human being *necessarily* pursuing it. He claims, for instance, that "for a human being who cognizes something as better, it is *impossible* for them to prefer the worse, and as such it *necessarily* happens that they choose the better" (DM §521, my emphasis). Divine choice works the same way and is distinct from human choice just as it was for Leibniz: whereas humans necessarily choose what *appears* to be best, God chooses in line with the *true* best (see DM §984). Like Leibniz, Wolff seeks to explain how the necessity involved in both human and divine choice is compatible with freedom by claiming that what is involved here is a particular "kind of necessity (which one has called the *necessity of morals* [*Nothwendigkeit der Sitten*])" (DM §521).[24] Wolff's most general distinction is also that between what is "*absolutely* [*schlechterdings*] necessary" (DM §575), namely that whose opposite contains a contradiction (see DM §36) or is "necessary in itself" (DM §575) and what is hypothetically necessary, that is, necessary "only under a certain *condition*" (*ibid*., see also Anm. §198). Wolff says that absolute necessity is also called "*geometrical necessity*" or "*metaphysical*" necessity, "because it is to be found in things that belong to geometry and partially also metaphysics" (DM §575). Hypothetical or 'conditional' necessity, on the other hand, is of two kinds (see Anm. §198). The first is "the *necessity of nature*, because it has its ground in the present course of nature, that is, in the present connection of things" (DM §575). The second is "the *necessity of morals*", that is, the kind that "is found in freedom" (*ibid*.) or free choice. Freedom is compatible with this latter kind of necessity because Wolff defines freedom simply as the capacity (*Vermögen*) of the soul "to choose from two equally possible things that which pleases it the most" (DM §519).[25] Thus, similar to Leibniz, necessarily choosing what we represent as best is compatible with freedom, for Wolff, because alternative courses of action are "equally possible", that is, *absolutely* possible or possible in themselves. Wolff also explains that, in choosing the best necessarily, we are not forced or constrained (*gezwungen*) to choose the best (DM §510), since alternative courses of action are still (absolutely) possible;

24. *Nothwendigkeit der Sitten* is Wolff's German rendering of *necessitas moralis* (DM, first *Register*, unpaginated).

25. Wolff places emphasis on pleasure here because pleasure is what necessarily arises in us when we have an intuition of the good (DM §404) and he defines 'the good' as that which makes us and our state more perfect (DM §422). Accordingly, acting freely can also be defined as choosing that which we cognize to be best, because what we cognize as best is, by definition, that which pleases us the most.

there is no constraint here because if we were to prefer an alternative, i.e., represent it as best, we could and would necessarily choose it. Accordingly, and once again in line with Leibniz, Wolff states that it is only "certain [*gewiß*]" that we necessarily choose what we represent to be best and not, strictly or absolutely speaking, necessary (DM §517, see also §578).

As this brief sketch of Wolff's theory of the will and choice and the *moral* necessity involved therein makes clear, Wolff's position is broadly similar to that of Leibniz. As is the case for Leibniz, the primary modal concept in the context of the metaphysics of action is that of the morally necessary. As mentioned above, however, Wolff does also say that "for a human being who cognizes something as better, it is *impossible* for them to prefer the worse" (DM §521, my emphasis); in other words, choosing the worse is *morally* impossible for a human being who cognizes something as better. Wolff does not mention the concept of 'moral possibility' in the context of action, but if it has meaning here, it is likely similar to that mentioned in the previous section, namely 'morally possible' is a course of action that it is possible for us to represent as best. What is distinct from Leibniz, and which will be my focus for the remainder of this section, is Wolff's conception of obligation. As we will see, Wolff's novel theory of obligation allows him to bring the concepts of the morally necessary and the morally impossible within the contexts of action and obligation into systematic connection with each other.

Wolff considers himself to have offered a theory of obligation "of the sort that one has not had before" (Anm. §137, p. 395). One of the ways in which it is unique is on account of the fact that it is grounded in his theory of the will.[26] Consider Wolff's definition of obligation in the *German Ethics*: "Obligating someone to do, or omit, something is nothing other than connecting a motive of volition or nolition to it" (DE §8). Wolff gives the example of a sovereign obligating subjects to refrain from stealing by connecting the punishment of hanging to the action (*ibid*.). Although perhaps not immediately apparent, this fits with Wolff's theory of the will in the following way: if human beings necessarily act on the basis of what they judge to be best, obligating a human being to act involves giving them a reason to do something, i.e., connecting a motive to an action.[27] It is not sufficient, of course, to provide a human being with just any reason: although Wolff does not make this point clear, successfully obligating a human being involves connecting a strong enough reason to an action such that, if they were to cognize this reason, they would represent the action as *better* or *best* and thus

26. For Wolff's explicit statement of this claim, see TN I §973. This can also be gleaned from Wolff's procedure in the *German Ethics*: in the Preface to the first edition (see DE, *Vorrede*, unpaginated), Wolff clarifies that he proceeds in line with the mathematical method, according to which everything that comes later is grounded on what comes before, and the first chapter of part one proceeds by first discussing his theory of the good (§§2-5) and theory of the will (§§6-7) before moving to his theory of obligation (§§8-11).

27. I focus on the case of action for the sake of simplicity, but there can also be obligations of omission as well, which Wolff calls "privative [*privativae*]" in contrast to "positive [*positivae*]" obligations (see PPU I §118).

necessarily act accordingly. Put differently, obligation involves giving human beings a *sufficient* reason to act in a particular way.[28]

'Obligating' in the above sense, namely connecting a (sufficient) motive to an action, is what Wolff later calls 'active' obligation, in contrast to 'passive' obligation, that is, being obligat*ed* to act in a certain way (see PPU I §118, GNV §37, TN I §973). Wolff also distinguishes between three types of obligation based on the source of the connection between a motive and an action: if the connection is grounded in nature, we are speaking about natural obligation; if God is the source, divine obligation; and if a human being, civil obligation (see DE §18). The point I wish to emphasize for the purposes of this paper, however, is that connecting a (sufficient) reason to an action involves *making it necessary* that a human being act in a certain way. This is significant, because it allows us to see how Wolff connects the two senses of 'moral necessity' with one another: if human beings act in accordance with what they cognize to be better or best with *moral* necessity, it makes sense to refer to obligation as moral necessity as well, since obligation amounts to *making it* morally necessary that a human being act in a certain way. Thus, in the *Theologia naturalis*, which contains Wolff's most important discussion of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility, he states that "active obligation is nothing other than the connection of a motive with an action" such that the "moral necessity to do something" is "passive" obligation (TN I §973). There he also defines what is "impossible in a moral way" as "what cannot happen without damaging the correctness of the action or through which the action become incorrect" (TN I §952). Wolff gives the example of helping a thief break open doors: one does not act against goodness if one does not help such a thief, because "it is morally impossible or contrary to good morals, insofar as it offends against justice or is impermissible for a righteous person to do something that does not befit a just man" (TN I §699). What is morally possible, by contrast, is "what can indeed happen, without an action thereby becoming incorrect" (TN I §952).[29] Wolff gives the example of eating an amount of food that is not contrary to health (*ibid.*). As an example of something morally necessary, Wolff gives the example of a rich person giving alms to the needy (see PPU I §116).

There are two features of this view that deserve attention. First, Wolff is explicit that both kinds of moral necessity, i.e., both in the context of the metaphysics of action and in the deontic sense, are versions of hypothetical necessity, and as such are not abso-

28. Other conditions need to be satisfied here as well, such as it must be possible for human beings to discover and know what their obligations are in the first place. For a discussion of this condition see Walschots 2024. See also Walsh 2024 for a recent interpretation of Wolff's conception of obligation more generally.

29. Wolff's inclusion of the concept of 'moral possibility' in the deontic context here is noteworthy: in the earlier *German Ethics*, Wolff not only argues that actions and omissions are good and evil in themselves and by nature on account of the consequences they have on the internal and external states of human beings (see DE §§2-5), but he also claims that *all* actions and omissions are good or evil in this way, such that no action is morally indifferent, that is, merely permissible (see DE §3). Wolff seems to have changed his mind in the Latin works, as the inclusion of the 'morally possible' indicates. See Favaretti Camposampiero 2024 for a discussion.

lute but are based on a condition: action is only morally necessary on the condition that we recognize something to be best (Anm. §198), and what is morally necessary in the deontic sense is only necessary "under the condition that the action must be right" (PPU I §116). The second feature is that Wolff seeks to bring the language of moral necessity and impossibility in both contexts in line with his broader theory of modality, according to which what is necessary is that whose opposite is impossible, and the impossible is that whose opposite is necessary (see DM §36). Thus, when, by means of (active) obligation, it is made morally necessary that a human being act in a certain way, alternative courses of action are thereby made morally impossible, and vice versa (see TN I §972 and PPU I §115). As we will see in the next section, Baumgarten refines the systematic nature of Wolff's theory in two ways: first, by explicitly distinguishing between the two contexts, and second by relating these modal terms to other kinds of modalities.

4. BAUMGARTEN

Baumgarten offers a broadly Wolffian conception of willing[30], according to which human beings merely desire what they perceive to be good (BM §665) and choose in line with what they perceive to be best or, as Baumgarten puts it, what they "prefer" (BM §726, §697). More specifically, Baumgarten argues that in order for choice and action to take place, the good that we perceive to be involved in a given course of action must be "overriding" (BI §13, §15) or "weigh" more (BM §697) compared to the good that speaks in favour of alternative courses of action. Baumgarten therefore agrees with Leibniz and Wolff that choice is "*determined* according to preference" (BM §726, my emphasis), and thus that we choose what we perceive to be best with *necessity*. The necessity of choice is compatible with freedom for the same reason as well, namely because alternatives to what we choose are still (absolutely) possible (see BM §102), and thus choice takes place not with absolute necessity but with mere hypothetical necessity (see BM §102, §724, and BI §139). Baumgarten conceives of divine choice along the same lines as Leibniz and Wolff as well: whereas human beings act in accordance with what they *perceive* to be best, whether this be true or false, the divine intellect is only capable of distinct cognition and is thus never wrong about what is good (see BM §863 and §890).

Baumgarten also offers a broadly Wolffian conception of obligation,[31] according to which it takes place by means of connecting "overriding impelling causes with a free determination" (BI §13, 15). The language of 'impelling causes' (*caussas impulsivas*) is Baumgarten's equivalent for what Wolff called 'motives' (*Bewegungs-Gründe*)[32]

30. For a discussion of some important differences between their views, see Schwaiger 2000 and 2011: ch. 4 and 5.

31. See Schierbaum & Walschots 2024 for some important differences between their views, especially with respect the ways in which constraint (*Zwang*) and reluctant (*ungern*) action are compatible with obligation.

32. Some details are important here: in his German writings, Wolff uses the term *Bewegungs-Grund* to capture both rational and sensible representations of the good (see e.g., DE §190), but in the Latin writings he reserves *motivum* for reasons for action that are rational only

and thus captures the idea that there is always a reason for what we desire, which for Baumgarten is knowledge of the good (see BM §669, §665, and §100).[33] Thus, although Baumgarten's terminology is different, the position is largely the same as Wolff's: obligation takes place by connecting a motive (or impelling cause), e.g., that it is good, with an action (or free determination). What is interesting about the above definition is that Baumgarten makes explicit what was only implicit in Wolff, namely that obligation does not merely require the connection of any motive with an action, but an "overriding" motive, namely one that is sufficient to *determine* the will. Put differently, obligation requires that a sufficiently strong motive be connected to an action such that, as long as the obligated agent distinctly cognizes the motive and its connection to the action, they will necessarily act accordingly. Thus, for Baumgarten as well, obligation involves *making it necessary* that a human being act in a certain way, and Baumgarten even coins a new Latin term to capture this idea, namely *necessitatio* (necessitation/*Nöthigung*),[34] which he defines as "the alteration of something from contingent to necessary" (BM §701). Baumgarten therefore conceives of obligation as "moral necessitation" (BM §723).[35]

Given the broad similarities between the ways in which Wolff and Baumgarten conceive of the necessity involved in both choice and obligation, it should come as no surprise that Baumgarten uses the language of *moral* necessity in both contexts as well. What is new in Baumgarten, however, is that he makes the two contexts explicit by distinguishing between moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility in the "broader sense" and in the "stricter sense" (see esp. BM §723). The "broader sense" refers to the context of action: what is morally necessary in the broader sense is "that whose opposite is only impossible through freedom, or in a substance insofar as it is free" (*ibid.*); what is morally impossible in the broader sense is "that which cannot be done solely on account of the freedom in a free substance" (*ibid.*); and what is morally possible in the broader sense is "that which can only be done through freedom, or in a free substance as such" (*ibid.*). Although Baumgarten's language places emphasis on freedom here, he defines moral necessity and moral impossibility in the context of action in largely the same way as Wolff: when I choose with moral necessity (which is compatible with freedom) on the basis of my representation of what is best, it then becomes morally impossible for me to (freely) choose its opposite. What is new in the above is Baumgarten's explicit inclusion of the category of the morally possible: for Baumgarten, morally possible in

(see PE §890 and §670 and Schierbaum 2022 for a discussion). We might therefore say, with Schwaiger 2011: 120 n. 343, that Baumgarten's "impelling causes" are broader than Wolff 's Latin conception of "motives" since the former encompasses both rational and sensitive motives alike.

33. Importantly, Baumgarten conceives of the impelling causes of desire as "incentives of the mind [*elateres animi*/*Triebfedern des Gemüths*]" (see BM §669 and §342). See Walschots (forthcoming) for the argument that the way in which Baumgarten understands incentives had an influence on Kant.

34. See Schwaiger 2009: 69-70 and 2011: 119.

35. See Klemme 2024 and Schierbaum & Walschots 2024 for a discussion of obligation as necessitation in Baumgarten and Kant.

the context of action, that is, in the "broader sense", is what "*can* only be done through freedom" (my emphasis); in other words, morally possible is that which it is possible for me to represent as best and thus do freely and yet with moral necessity. In the previous two sections, I suggested that this was indeed one possible way in which to understand the category of moral possibility in the context of action for Leibniz and Wolff as well.

The "stricter" sense of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility therefore refers to the deontic context. The morally necessary in the stricter sense is "that whose opposite is impermissible", i.e., "moral necessitation" or "obligation" (BM §723); the morally impossible in the stricter sense is the "morally impermissible" or "that which is impossible through the freedom that must be determined in conformity with moral laws" (*ibid.*); and the morally possible in the stricter sense is the "morally permissible", i.e. "that which can only be done through freedom determined in conformity with moral laws" (*ibid.*). As Baumgarten explains in the *Elements*, moral laws are simply those that "morally necessitate free determinations", that is, they are "obligatory propositions" which "express a determination in conformity with overriding impelling causes" (BI §60). This description of moral laws highlights an important point about his view: not just any overriding impelling cause is truly obligatory, for this would imply that anything a human being cognizes as best is not only something they *will* do with moral necessity in the broad sense, but also something they *ought* to do. To make this point, Baumgarten (and Wolff, see PPU I §117) distinguishes between "true" and "apparent" obligations (see BI §23). Thus, when a human being perceives a given course of action as best (whether they are right or wrong), it only *appears* to them to be what they are obligated to do.[36] We would only know our true obligations at all times if our intellect were infallible and we were only capable of distinct cognition, as is the case for God, as mentioned above. Thus, in the above definitions, Baumgarten presumably has "true" obligations in mind, such that the morally possible or permissible is that which *does not* conflict with our true obligations, and the morally impossible or impermissible that which *does* conflict with our true obligations.

An important feature of Baumgarten's conception of the two kinds of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility that I wish to highlight is the relationship he sees as existing between various modalities.[37] Like Leibniz and Wolff, Baumgarten distinguishes between what is "necessary in itself", i.e., what is necessary "metaphysically, intrinsically, absolutely, geometrically, [or] logically", and what is "hypothetically necessary" (BM §102), that is, what is necessary only "respectively, relatively, extrinsically, through another, [or] qualifiedly" (see BM §16). What is absolutely necessary is

36. Strictly speaking, even a human being perceiving something as best does not always mean they regard it as obligatory: Baumgarten makes room for various sorts of reluctant action, such as when a human being takes something to be good only insofar as it is the lesser of two evils. In such a case, one takes something to be better while simultaneously regarding it as evil in itself. For an extended discussion of Baumgarten's conception of reluctant action, see Schierbaum & Walschots 2024.

37. To be sure, the 'hierarchy' that I proceed to explain below can be found in Wolff as well (see e.g., TN §699; PPU I §115, §209, §264), but it is especially apparent and more detailed in Baumgarten.

"that whose opposite is impossible in itself" (BM §102); in other words, it is that whose opposite implies or involves a contradiction, when considered in itself and not in relation to anything else. Similarly, the absolutely possible is that which does not involve a contradiction, when considered by itself (BM §8). And the absolutely impossible is that which *does* involve a contradiction, when considered by itself (see BM §§7, 9, 15). What is hypothetically necessarily, possible, and impossible, by contrast, is that which is such when considered in relation to something else or on hypothesis of something else. Baumgarten distinguishes between two kinds of hypothetical necessity, possibility, and impossibility. The first is moral in its two varieties discussed above, and the second is physical or natural. Baumgarten defines what is physically possible as "whatever can be actualized by a certain nature" and whatever cannot be so actualized is "physically impossible" (see BM §469). The physically necessary is the opposite of what is physically impossible (*ibid.*) and, as Baumgarten explains elsewhere, it is what a substance is "necessitated" to do "by their own essence alone" (BM §710). These are all only hypothetical because they describe things that are necessary, possible, and impossible only for, i.e., on condition of, a certain nature. To illustrate what these terms mean with some examples: it is physically necessary that a human being breathe, because their essence makes it impossible for them not to do so (without ceasing to be the kind of thing that they are); it is physically impossible, all things being equal, for a human being to lift 5,000 kg above their head; and finally, it is physically possible, again all things being equal, for a human being to lift 5 kg above their head.[38]

Distinguishing between these varieties of necessity, possibility, and impossibility leads Baumgarten to explain that a certain hierarchy exists among them such that, in the first instance, something is only physically possible if it is also absolutely possible (BI §11). The correlate here is that if something is absolutely impossible it cannot be physically possible (see BM §469). For example, it is physically impossible to draw a four-sided triangle *because* a four-sided triangle is absolutely, i.e., intrinsically or conceptually, impossible. Similarly, what is morally possible in the broad sense, i.e., possible for me to recognize as best and therefore do freely, must first be *both* absolutely possible *and* physically possible (see BI §131). The correlate of this is that if a given action is physically impossible, for instance, I cannot freely choose to do it. Finally, Baumgarten argues that actions that are morally necessary and possible in the stricter sense, i.e., morally obligatory and permissible, must not only be absolutely and hypothetically possible, but also morally possible in the broader sense, i.e., possible for me to freely choose (see BI §10 and §43). If I cannot first freely choose to do an action, i.e., represent it as the best course of action, I also cannot be obligated to do it. At the same time, Baumgarten makes clear that the reverse relationships do not always hold: absolute possibility does not guarantee physical or moral possibility (in either sense), nor does physical possibility guarantee moral possibility (in either sense) (see BM §469). Similarly, and going in the opposite direction, physical impossibility does not always imply absolute impossibility, nor does moral impossibility (of either sort) always imply

38. The latter two examples are similar to those given by Wolff in PPU I §115.

physical or absolute impossibility (*ibid*.). Indeed, the relationships holding between all these modal terms is complex, since what is physically necessary does not imply that it is absolutely necessary (see *ibid*. and §102), and what is physically necessary of course *excludes* moral possibility and necessity in both the broader and stricter senses (see BM §708).

It would be worth exploring the above-identified hierarchy that Baumgarten sees as existing between these various modalities in more detail. The point I wish to emphasize for my purposes in this paper is that this hierarchy amounts to a relatively elaborate conception of the relationship between 'ought' and 'can': we can only be obligated to do what we (absolutely, physically, and morally in the broad sense) *can* do, and what we (absolutely, physically, and morally in the broad sense) *cannot* do, we cannot be obligated to do (see especially BI §11). In the Conclusion to this paper, I will suggest that this is a feature found in Kant's use of the language of moral impossibility in particular.

5. CRUSIUS

Crusius also makes a fundamental distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity, and he does so in the following way: absolute necessity is when "something absolutely cannot be otherwise" and hypothetical necessity is such that "on supposition of certain circumstances, something cannot fail to happen, or could happen differently" (E §125). Crusius states that these kinds of necessity are not arbitrary, but are in accordance with the end of using language, for there is an important difference between them, namely "hypothetical necessity is supposed to leave the possibility of the moral imputation of our actions open in such a way that we can nonetheless perform virtue, or incur blame, or deserve punishment or reward" (E §126). Significantly, however, Crusius argues that the distinction dissolves if

> in the series of causes, on which that which is hypothetically necessary is based, one does not at some point arrive at the kind of cause that could have omitted its action in precisely the same circumstances, such that its action was not, not even hypothetically, necessary. For, if all the causes, in the circumstances where they have acted, could not have omitted acting, then the opposite of no action was truly possible, §56. Consequently, they were all necessary. (E §126)

Accordingly, whether the series of causes continues into infinity or one arrives at something immediately necessary, Crusius argues that the effects in both cases are absolutely (*schlechterdings*) necessary, "and must, at the time they exist, be just as necessary as if their opposite could not have been thought, both immediately and in general" (E §126). Accordingly, Crusius argues that if we want to make use of this distinction in accordance with the use of language and to make room for moral imputation, "hypothetical necessity must in the end be grounded on first, free, foundational activities" (*ibid*.).[39]

39. This is likely a critique of the Wolffian conception of hypothetical necessity, but it should be noted that Leibniz accounts for exactly that which Crusius demands here. In the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Leibniz argues that contingent truths, i.e., those that are hypothetically necessary, are grounded on "God's first free decree always to do what is most perfect" (DM §13).

In this context Crusius makes an interesting point. He argues, namely, that "each and every hypothetical necessity is a *necessitas consecutionis* [consequential necessity], but such a one that has an end somewhere and is grounded on something that is not necessary" (*ibid.*). Continuing, he explains that "not every *necessitas consecutionis* is a *necessitas hypothetica*, rather, when in the series of that which one sets as the condition, everything is again necessary, then it remains an absolute necessity" (*ibid.*). This leads Crusius to make an implicit critique of Wolff's conception of hypothetical necessity: if one were to think that necessity remains hypothetical simply because the consequent inevitably follows from a preceding condition, then one is confusing *necessitas consecutionis* with *necessitas hypothetica*; put differently, if one thinks this way then there is ultimately no difference in the effects of both kinds of necessity. Crusius claims that this is the essence of fate (*fatum*), that is, when one does not presuppose a foundational activity of freedom as the origin of the series of consequences (see *ibid.*).

In the *Guide to Living Rationally*, Crusius explicitly links this critique to the Wolffian conception of the metaphysics of action, where he argues that "if one were to permit those actions [to be free], to which the effecting substance would be determined by its own representations and desires […] then the action would not thereby stop being necessary, because everything that is determined is necessary, insofar as it is determined" (A §40). Crusius therefore explicitly rejects using the language of moral necessity in the context of the metaphysics of action: "Some consider moral necessity in a different sense, namely in one such that it is a species of *necessitas consecutionis*. Namely, moral necessity is for them the kind where a rational spirit is determined to do something by means of certain representations of the good" (E §131). Crusius argues that these philosophers entirely remove the possibility of true moral necessity, namely the kind on which virtue is grounded: "one therefore sees quite well that they only preserve the word and have made the meaning more doubtful, by virtue of which they believe the same *necessitas consecutionis* in all the events of the world" (*ibid.*). Indeed, Crusius notes that although these philosophers try to distinguish between physical and moral necessity, he argues that this distinction ends up collapsing because both are versions of *necessitas consectionis*, in either bodies or spirits; put differently, both physical and moral necessity are, for these philosophers, subspecies of a more general kind of necessity and are therefore, at root, the same (*ibid.*). This destroys the possibility of true freedom, for Crusius, which he conceives as *incompatible* with determinism.[40]

Crusius criticizes Wolff's conception of obligation on similar grounds, namely he says that it is an "error [*Fehler*] that cannot be excused" when "some completely confuse the grounds of physical actuality or possibility with moral grounds, and thus believe to have explained obligation when they provide a series of efficient causes, which follow upon each other in the soul and determine the effect, e.g., how certain representations excite the will and this subsequently breaks out into action" (A §164). As this passage indicates, Crusius rejects conceiving of obligation in terms of *making* an action necessary, primarily because he thinks that in doing so one confuses or equates physical and

40. For an account of Crusius's conception of free will, see Walschots 2021.

moral grounds, and thereby conceives of human action as determined rather than free. Although Crusius rejects the conception of the necessity of action we find in Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten, he continues to use modal language in the context of obligation. But because both Wolff and Baumgarten offer a conception of obligation that relies on their theory of the will, the way in which Crusius uses this modal language is therefore importantly different.

In order to understand how Crusius uses the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility in the deontic context, we need to look at a distinction Crusius implies in the passage quoted above, namely that between "physical" and "moral" existence: whereas physical or "true" existence is attributed to a thing insofar as it "actually exists [*wirklich vorhanden sey*]", moral existence is "that constitution of thing, by virtue of which one can say of it that it *should* happen" (E §131, my emphasis). In general, Crusius defines the word 'moral' as "that which can be accomplished by the will of a rational and free spirit in such a way that this spirit thereby strives for known ends" (*ibid.*). In line with this definition, moral existence is given the following, more precise definition: "Now, if one has insight into certain reasons why something should be done by a rational spirit on account of certain presupposed ends, then one ascribes to that which should happen a moral existence" (*ibid.*). Crusius conceives of moral necessity in the same way and thereby equates moral existence and moral necessity: "*moral necessity* is the relation of an action or omission to certain presupposed ends, by virtue of which it should happen" (*ibid.*, see also A §160). Moral necessity is thus obligation: "That state, in which a moral necessity to something exists, is called *obligation* in the broad sense" (E §131 and A §160). Moral impossibility and possibility are understood as impermissibility and permissibility:

> Similarly, one calls *moral impossibility* that constitution of a thing, on account of which it is not permitted to happen. But *moral possibility* is when one can claim of something that is subjected to the voluntary actions of a rational spirit neither that it should happen, nor also that it should not happen, and thus merely that it is permitted to happen, and that it is up to one. (E §130)

Accordingly, since moral necessity is defined as what *should* happen, moral possibility and impossibility are defined in terms of what *may* and *should not* happen respectively. The salient feature of Crusius's use of this language is that moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility relate to "certain presupposed ends" (E §131). Crusius distinguishes between two kinds of obligation based on the source of these ends:

> The presupposed ends, on the basis of which moral necessity can be grasped, are either laws and therefore ends of the legislator, or they are ones that we give [*vorsetzen*] to ourselves, and which we therefore do not regard in relation to a law. On this basis there arise *two kinds of moral necessity*, namely *statutory obligation* [*gesetzliche Verbindlichkeit*] and the *obligation of prudence* [*Verbindlichtkeit der Klugheit*], which must be treated in practical philosophy. (E §131)

As indicated here, Crusius offers additional insight into the necessity involved in these two kinds of obligation in the *Guide*. There, he explains that, on the one hand, that "on which the moral necessity of an action or omission is grounded […] is to be sought […] in certain ends already desired by us", that is, the "essential ends of human nature according to the thelematology" (A §162). 'Thelematology' is Crusius's "doctrine of the will" (A §1), and the essential ends of human nature that he describes in that section of the *Guide* include the foundational desires for our own perfection (A §111) and perfection in general (A §122). The obligations based on these essential ends are the obligations of prudence, and their necessity is grounded in *instrumental rationality*. Consider the following passage:

> the *obligation of prudence* in moral science is that relation of an action or omission to certain ends, which we desire on account of our nature and therefore to the extent that we desire them, which makes it such that when we do not proceed in such and such a way, the same ends cannot be attained. (A §162)

The necessity involved in obligations of prudence is therefore grounded on instrumental rationality: given we necessarily desire certain things as a matter of nature, we ought to undertake certain actions and omissions as *necessary* means to attaining these ends. Indeed, as the above passage indicates, if we do not undertake certain actions and omissions, the ends in question would not be achieved, i.e., it would be impossible for us to attain them. As such, alternative courses of action become either *morally impossible*, that is, impermissible, or *morally possible*, that is permissible, on the condition that we actually want to attain our ends.

At first glance, obligations of virtue, which Crusius calls "obligation in the narrow sense" (A §162), seem to be somewhat different. In contrast to obligations of prudence, Crusius argues that an "*obligation of virtue* is the relation of an action or omission to a divine law, which makes it such that, if we do not proceed in such and such a way, the law will be infringed upon" (*ibid.*). Conceiving of obligations of virtue in this way seems to suggest that they are not founded on an end, and thus their necessity is not grounded in instrumental rationality either. However, a closer look reveals that this is not the case. After all, Crusius defines moral necessity in general, not just obligations of prudence, as "the relation of an action or omission to certain presupposed ends, by virtue of which it should happen" (E §131, see also A §160). In addition to the foundational desires for our own perfection and perfection in general mentioned above, the third and final foundational desire in human beings is the "*drive of conscience* [*Gewissenstrieb*]", that is, "the natural drive to cognize a divine moral law, that is, to believe in a rule of human action wherein it is determined what God demands be done or omitted out of obedience and for the sake of our dependence on him and which he would otherwise punish" (A §132). The key here is dependence: Crusius argues that "we depend on God in every respect" (A §133), where dependence is defined as "the kind of relation […] that implies a moral necessity to fulfill a law, insofar as it is a law, even if we were not to consider our own advantage or disadvantage" (A §165). Crusius argues that it is "the representation of dependence, by means of which it is made efficacious in us that it drives us to obedience, because there is a foundational desire in us to act in accordance with it" (*ibid.*). Accordingly, in the case of obligations of virtue, "the ground of moral necessity lies in a law and in our indebtedness [*Schuldigkeit*] to fulfill it" (A §162). In that our obedience to divine law is ultimately grounded on a foundational drive, obligations of virtue are grounded on an end that we necessarily desire as well, namely our foundational drive to obey God's commands, and the necessity involved here can therefore similarly be said to be grounded in instrumental rationality.[41] In sum: for Crusius the moral necessity of obligation is grounded in the fact that it would be instrumentally *irrational* not to choose the necessary means to our ends.

6. CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion of the ways in which some of the most central figures in eighteenth-century German philosophy used the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility reveals that this terminology underwent an interesting development: whereas for Leibniz the two contexts in which the terminology was used appeared to be distinct, Wolff brought them into systematic relation to one another, which was then refined and developed further by Baumgarten. Crusius's use of this language is a turning point because he rejects conceiving of free action as necessary in the way common to Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten. Yet he continues to utilize these modal terms in the context of obligation and thereby redefines the sense of necessity involved therein. The situation for Kant is similar to that of Crusius: he ridicules the psychological determinism found in Leibniz (and Wolff and Baumgarten) that "is driven by representations" as "at bottom […] nothing better than the freedom of a turnspit, which also, once it is wound up, accomplishes its movements of itself" (5: 97; see also 28: 267-268 and Allison 2006: 388). It is therefore not surprising that Kant only uses the language of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility in the context of obligation.

Kant's understanding of obligation, and of moral permissibility and impermissibility as well, is far too big a topic to treat here in any detail. By way of conclusion, however, I wish to illustrate an important way in which the foregoing sections can help clarify Kant's use of modal language in the deontic context. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Kant distinguishes between two kinds of moral impossibility, and these correspond to the two ways in which maxims can fail the requirements of the formula of universal law, namely when maxims "cannot even be thought without contradiction as a universal law of nature", and when maxims lack this inner impossibility but are nevertheless "impossible to will" (4: 424). Now, although Kant distinguishes between these two kinds of moral impossibility, he argues that, at root, there is just one criterion: he claims that "the canon of judging" a maxim morally is that one "must *be able to will* that a maxim of our action become a universal law" (*ibid.*). What this means is that a 'contradiction in conception', as Onora O'Neill famously described the

41. For a recent and more extensive discussion of Crusius's attempt to ground moral obligation, but with a different focus than mine here, see Schierbaum 2024.

first kind of moral impossibility (see O'Neill 2013: 136-193), implies a 'contradiction in the will', but not vice versa (see Klemme 2017: 158). In other words, some maxims are such that they cannot be willed as a universal law, even though there is nothing contradictory or impossible about conceiving the maxim itself as a universal law (a contradiction in the will, but *not* a contradiction in conception). But other maxims are such that we cannot will them as universal laws *because* it is impossible to conceive of them as universal laws (a contradiction in the will *because* a contradiction in conception). In both cases the ultimate test is whether a maxim can be willed as a universal law, as Kant says in the passage above. But there are two separate ways in which it is impossible to do so.

What the preceding discussion reveals, I would like to suggest, is *why* this is the case. As Baumgarten makes especially clear, a certain hierarchy exists among various kinds of necessity, possibility, and impossibility, such that what is physically possible, for instance, must first be absolutely possible, even though absolute possibility in turn does not guarantee physical possibility, etc. For Kant things are similar: according to perhaps his most central distinction between kinds of possibility, *logical* possibility is merely what is possible in thought, that is, merely when a concept does not contradict itself, but for *real* possibility "something more is required" (see e.g., B xxvi). The important point for my purposes, which this passage reveals, is that in order for something to be really possible, it must first be logically possible, but logical possibility does not guarantee real possibility. The same holds for moral possibility in the sense of moral permissibility: it must first be conceptually possible for a maxim to be a universal law if it is possible for us to will as a universal law, but just because a maxim is conceptually possible as a universal law, this does not in turn imply that we can will it as one. I contend this is what is happening in Kant's two cases of moral impossibility: according to the first, a maxim is morally impossible *because* it is conceptually (i.e., logically) impossible as a universal law. And according to the second, even if a maxim is (logically) possible as a universal law, this is not guarantee it is morally possible, i.e., that we can will it as one.

As I hope this brief conclusion reveals, taking a more in-depth look at Kant's conception of moral necessity, possibility, and impossibility in light of how some of his more important predecessors used this language would be a very worthwhile undertaking. With the above sketch of how some of his most important predecessors used this language now in hand, we are in a much better position to do so.

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ABBREVIATIONS

References to Kant's works cite the volume and page number of his *Gesammelte Schriften* (Akademie Ausgabe): Vol. 1-22, edited by Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften; Vol. 23 edited by Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin; Vol. 24ff. edited by Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. The exception are references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which refer to the page numbers of the first (A) and second (B) edition. I follow the translations of Kant's texts available in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* and I indicate where these translations have been modified. Translations of the Mrongovius II lecture notes on moral philosophy are from Jens Timmermann, whom I thank for making his draft available to me.

References to Leibniz's *Theodicy* (T) cite either the section (§) or, if from the Preface, page number. I use the English translation in G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. by E. M. Huggard, ed. with an Introduction by A. Farrer, BiblioBazaar, 2007. References to Leibniz's other works cite either the section or page number of the translations contained in G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. by D. Garber and R. Ariew, Indianopolis-Cambridge, Hackett, 1989, and I use the following abbreviations:

DM = *Discourse on Metaphysics*
FP = *On Freedom and Possibility*
OC = *On Contingency*
OF = *On Freedom*
UOT = *On the Ultimate Origin of Things*
LC = *Letter to Cost, on Human Freedom*

Whenever possible, I also cite from the following standard editions:

A = *Sämtliche Schriften* (Akademie Ausgabe), Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Akademie Verlag, 1923 (citing the series, volume, and page number).
Ger = *Philosophische Schriften*, ed. by C. J. Gerhardt, 7 Vols., Berlin, Weidmann, 1875-90.
Gr = *Textes inédits d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque provincial de Hanovre*, ed. by G. Grua, Vol. I, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1948.

All translations of Wolff are my own. I cite the volume, section, and occasionally page number of the following works:

Anm. = *Der vernünfftigen Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen* überhaupt*, anderer Theil, bestehend in ausführlichen Anmerckungen*, Frankfurt, 1724; reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 1983 (here referred to as *Remarks to the German Metaphysics*).
DE = *Vernünfftige Gedancken von der Menschen Thun und Lassen, zu Beförderung ihrer Glückseeligkeit*, Halle, 1720; reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 2003 (here referred to as *German Ethics*).
DM = *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen* überhaupt, Halle, 1720; reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 2003 (here referred to as *German Metaphysics*).
GNV = *Grundsätze des Natur- und Völckerrechts*, Halle, 1754.
PPU = *Philosophia practica universalis*, 2 Vols., Frankfurt-Leipzig, 1738-39.
TN = *Theologia naturalis*, 2 Vols., Frankfurt-Leipzig, 1736-37.

References to Baumgarten's works cite the section number of:

BM = *Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. by C. D. Fugate and J. Hymers, London-New York, Bloomsbury, 2013.
BI = *Elements of First Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. by C. Fugate and J. Hymers. London-New York, Bloomsbury, 2020.

All translations of Crusius are my own and I cite the section numbers of:

A = C. A. Crusius, *Anweisung vernünftig zu leben,* Leipzig, 1744 (here referred to as *Guide to Living Rationally*).
E = C. A. Crusius, *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten*, Leipzig, 1745 (here referred to as *Sketch of the Necessary Truths of Reason*).

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Michael Walschots
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
ORCID: 0000-0002-9869-6696
mhwalschots@gmail.com

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ALEXEI N. KROUGLOV

Der Begriff der Gesinnung bei Kant

ABSTRACT: Kant's concept of '*Gesinnung*' causes enormous difficulties when translated into foreign languages. This is related to substantive problems in the understanding of this 'enigmatic term'. Various translations of the Bible result in a tension between the sensual and intellectual realms in Kant's understanding of '*Gesinnung*'. A review of the pre-Kantian history of the idea of '*Gesinnung*' clarifies some problems. Important sources for the Kant's concept were the writings of A. G. Baumgarten, Chr. A. Crusius, M. Mendelssohn, and J. J. Spalding. '*Gesinnung*' obtains a conceptual status in Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. However, Kant truly develops this concept only in *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*. Here '*Gesinnung*' appears as an unknowable, noumenal, supersensual basis for the acceptance of other maxims and as a maxim of maxims. Virtue turns out to be the evidence of the presence of '*Gesinnung*' while an act is a manifestation of '*Gesinnung*'.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Kants Begriff der ‚Gesinnung' erzeugt erhebliche Schwierigkeiten bei der Übersetzung in andere Sprachen. Die Schwierigkeiten sind mit den inhaltlichen Problemen in der Auffassung von diesem „enigmatic term" verbunden. Verschiedene Übersetzungen der Bibel aus dem Lateinischen und Altgriechischen tragen zur Spannung zwischen den sinnlichen und intellektuellen Sphären in Kants Begriff der Gesinnung bei. Einige von diesen Problemen werden durch die Studie der vorkantischen Geschichte des Begriffs der Gesinnung gelöst. Als besonders wichtige Quellen gelten für Kant Werke von A. G. Baumgarten, Chr. A. Crusius, M. Mendelssohn und J. J. Spalding. Als richtiger Begriff bildet sich die Gesinnung in der *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. Aber die genuine Entfaltung erlebt dieser Begriff erst in der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*. Hier ist die Gesinnung ein unerkennbarer, noumenaler, übersinnlicher Grund für die Annahme von Maximen, eine Maxime von Maximen, wobei die Tugend als ein Zeugnis des Vorhandenseins der Gesinnung und die Handlung als eine Erscheinung der Gesinnung gilt.

KEYWORDS: *Gesinnung*; Conduct of Thought; Supersensible; Revolution; Religion of Reason

1. EINLEITUNG

Bis jetzt ist die Reflexion über den kantischen Begriff der Gesinnung in erster Linie im nicht-deutschsprachigen Raum verbreitet. Die Ursache liegt wohl darin, dass dieser Begriff für die Muttersprachler vermeintlich klar und deutlich scheint, während die ausländischen Kantforscher auf erhebliche Probleme aufstoßen, sobald sie versuchen, diesen „enigmatic term“[1] etwa ins Englische,[2] ins Portugiesische[3] oder ins Russische[4] zu übersetzen. Ein zusätzliches Problem bildet, zumindest für die russische Philosophie, eine spätere philosophische Entwicklung in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts, die zu einer Gegenüberstellung von zwei Typen der Ethik führte, nämlich der so genannten ‚Gesinnungsethik‘ einerseits und der so genannten ‚Erfolgsethik‘ bzw. ‚Verantwortungsethik‘ andererseits. Bei jeder gerechten Kritik an dieser Gegenüberstellung[5] gilt für viele bis heute eine ‚Gesinnungsethik‘ im Sinne von Ethik der Überzeugungen als eine gewisse Verkörperung der kantischen Ethik.

Methodologisch gesehen sind mindestens drei Herangehensweisen vorhanden, um die mit dem kantischen Begriff der Gesinnung verbundenen Probleme zu lösen: eine Appell an die heutigen linguistischen Lexika, je jünger desto besser, was vor allem in der englischsprachigen Kantforschung praktiziert wird, eine hinsichtlich Kants erklärende Studie der Vorgeschichte des Begriffs der Gesinnung in der deutschen Philosophie des 18. Jahrhunderts sowie seiner älteren Quellen, und eine genetische Untersuchung der Entwicklung des Begriffs der Gesinnung bei Kant von den vorkritischen zu den kritischen Werken.

Die erste Herangehensweise kann zwar für die Übersetzung bis zu einer gewissen Grade vom Nutzen sein, aber zur Klärung des Begriffs selbst kann sie wenig beitragen. Diejenigen, die dem zweiten Weg folgen, entdecken mit Erstaunen, dass trotz der zahlreichen Studien solcher Art vieles nach wie vor im Dunkeln bleibt. Die genetische Betrachtung zeigt von Anfang an, dass Kant das Wort „Gesinnung“ in den vorkritischen Werken zwar benutzte,[6] aber dies kaum eine strenge begriffliche Verwendung war, die jedes Mal von dem Kontext sehr abhing. Eine begriffliche Gestaltung erlebte die „Gesinnung“ erst nach der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781^{1}).[7] Obwohl in der ersten *Kritik* ein gewisser Schimmer des zukünftigen Begriffs bereits zu sehen wäre, ist es eher nach wie vor ein nicht präzis bestimmtes Wort und immer noch kein strenger philosophischer Begriff, der wichtige Inhalte zum Ausdruck bringt. Zum echten philosophischen Begriff wird die Gesinnung erst in der *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785). Kant redet hier von den „reinen moralischen Gesinnungen“,[8] die als „Maximen des Willens“[9] zu verstehen sind. Die Gesinnung besteht in der Handlung aus „reiner Pflicht“,[10] wobei die sittlich gute Gesinnung mit der Tugend identisch sei.[11] Eine neue

1. Palmquist 2015: 235.
2. Alisson 1990: 136-145; Munzel 1999: xvi-xvii; McCarty 2009: 205; Pluhar 2009: xi-xiii; Palmquist 2015: 254-255; Krouglov 2019a: 47-50.
3. Vgl. Pinheiro 2005.
4. Krouglov 2019b.
5. Vgl. dazu sowohl im Allgemeinen als auch in Bezug auf Max Weber: Grünewald 2010.
6. Vgl. AA I, 222, 228; AA II, 200; AA II, 216, 220; AA II, 372.
7. Vgl. KdrV B 777/A 749; B 778/A 750; B 841/A 813; B 843/A 815; B 857/A 829; B 858/A 830.
8. AA IV, 412.
9. AA IV, 435.
10. AA IV, 406.
11. AA IV, 435.

These Kants lautet hier, „das Wesentlich-Gute“ der Handlung nach dem kategorischen Imperativ, der in dieser Schrift überhaupt zum ersten Mal auftaucht, bestehe nicht in dem Erfolg, denn der „mag sein, welcher er wolle“, sondern in der Gesinnung.[12]

Im *Naturrecht Feyerabend*, das als eine Erläuterung zur *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* helfen kann, erweiterte Kant den Begriff der Gesinnung dadurch, dass er für die Entgegensetzung von Ethik und Recht dient: „Die Handlung die nach den geäußerten Gesinnungen, und nicht nach den innern Gesinnungen mit dem allgemeinen Gesetz übereinstimmt, ist unbillig“.[13] Die Innerlichkeit der wahren Gesinnungen bedeutet, dass sie „nicht unter Zwangsrecht stehen“ können.[14] Dies schafft eine Grundlage für die Unterscheidung der Ethik und des Rechts:[15] „Ethic ist praktische Philosophie der Handlung in Ansehung der Gesinnungen. Jus practische Philosophie der Handlungen ohne Rücksicht der Gesinnungen“.[16] In der Ethik ist die Billigkeit vorhanden, die mit den innerlichen Gesinnungen verbunden ist, während das Recht mit der Gerechtigkeit oder den so genannten „geäußerten“ Gesinnungen zu tun hat: „Die Billigkeit ist Uebereinstimmung des Willens auch mit den innern Gesinnungen andrer Menschen; das strenge Recht aber mit den geäußerten Gesinnungen“.[17]

Diese neuen Bedeutungen fanden in der *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788) ihre Entfaltung, in der der Begriff der Gesinnung bereits mehr als 50 Mal benutzt wird, d.h. öfters als in allen vorherigen Druckschriften Kants insgesamt. Im Folgenden biete ich das Ergebnis meiner Untersuchung mancher wichtiger Quellen des kantischen Begriffs der Gesinnung an. Danach skizziere ich diejenige Entwicklung, die dieser Begriff in der kritischen Zeit bei Kant erlebte, und zwar unter Berücksichtigung der vorkantischen Vorgeschichte.

2. ZUR VORGESCHICHTE DES KANTISCHEN BEGRIFFS DER GESINNUNG

Auf Deutsch sind sowohl systematische[18] als auch quellengeschichtliche Untersuchungen des Begriffs der Gesinnung vorhanden. Es lohnt sich zu Beginn, diese Studien wenigstens kurz zu überblicken, und zwar von demjenigen Standpunkt aus, ob sie den kantischen Begriff der Gesinnung verdeutlichen können.

Trübners deutsches Wörterbuch (1943), herausgegeben von Alfred Götze, unterstrich, dass „gesinnt“ in der mitteldeutschen Sprache sowohl durch die Sinne als auch durch den Verstand begabt zu sein bedeutete. Wenn in der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts das Substantiv „Gesinnung“ fast ausschließlich so viel als „Denkweise“ bedeutete, so war es im 18. Jahrhundert breiter und enthielt unter anderem auch die Bedeutung des

12. AA IV, 416.
13. AA XXVII, 1328.
14. AA XXVII, 1329.
15. Vgl. dazu auch: AA XXIX, 235; R 7050.
16. AA XXVII, 1327.
17. AA XXVII, 1334.
18. Vgl. z.B. Schulze-Sölde 1955.

französischen Wortes „sentiment".[19] Dieser Version folgte auch Helmut Karl Kohlenberger im *Historischen Wörterbuch der Philosophie*,[20] der ebenfalls ein Zitat Gotthold Ephraim Lessings über *Messiade* Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstocks wiedergab.[21] Für Kant sollte also der Begriff der Gesinnung, so Kohlenberger, ein Neologismus sein, und zwar vom Französischen und nicht vom Lateinischen. Es sei zu betonen, dass in den französischen Übersetzungen der Werke Kants im 20. Jahrhundert, z.B. der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, für den Begriff der Gesinnung nicht „sentiment", sondern „intention" genommen wurde.[22] Wenn wir dabei die deutschen Übersetzungen des 18. Jahrhunderts aus dem Englischen zur Kenntnis nehmen, etwa *Das Licht der Natur* von Abraham Tucker,[23] das Kant in seiner Privatbibliothek besaß, so wird es klar, dass das deutsche Wort ‚Gesinnung' auch als eine Entsprechung des englischen Wortes ‚sentiment' galt.

Die Rede Lessings aus dem Jahre 1753 von den „eingestreuten Gesinnungen" als Sentimenten, oder moralischen Eigenschaften des Buches, wurde noch Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts von Karl Hermann Scheidler in der *Allgemeinen Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* scharf kritisiert.[24] Allem Vermuten nach ist es eben Scheidler gewesen, der als erster die Aufmerksamkeit der Forscher auf die Rolle von Lessing in der Entwicklung des Begriffs der Gesinnung lenkte. Man kann aber auch eine Rezension über die Schriften des kurz davor verstorbenen Thomas Abbt aus dem Jahre 1770 hinzufügen, in der ‚Sentiment' und ‚Gesinnung' im Zusammenhang betrachtet wurden. Abbt versuchte, den Unterschied zwischen den französischen Begriffen „Sensation" und „Sentiment" auf Deutsch durch ein Paar „Empfindung" und „Empfindnis" zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Während „Sensation" „vollkommen auf das Sinnliche" geht und den Zustand bedeutet, „in welchem die Seele sich leidend verhält", bezeichnet „Sentiment" „die Weise, wie die Seele die Gefühle oder die bloß sinnliche Eindrücke aufnimmt, den Zustand, da die Seele sich schon einiger maßen würkend zeiget".[25] Der unbekannte Rezensent polemisierte dadurch mit denjenigen, die mit dem Wort „Empfindung" ein „moralisches Verhältnis der Seele" benennen, denn „dafür haben wir das gute deutsche Wort Gesinnung, welches in dieser Absicht vortrefflich ist".[26]

Kohlenberger wies auf eine andere wertvolle Quelle hin, nämlich auf die deutsche Übersetzung der *Bibel* von Martin Luther sowie auf andere Schriften des deutschen Theologen. In der *Auslegung der zehn Gebote* betonte Luther: „[...] einer, der selig wil werden, sol also gesynnet seyn [...]".[27] Das steht in Verbindung mit einer Stelle aus seiner Übersetzung der *Bibel*, aus dem Paulus' *Brief an die Philliper* (Phil. 2, 5): „ejn

19. Götze 1943: III, 145.
20. Vgl. Kohlenberger 1974.
21. Vgl. Lessing 1890: 77; Klopstock 1756: II, 56.
22. Vgl. Kant 1913: 92-93.
23. Search 1772: 180.
24. Vgl. Scheidler 1857: 267.
25. Abbt 1770: 39.
26. *Ibid.*: 39-40.
27. Luther 1904: XVI, 433.

jglicher sey gesinnet / wie jhesus christus auch war“ (*Luther-Bibel*, 1545).[28] *Biblia Vulgata*, die Luther für die Übersetzung als Vorlage hatte, benutzte in diesem Fall das Verb „sentire“, während im altgriechischen Text der *Bibel* hier φρονέω steht. Vom Interesse ist auch, dass ein *Griechisch-Deutsches Lexicon* aus der Zeit Kants für das Verb φρονέω, „denken“, „gesinnet seyn“ sowie „Sentiment“ vorschlug.[29] Wenn also der lateinische Text der *Bibel* in erster Linie Sinne und Gefühle meint, setzt der altgriechische Text der *Bibel* vielmehr auf das Denken Akzente. Diese Spannung ist in den russischen Übersetzungen der *Bibel* noch deutlicher, die – im Unterschied zu den besprochenen deutschen Übersetzungen – nicht aus dem Lateinischen, sondern aus dem Altgriechischen gemacht wurden. Die so genannte *Elisabeth-Bibel*, die 1751 auf Kirchenslawisch mit der Unterstützung der russischen Kaiserin Elisabeth gedruckt wurde und in der russisch-orthodoxen Kirche im Gottesdienst bis heute verwendet wird, gebraucht hier das Verb „mudrstvuetsja“, das als Wurzel Weisheit hat und in die Richtung des Denkens geht, wodurch eher die Bedeutung des altgriechischen Wortes betont wird. Die so genannte synodale Übersetzung der *Bibel* ins Russische aus dem Jahre 1876, die bis heute am verbreitetsten ist, benutzt hier dagegen ein Substantiv im Plural „čuvstvovanija“,[30] was so etwa wie Sinne, Gefühle, Empfindungen bedeutet und dem lateinischen Wort näher ist. Die moderne russische Übersetzung sucht nach einem Kompromisse „mysli i čuvstva“,[31] also Gedanken und Gefühle.

Bei aller Wichtigkeit findet sich in den Werken von Luther und in seinen Übersetzungen jedoch kein Substantiv „Gesinnung“, was nach wie vor die Version nicht ausschließt, dass es eben Lessing gewesen ist, der bei den Ursprüngen der späteren großen Karriere des Begriffs der Gesinnung stehe. Dazu kommt noch, dass wenigstens in der Mitte der 30er Jahre des 18. Jahrhunderts das Wort „Gesinnung“ vermutlich noch nicht als Begriff wahrgenommen wurde. Jedenfalls fehlt im *Grossen vollständigen Universal-Lexicon* von Zedler im Jahre 1735 ein Artikel über die Gesinnung, dennoch gibt es einen Artikel „gesinnet seyn“,[32] und zwar mit einem Hinweis auf den Paulus’ *Brief an die Römer* (Röm. 8, 5-7), in dem, in der Übersetzung von Luther, der Zustand „*fleischlich gesinnet*“ dem Zustand „*geistlich gesinnet*“ gegenübergestellt wird.[33] Im altgriechischen Text findet sich hier wiederum das Verb φρονέω, in der *Biblia Vulgata* „sentire“, das in der *Elisabeth-Bibel* konsequent als „mudrstvujut“ übersertzt wird, während die synodale Übersetzung bereits das Verb „pomyšljajut“, d.h. etwa denken, dem „čuvstvujut“, oder fühlen, bevorzugt.[34] Die Erklärung dieses neutestamentlichen Ausdruckes bei Zedler lautete: „[...] auf etwas denken, sorgen, dichten und trachten;

28. Im privaten Exemplar der Bibel, das Kant besaß: „Ein jeglicher sey gesinnet, wie Jesus Christus auch war“ (NT 200). In der modernen Übersetzung (*Lutherbibel 1984*): „Seid so unter euch gesinnt, wie es auch der Gemeinschaft in Christus Jesus entspricht“.

29. Vgl. Bahrdt 1786: 713.

30. Vgl. beide Übersetzungen: НЗ, 926.

31. Биб 1310.

32. ZL 1299.

33. Vgl. auch das kantische Exemplar: NT 158.

34. НЗ 752.

und gehet das Grund-Wort eigentlich auf den Verstand, Sinnen und Gedancken, doch müssen der Wille und die Begierden, in alle Kräffte, alles Dichten und Trachten, nicht ausgeschlossen, sondern eben so wohl mit verstanden werden“.[35]

Dennoch wird auch das Substantiv „Gesinnung“[36] ganz bestimmt noch vor Lessing gebraucht, sogar in den Titeleien der poetischen und theologischen Werke.[37] Aus diesem Grund wird die Rolle Lessings in dieser Frage in den Lexika überschätzt. Abgesehen davon lässt sich immer noch fragen, ob Kant tatsächlich den Begriff der Gesinnung als einen Neologismus aus dem Französischen wahrgenommen hat? Diese Version von Götze und Kohlenbeger scheint mir zweifelhaft zu sein. In der vierten Auflage der Metaphysica (1757) von Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, die für Kant jahrzehntelange als Vorlage für die Metaphysikvorlesungen diente, schrieb der Verfasser für den lateinischen Text „maiores propositiones syllogismorum practicorum sive maximae“, d.h. für die Obersätze des praktischen Syllogismus oder Maximen, eine deutsche Übersetzung zum Begriff der „maxima“: „jemandes gewöhnliche Gesinnungen“.[38] Seit Ende der 50er Jahren hatte Kant also den Begriff der Gesinnung als eine Übersetzung aus dem Lateinischen ständig vor Augen. Derselbe Baumgarten kommentierte in der *Ethica philosophica* (1763), d.h. in einem Lehrbuch, das für die Lehrtätigkeit Kants ebenfalls relevant war, eine Definition „VERITAS MORALIS est conuenientia signorum MENTIS TUAE“ in Bezug auf zwei letzte Worte folgenderweise: „deine Gesinnungen“.[39] Kant selber erwähnte in der späteren Metaphysik der Sitten (1797) ein lateinisches Äquivalent für den Begriff der Gesinnung, und zwar „animus“, ein Terminus, der mit dem Begriff der Gemütsart korreliert.[40]

Baumgarten war nicht der einzige bedeutende deutsche Philosoph in der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts, für den der Begriff der Gesinnung eine nennenswerte Rolle spielte, wenn auch wohl einer der wichtigsten, was den terminologischen Einfluss auf Kant eingeht. Ein anderes Beispiel stell Christian August Crusius dar, der den Begriff der Gesinnung sowohl in den logischen als auch in den metaphysischen sowie in den theologischen Schriften verwendete. In der Logik (1747[1]) ist die Gesinnung mit dem Akt des Willens verbunden.[41] In der Metaphysik (1745[1]) von Crusius drückt die Gesinnung die Wahrhaftigkeit aus: derjenige ist „wahrhaftig, welcher diejenige Gesinnung durch

35. ZL 1299.

36. In der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts entstehen auch einige bildhafte Darstellungen der Gesinnung. Auf dem Titelblatt des Sammelbandes von Christian Gottfried Assman wird der Titel dargestellt: *Gedichte meiner Gesinnung. Von dem Verfasser der Gemählde der Tugend*. Vgl. Assmann 1776. Der bekannte Maler Daniel Chodowiecki bat ein Bild zum Thema „Peter des Grossen mittleidige Gesinnung über leichte fleischliche Sünden“ an; vgl. Goettinger Calender 1790.

37. Vgl., z.B.: Zimmermann 1750; Höslin / Wagner 1750.

38. Baumgarten 1757: 270, §699 In der jüngsten kritischen Ausgabe: Baumgarten 2011: 372-374.

39. Baumgarten 1763: 84, §149.

40. AA VI, 477, §49.

41. Vgl. Crusius 1747: 398, 920, 1029, 1067.

Zeichen ausdrücket, deren er sich wirklich in ihm bewußt ist".[42] Die Gesinnung gehört also zur praktischen Philosophie, ist mit dem Willen sowie mit dem Problem des Äußeren und des Inneren im menschlichen Verhalten verbunden, wobei das Äußere und das Innere nicht immer übereinstimmen können. Mehr noch, Crusius stellte die Wahrhaftigkeit Gottes einer solchen Verstellung gegenüber, „da er uns eine gewisse Beschaffenheit der Sachen, oder eine gewisse Gesinnung seines eigenen Willens, als wahr angezeigte, welche er doch in seinem Verstande nicht als wahr dächte, und welche also auch nicht wahr wäre".[43]

Kurzer Begriff der Moraltheologie (1772) von Crusius demonstriert einen engen Zusammenhang zwischen der Gesinnung und der „Gedenkensart".[44] Beide beziehen sich auf die innerlichen Eigenschaften der Tugend und drücken das Bewusstsein des Tugendhaften eines Menschen aus, wodurch er sich „seiner Gesinnung, Gedenkensart und seines moralischen Geschmackes bewußt ist".[45] Die Überlegungen von Crusius über die gründliche Veränderung im Laufe der religiösen Bekehrung sind dem kantischen Verständnis noch näher. Die Bekehrung ist „eine so mächtige Veränderung", „welche die Gedenkensart, Gesinnung, Wandel und moralischen Geschmack des Menschen umbildet, und einen neuen Menschen schaffet, und zwar so, wie ihn das Evangelium Gottes verlangt [...]".[46] Der Unterschied besteht darin, dass Kant in späteren Werken eine solche tiefe innerliche Veränderung im Menschen ausgerechnet mit dem Begriff der Gesinnung fasste, während die Gesinnung bei Crusius eher einen Aspekt einer solchen Veränderung bedeutete. Andererseits hängt bei Crusius auch die Heiligkeit mit der Gesinnung zusammen:

> Daraus erhellet, warum die *Rechtschaffenheit* in der Gesinnung und im ganzen Lebenswandel, welche durch die Annehmung des Evangelii vom Reiche Gottes mit einem Herzen, das die Sünde erkennt und von derselben sich abwendet und zu Gott kehret, bewirket werden soll, die *Heiligung* heißt, gleichwie sie aus einem andern Gesichtspunkte betrachtet auch die *Erneuerung* genennt wird.[47]

In den theologischen Schriften begnügt sich Crusius mit dem lateinischen oder dem deutschen Text der *Bibel* nicht und wendet sich auch an die altgriechische Vorlage des Neuen Testaments. Das Wort, das im Kontext von „Sinn" und „Gesinnung" bei ihm auftaucht, lautet διάνοια: „*Das Wort* διάνοια bedeutet gewiß nicht den Verstand an sich selbst, sondern die Gedanken und Gesinnung, d.i. den subjectivischen Zustand des menschlichen Gemüths, so daß vornehmlich dabey auf die Angewöhnung des Willens gesehen wird".[48]

42. Crusius 1745: 519, §287.
43. *Ibid.*: 520, §287.
44. Vgl. Crusius 1772: 364, §106.
45. Vgl. *Ibid.*: 204, §56.
46. *Ibid.*: 536, §161.
47. *Ibid.*: §194, 700.Vgl. auch *Ibid.*: 703, §194.
48. Crusius 1754: 113, §54.

Die Werke von Baumgarten und Crusius können also als Kants Quellen hinsichtlich des Begriffs der Gesinnung betrachtet werden. Das gilt auch für manche Schriften von Moses Mendelssohn. Das, was im *Phädon, oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (1767)[49] zu finden ist, erinnert noch an die vorkritischen Schriften Kants selbst. Anders ist es aber bei der Schrift *Jerusalem oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (1783), die von Kant hoch gepriesen war,[50] und zwar zu der Zeit, als der letztere an der *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* arbeitete. Mendelssohn setzt einer Handlung eine Gesinnung ganz deutlich entgegen: „Nun gehöret zur wahren Erfüllung unserer Pflichten, zweierlei: Handlung und Gesinnung. Durch die Handlung geschieht das, was die Pflicht erfordert, und die Gesinnung macht, daß es aus der wahren Quelle komme, d.i. aus ächten Bewegungsgründen geschehe".[51] Die Handlungen und die Gesinnungen gehören also „zur Vollkommenheit des Menschen", und die Aufgabe der Gesellschaft besteht darin, für die Handlungen bei der Lenkung und Regierung und für die Gesinnungen bei der „Erziehung des geselligen Menschen" zu sorgen.[52] Die Handlungen werden durch die Bewegungsgründe erfüllt, zu den Gesinnungen wird man durch die Wahrheitsgründe geleitet.

Noch ‚kantischer' im Sinne der Gegenüberstellung von Ethik und Recht klingen die Ausführungen Mendelssohns, in denen eine klare Grenze zwischen dem Staat und der Religion gezogen wird. Für den Staat reichen, so Mendelssohn, auch die „todten Handlungen", oder „Werke ohne Geist, mit Uebereinstimmung im Thun, ohne Uebereinstimmung in Gedanken".[53] Ganz anders ist es aber in der Religion:

> Diese kennet keine Handlung ohne Gesinnung, kein Werk ohne Geist, keine Uebereinstimmung im Thun, ohne Uebereinstimmung im Sinne. Religiöse Handlungen, ohne religiöse Gedanken, ist leeres Puppenspiel, kein Gottesdienst. [...] Aber auch von bürgerlichen Handlungen ziehet die Religion ihre Hand ab, in so weit sie nicht durch Gesinnung, sondern durch Macht hervorgebracht werden.[54]

Der Staat darf nicht durch einen Vertrag oder ein Gesetz sein Zwangsrecht auf den Bereich von Gesinnungen erweitern. Für die Erläuterung dieser Thesis verwendet Mendelssohn solche Ausdrücke, die auch heute im Verfassungsrecht gebräuchlich sind: „Das Recht auf unsere eigene Gesinnungen ist unveräusserlich, kann nicht von Person zu Person wandern; denn es giebt und nimmt keinen Anspruch auf Vermögen, Gut und Freyheit".[55] Weder Staat noch Kirche besitzen nach Mendelssohn ein Recht, „die Grundsätze und Gesinnungen der Menschen irgend einem Zwange zu unterwerfen".[56]

49. Vgl. Mendelssohn 1814^5: 54-64.
50. Vgl. den Brief Kants an Mendelssohn vom 16. August 1783: AA X, 347, Nr. 206.
51. Mendelssohn 1783: 18.
52. *Ibid.*: 19.
53. *Ibid.*: 26.
54. *Ibid.*: 27
55. *Ibid.*: 65.
56. *Ibid.*: 85.

Die Gesinnung und die Handlung deutet Mendelssohn als ein Prinzip und dessen Anwendung. Für die göttliche Religion verschwindet aber der Gegensatz zwischen der Gesinnung und der Handlung, denn diese Religion gebietet ohne jeden Zwang, und die Handlung erscheint als ein „Zeichen der Gesinnung".[57]

Früher als Kant gebrauchte den Begriff der Gesinnung auch Johann Joachim Spalding. Eine seiner Predigten aus dem Jahre 1766 heißt *Predigt über die Gesinnung eines Christen bey dem herrschenden Verderben in der Welt*,[58] wobei Spalding in den Predigten von der Gesinnung noch früher gesprochen hat,[59] nämlich im Sinne einer innerlichen Einstellung, einer religiösen Stimmung unseres Gemüts:

> Wenn ich einmal, mit völliger Beystimmung meines Herzens, meine beste Ehre in den Beyfall Gottes und meines Gewissens gesetzt habe, so kann ich mir unmöglich nichtsbedeutende äusserliche Vorzüge zu meinem wichtigsten Werth anrechnen. Diese innerliche Gesinnung macht den Menschen zum Christen; und diese Gesinnung, wenn sie einmal da ist, muß sich in einem jedesmaligen Verhalten thätig beweisen. So kann also der Mensch gewissermaßen sein Leben zu einem beständigen Gottesdienst machen, wenn er sich beständig von der großen Empfindung des Glaubens und des Gewissens leiten lässet.[60]

In den späteren Schriften taucht der Begriff der Gesinnung bei Spalding noch öfter auf, jedoch bereits unter dem Einfluss der kritischen Werke Kants über Ethik und Religion.[61]

In der Zeit der Entfaltung der deutschen Aufklärung war Kant nicht der einzige bedeutende Denker, der den Begriff der Gesinnung intensiv benutzte. Parallel zu ihm, und normalerweise auch unabhängig von ihm verwendeten diesen Begriff Christian Garve[62] oder Johann Georg Heinrich Feder.[63] Dass nicht alle Zeitgenossen seit den 90er Jahren des 18. Jahrhunderts von Kant und dessen Prägung des Begriffs der Gesinnung beeinflusst wurden, zeigt die Figur seines Kontrahenten aus Halle Johann August Eberhard. Sein *Versuch einer allgemeinen deutschen Synonymik* (1798) ist in der ausführlichen Deutung der Gesinnung von den kantischen Neuerungen so gut wie völlig frei. Eberhard erörtert die Gesinnung im Unterschied zur Sinnesart: „Die Urtheile über das sittlich Gute und Böse, wodurch der Mensch gewöhnlich seine freyen Handlungen zu bestimmen pflegt, machen seine *Gesinnungen* und *Sinnesart* aus".[64] Diese „wirklichen Urtheile" sind Gesinnungen, aber „die Fertigkeit in denselben ist die *Sinnesart*".[65] Im Unterschied zur Sinnesart können die Gesinnungen nicht angeboren sein.

57. *Ibid*.: 91.
58. Spalding 1766.
59. Vgl. z.B. Spalding 1761: 4, 36-37.
60. Spalding 1769: 38.
61. Vgl. dazu Macor 2013: 306-308.
62. Vgl. Garve 1787: 59, 182; Garve 1792: 161-162, 202, 277, 436, 479.
63. Vgl. Feder 1790: 81, 88, 119-120; Feder 1792^2: 51, 96-97, 262, 266, 313.
64. Eberhard 1798: 274.
65. Eberhard 1798.

Die Gesinnungen können, so Eberhard, nicht sanft oder rauch sein, als „bloße wirkliche Urtheile" können sie aber gut oder schlecht, veränderlich oder unveränderlich sein.

Man darf heute selbstverständlich nicht vergessen, dass auch die Nachkommen Kants dem Begriff der Gesinnung andere Schattierungen und Bedeutungen beigegeben haben, was heute kaum zu ignorieren wäre. Neben der bereits erwähnten Tradition der Gesinnungsethik / Erfolgs- bzw. Verantwortungsethik von Max Weber oder Max Scheler kann man auch auf die früheren Variationen des Begriffs der Gesinnung bei Friedrich Schiller,[66] Johann Gottlieb Fichte,[67] Friedrich Schleiermacher[68] oder Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel[69] hinweisen.

Als Fazit lässt sich also sagen, dass die Ursprünge des Begriffs der Gesinnung zum Teil in den Übersetzungen der *Bibel* aus dem Lateinischen (*sentire*) und aus dem Altgriechischen (φρονέω) zu suchen sind. Dadurch entsteht eine gewisse Spannung, die auf verschiedene Weise auch bis heute spürbar ist, nämliche zwischen den Empfindungen, Gefühlen einerseits und den Gedanken andererseits, zwischen der sinnlichen und der intellektuellen Ebene. Man darf zwar die aristotelischen Bedeutungen von φρόνησις auf die Sprache des Neuen Testaments automatisch nicht übertragen. Dennoch sind wohl manche Töne Aristoteles' aufgrund der merkwürdigen sprachlichen Transformationen auch im deutschen Wort ‚Gesinnung' bei Kant hörbar, und wenn wir dabei noch die Einstellung von Crusius berücksichtigen, dann ist dazu noch διάνοια Platons durch die neutestamentlichen Veränderungen hinzuzufügen. Die Bedeutung Lessings in der Entwicklung des Begriffs der Gesinnung ist zwar stark überschätz, aber der Hinweis auf das französische oder englische Wort ‚sentiment' skizziert noch eine wichtige Linie in der Vorgeschichte des Begriffs der Gesinnung. Unter den deutschen Philosophen, die auf den kantischen Gebrauch einen Einfluss ausüben konnten, muss man vor allem Baumgarten, Crusius und Mendelssohn nennen. Die Schriften Baumgartens beweisen vor allem die lateinischen und nicht die französischen Wurzeln des Begriffs der Gesinnung bei Kant. Das Verständnis der Gesinnung als Maxime und ihr Bezug auf den Verstand, wie dies bei Baumgarten der Fall war, wurde von Kant wahrgenommen. Dasselbe gilt auch für die Betonung des subjektiven Zustandes des Gemüts, des Aktes des Willens, der innerlichen Eigenschaft der Tugend sowie des Zusammenhanges mit dem innerlichen Wandel und der Bekehrung, die Crusius mit der Gesinnung verbunden hat. Eine klare Gegenüberstellung von Handlung und Gesinnung, bei der die Gesinnung als wahre Quelle unseres Verhaltens verstanden wird, wie bei Mendelssohn, ist jedenfalls ein Schritt in die Richtung der kritischen Schriften Kants. Die Grenze zwischen dem Staat und der Religion, eine Aussonderung der „toten Handlungen" ohne entsprechende Gesinnung, die in der Religion unmöglich sind, ist noch eine Thesis Mendelssohns, die der Einstellung Kants der 80er – 90er Jahre ganz nah ist.

66. Vgl. *Piccolomini*. V, 1 („meine innerste Gesinnung hab ich tief versteckt"). Schiller 1800: 223.

67. Vgl. Fichte 1981: 279, 300-301; Fichte 1977: 237, 278, 303.

68. Vgl. Schleiermacher 1981: 132-133.

69. Vgl. Hegel 1992: 495, §515; Hegel 2009: 211, §265; 211-212, §268; 212, §269; 227, §274. Vgl. dazu auch: O'Malley 1991: 422-435.

3. DER BEGRIFF DER GESINNUNG IN DER *KRITIK DER PRAKTISCHEN VERNUNFT*

Nach der kurzen Skizze der vorkantischen Geschichte des Begriffs der Gesinnung kann man nun die Frage stellen, ob die *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, in der bei Kant von der Gesinnung so oft die Rede ist, etwas zu dem hinzufügt, was er davon bereits in der *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* zum Ausdruck gebracht und in der er den Begriff der Gesinnung lediglich sechs Mal verwendet hatte. Wenn man dabei noch das *Naturrecht Feyerabend* mitberücksichtigt, dann findet sich in der zweiten *Kritik* nicht besonders viel Neues. Zusammenfassend sieht die Position Kants gegen 1785 folgendermaßen aus. Erstens, unterstreicht eine Hinzufügung des Prädikats der Moralität und der Reinheit zur Gesinnung, die Kant gelegentlich tut, dass die Gesinnung auch nicht moralisch sein kann.[70] Zweitens, setzt Kant die Gesinnung und die Maxime des Willens gleich, wie dies auch Baumgarten in der *Metaphysica* getan hat. Drittens, versteht Kant unter der Tugend eine gute Gesinnung. Viertens, ist in der Handlung nach dem kategorischen Imperativ eben die Gesinnung wesentlich gut, und nicht das Ergebnis der Handlung. Fünftens, wird die geäußerte und die innerliche Gesinnung entgegengesetzt, wobei das Gewissen und die Billigkeit nur zur letzten gehören. Sechstens, liegt die Gegenüberstellung von Handlungen aufgrund der Gesinnungen und ohne Rücksicht auf Gesinnungen als eine Grundlage für die Unterscheidung der Ethik und des Rechts, und diese Unterscheidung überdenkt den Gegensatz von Staat und Religion bei Mendelssohn.

Die *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* wiederholt und entwickelt diese Thesen. Kant spricht von einer moralischen Gesinnung, ohne dabei zu erörtern, worin sie besteht. Ebenso wenig erklärt er auch eine nicht moralische Gesinnung. Die Gesinnung ist 1788 nach wie vor mit der Maxime verbunden, dennoch handelte es sich 1785 um eine gewisse Gleichsetzung der Gesinnung und der Maxime, während in der *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* eher von der Gesinnung der Maxime bzw. von der in die Maximen gebrachte Gesinnung die Rede ist:[71] „ob die Handlung auch (subjectiv) um *des moralischen Gesetzes willen* geschehen, und also sie nicht allein sittliche Richtigkeit als That, sondern auch sittlichen Werth als Gesinnung, ihrer Maxime nach, habe"?[72] Da Kant die Maximen des Willens behandelt, betrachtet er auch die Reinheit der Gesinnungen (als Maxime) des Willens, die Gesinnung, die „mit einem Bewußtsein der Bestimmung des Willens *unmittelbar durchs Gesetz* nothwendig verbunden ist".[73] Um das tugendhafte Wesen der Gesinnung hervorzuheben, führt Kant einen neuen Terminus ein, nämlich die „Tugendgesinnung".[74] Die Tugend deutet Kant als eine moralische

70. Vgl. zu der Rolle der Gesinnung in Bezug auf das in der Natur des Menschen wurzelnden Bösen: Konhardt 1988. Von der guten und bösen Gesinnung vgl. auch: Hake 2003: 35-37.
71. Vgl. AA V, 84, 86.
72. AA V, 159.
73. AA V, 116.
74. Vgl. AA V, 114.

Gesinnung „*im Kampfe*",[75] und das sollte der Kampf gegen die Neigungen sein.[76] In der Auffassung der moralisch guten Gesinnung ist für Kant 1788 der gesetzmäßige Charakter von größerer Bedeutung: Tugend ist die „gesetzmäßige Gesinnung aus *Achtung* fürs Gesetz [...]".[77] Die Entsprechung der Gesinnung zum moralischen Gesetz stellt Kant auch ohne Erwähnung der Tugend fest.[78] Die wahrhaft sittliche Gesinnung besteht in der direkten Unterwerfung dem moralischen Gesetz, und der Wert der Gesinnung, die dem moralischen Gesetz völlig angemessen ist, „ist unendlich".[79] Im Unterschied zur *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* streicht Kant also den Wert der Gesinnung und nicht der Handlungen unter, was letztendlich auch zu einem neuen terminologischen Paar Legalität / Moralität der Gesinnungen führt,[80] was 1785 noch fehlte.

Neu ist in der *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* eine Gegenüberstellung der guten Handlung den Buchstaben und dem Geiste nach, wobei nur die letzte von der moralischen Gesinnung bezeugt.[81] Zwei andere Aspekte, die 1788 entstehen, weisen bereits in die Richtung der zukünftigen *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* hin. Erstens berührt Kant das Problem der Erscheinung der Gesinnung in der sensiblen Welt, und es scheint so zu sein, dass die Gesinnung hier mit dem Charakter praktisch identisch ist,[82] obwohl Kant in anderen Fällen zwischen der moralischen Gesinnung und dem moralischen Charakter klar unterscheidet.[83] Früher betrachtete Kant die Gesinnung vom Standpunkt des transzendentalen Idealismus aus nicht so deutlich. Zweitens bespricht Kant jetzt das Problem der Unveränderlichkeit der Gesinnung im Fortschreiten zum Guten.[84] Andererseits stellt Kant die Frage nach der „Methode der Gründung und Cultur ächter moralischer Gesinnungen",[85] und hier liegt noch eine Kluft zwischen der zweiten *Kritik* und der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*.

4. DER BEGRIFF DER GESINNUNG IN DER *RELIGION INNERHALB DER GRENZEN DER BLOSSEN VERNUNFT*

Ihren Höhepunkt erreichte die ‚Gesinnung' in der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (1793), in der Kant diesen Begriff dreimal so häufig wie in der *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* gebrauchte. Bereits Crusius behandelte die Gesinnung im Zusammenhang mit der Gedenkensart. Kant brach Gesinnung und Denkungsart in

75. AA V, 84.
76. Vgl. AA V, 147.
77. AA V, 127.
78. Vgl. AA V, 122.
79. AA V, 128.
80. AA V, 151.
81. Vgl. AA V, 72 Anm.
82. Vgl. AA V, 59.
83. Vgl. AA V, 157.
84. Vgl. AA V, 123 Anm.
85. AA V, 153.

der zweiten *Kritik* ziemlich nah („eine solche Gesinnung und Denkungsart“[86]). Trotz einer gewissen Tendenz zur Synonymie dieser Termini entstehen 1793 auch manche wesentlichen Unterschiede. Erstens, enthält die Denkungsart kein explizites Willenselement, wie dies bei der Gesinnung der Fall ist. Zweitens, verbindet der Begriff der Gesinnung sowohl in der *Grundlegung* als auch in der zweiten *Kritik* beides, das Sinnliche und das Intellektuelle, während sich der Begriff der Denkungsart lediglich auf das Intellektuelle bezieht. Drittens, gehört die Gesinnung in der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* nicht selten auch dem Übersinnlichen, dem Intelligiblen an, was in seinem Inneren unerkennbar bleibt, während die Denkungsart als etwas, was dem Denken eigen ist, entsprechend der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* auf die Sinnlichkeit gerichtet ist. Viertens, bedeutete der Begriff der Denkungsart bei Kant ab und zu so viel wie Methode oder Herangehensweise der Deutung, der Interpretation, was übrigens bei der Unterscheidung von Latitudinariern und Rigoristen zum Ausdruck kommt, und was dem Sinn der Gesinnung fremd ist. Aber auch 1793 gebraucht Kant gelegentlich Gesinnung und Denkungsart beinahe synonymisch.

Das für die Schriften Kants aus den Jahren 1785 und 1788 wichtige Thema der Grenze zwischen der Ethik und dem Recht tritt 1793 in den Hintergrund. Das gilt auch für die Beziehung der Gesinnung und des moralischen Gesetzes.[87] Aber selbst in solchen Punkten, in denen Kant in der Abhandlung über die Religion in seiner Charakteristik der Gesinnung mit seinen früheren Schriften über die Ethik mehr oder weniger übereinstimmt, werden auch neue Seiten beleuchtet. Erstens, ist die Gesinnung nicht mehr eine bloße Maxime bzw. etwas, was in die Maxime beigebracht wird, sondern ein Grund, ein „subjectives *Princip* der Maximen“,[88] „der erste subjective Grund der Annehmung der Maximen“,[89] die Regel der Handlungen.[90] Verschiedene Maximen brauchen eine Grundlage oder ein Prinzip, und diese Rolle spielt eben die Gesinnung, die allem Vermuten nach selber ein Sonderfall der Maxime darstellt, nämlich eine Maxime der Maximen. Zweitens, wird die vorhandene Verbindung zwischen der Tugend und der Handlung anders gedeutet. Jetzt bezeugt die Tugend, die einen festen Grund erhält und auf die genauere Erfüllung der Pflicht gerichtet ist, von der Gesinnung selbst. Mehr noch, nur die Tugend kann in vollem Maße die Gesinnung demonstrieren.[91] Wenn wir aber die Tugend allein betrachten, d.h. außerhalb der Handlung, als eine nicht „geäußerte“, so können wir diese Tugend kaum einschätzen. Über die Gesinnungen lässt sich also nicht nur aufgrund von Tugend, sondern vor allem aufgrund von Handlungen als Erscheinungen urteilen.[92] Unsere Gesinnungen kennen wir nicht unmittelbar, sondern nur dank unseren Taten.[93] Die Frage besteht also nicht darin,

86. AA V, 116.
87. Ein seltenes Beispiel vgl. AA VI, 66.
88. AA VI, 37.
89. AA VI, 25.
90. AA VI, 66.
91. Vgl. AA VI, 35.
92. Vgl. AA VI, 70 Anm.
93. Vgl. AA VI, 75-76.

was einen wahren moralischen Wert hat, nämlich die Gesinnung oder die Handlung, sondern darin, dass wir für die Beurteilung der Gesinnung keine andere Quelle besitzen außer den Handlungen, die indirekt davon zeugen können. Diese Einstellung hat aber eine gewisse Voraussetzung, dass die Gesinnung an sich etwas Unerkennbares ist.

Kant betont 1793 mehrmals, dass der subjektive Grund der Annahme der moralischen Maximen unergründlich ist: das „Innere",[94] die Tiefen, das „innerste unsrer moralischen Gesinnungen"[95] können wir nicht durchschauen.[96] Dadurch wird die Gesinnung zu einem Noumen, und die Betrachtung der Gesinnung wird von Anfang an in der Gegenüberstellung von „virtus noumenon" und „virtus phaenomenon" vollzogen.[97] Die Gesinnung ist nicht nur intellektuell,[98] sondern eher übersinnlich,[99] sie wird als etwas gedacht, was auf eine übersinnliche Weise begründet ist.[100] Aber selbst in dieser übersinnlichen Form wird die Gesinnung als etwas verstanden, dessen Vorbild die Gesinnung Gottes bildet.[101]

Hier stellt sich die Frage nach der Entstehung, nach dem Ursprung der Gesinnung eines Menschen, umso mehr, dass er dafür die Verantwortung trägt. Kants Antwort lautet ungewöhnlich und sogar paradoxal. Obwohl er erklärt, dass die Gesinnung angeboren ist, dennoch bedeutet dies lediglich, dass die Erwerbung der Gesinnung nicht in der Zeit geschieht, weswegen eine solche Angeborenheit keineswegs einen Status des Urhebers beim Menschen verneint.[102] Nicht in der Zeit bedeutet, dass die Erwerbung der Gesinnung im Noumenalen, Übersinnlichen durch eine Annahme von der freien Willkür geschieht.[103] Da es sich um etwas geht, was nicht in der Zeit ist, scheint es für Kant wohl begründet zu sein, dass die Gesinnung, die auf die Anwendung der Freiheit überhaupt gerichtet ist, „nur eine einzige sein" kann,[104] weil sie als etwas Übersinnliches in keine Perioden geteilt sein kann.[105] Daraus folgt, warum das Problem der Erwerbung der Gesinnung keinesfalls ein leitendes Problem der Kultur bzw. der Pädagogik ist. Auf diese Weise kommt Kant zu seiner bemerkenswerten Novation, nämlich zur Frage nach einer Revolution der Gesinnung. Er stellt eine Reform des empirischen

94. AA VI, 63.
95. AA VI, 169.
96. Vgl. AA VI, 71.
97. Vgl. AA VI, 14.
98. Vgl. AA VI, 170 Anm.
99. Vgl. AA VI, 67.
100. Vgl. AA VI, 75 Anm.
101. Vgl. AA VI, 161-162.
102. Vgl. AA VI, 25.
103. Manfred Kuehn argumentiert in dieser Hinsicht, es handele sich nicht um die Wahl eines einzelnen Menschen, sondern um die Gesinnung als einer Eigenschaft des gefallenen Menschengeschlechtes. Vgl. Kühn 2007: 428.
104. AA VI, 25.
105. Vgl. AA VI, 70 Anm.

Charakters,[106] der von dem Menschen selbst gebildet wird,[107] der Veränderung im Herzen des Menschen gegenüber:

> Daß aber jemand nicht bloß ein *gesetzlich*, sondern ein *moralisch* guter (Gott wohlgefälliger) Mensch, d.i. tugendhaft nach dem intelligiblen Charakter (*virtus Noumenon*), werde, welcher, wenn er etwas als Pflicht erkennt, keiner andern Triebfeder weiter bedarf, als dieser Vorstellung der Pflicht selbst: das kann nicht durch allmählige Reform, so lange die Grundlage der Maximen unlauter bleibt, sondern muß durch eine Revolution in der Gesinnung im Menschen (einen Übergang zur Maxime der Heiligkeit derselben) bewirkt werden; und er kann ein neuer Mensch nur durch eine Art von Wiedergeburt gleich als durch eine neue Schöpfung (Ev. Joh. III, 5; verglichen mit 1. Mose I, 2) und Änderung des Herzens werden.[108]

Vom Standpunkt der Schlussfolgerung „du kannst, denn du sollst" aus behauptet Kant, dass der Mensch trotz der Verdorbenheit des Grundes seiner Maximen eine solche Revolution mit eigenen Kräften durchführen kann, indem er sich selbst zu einem guten Menschen macht:

> [...] die Revolution muß für die Denkungsart, die allmählige Reform aber für die Sinnesart (welche jener Hindernisse entgegenstellt) nothwendig und daher auch dem Menschen möglich sein [...]. Das ist: wenn er den obersten Grund seiner Maximen, wodurch er ein böser Mensch war, durch eine einzige unwandelbare Entschließung umkehrt (und hiemit einen neuen Menschen anzieht): so ist er so fern dem Princip und der Denkungsart nach ein fürs Gute empfängliches Subject; aber nur in continuirlichem Wirken und Werden ein guter Mensch: d.i. er kann hoffen, daß er bei einer solchen Reinigkeit des Princips, welches er sich zur obersten Maxime seiner Willkürgenommen hat, und der Festigkeit desselben sich auf dem guten (obwohl schmalen) Wege eines beständigen *Fortschreitens* vom Schlechten zum Bessern befinde.[109]

Diese Änderung sieht in den Augen des Menschen selbst und in den Augen Gottes verschieden aus. Für Gott, der „den intelligibelen Grund des Herzens (aller Maximen der Willkür) durchschauet",[110] bildet dieser unendliche Fortschritt eine vollgezogene Einheit, darum kann man diese prozessuale Änderung als eine Revolution verstehen. Für den Menschen selbst dagegen, der in der Zeit lebt, wird der unendlich lange Kampf gegen die Sinnlichkeit eher als eine gewisse Reform dargestellt. Dennoch redet Kant 1793 in dieser Hinsicht nicht von der Kultur oder Disziplin, sondern eben von der Revolution. Die moralische Bildung soll mit der „Umwandlung der Denkungsart" und mit der „Gründung eines Charakters" angefangen werden, was die Hauptsache ist, und nicht mit der „Besserung der Sitten",[111] die lediglich eine Folge ist.

106. Vgl. AA VI, 47.
107. Vgl. AA VI, 21.
108. AA VI, 47.
109. AA VI, 47-48.
110. AA VI, 48.
111. *Ibid*.

Die Revolution in der Gesinnung führt zur Bildung eines neuen Menschen. Dieser neue Mensch kann auf eine doppelte Weise betrachtet werden, und zwar als ein „intelligibles Wesen“ in seiner neuen Gesinnung,[112] oder als derselbe physische Mensch, der dem moralischen Gericht und der Strafe im Sinne eines „alten Menschen“ für seine Handlungen und Gesinnungen vor der vollgezogenen Revolution unterliegt. Das Leiden des „alten Menschen“ deutet Kant als ein Anlass für die Prüfung der neuen Gesinnungen des „neuen Menschen“.[113]

Wie aber dieser Übergang von einer verdorbenen zu einer guten Gesinnung geschieht, und ob eine Revolution in der Gesinnung des Menschen eine einmalige und unumkehrbare ist, bleibt eher fraglich. Ebenso schwierig ist die Frage nach den Unterschieden zwischen den Menschen, die eine solche Revolution hinter sich haben: Besteht der Unterschied zwischen diesen Menschen in dem Grad der Annäherung zum Guten im irdischen Leben im Gange der Reform? Und wie wesentlich können überhaupt solche Unterschiede im Falle einer guten Gesinnung sein? Man könnte versuchen, diese Fragen bei der Berücksichtigung der Unerkennbarkeit der Gesinnung und deren übersinnlichen Charakters zu beantworten, indem man von dem Nichtvorhandensein der Zeit im Intelligiblen ausgeht. Kant behauptet, dass

> die Umwandlung der Gesinnung des bösen in die eines guten Menschen in der Veränderung des obersten inneren Grundes der Annehmung aller seiner Maximen dem sittlichen Gesetze gemäß zu setzen sei, so fern dieser neue Grund (das neue Herz) nun selbst unveränderlich ist.[114]

In diesem Zusammenhang tritt bei Kant das Problem der Beständigkeit dieser neuen Gesinnung im Fortschreiten zum Guten in den Vordergrund,[115] und die gute Gesinnung selbst trägt zu deren Festigkeit bei. Kant beschreibt

> ein Ausgang vom Bösen und ein Eintritt ins Gute, das Ablegen des alten und das Anziehen des neuen Menschen, da das Subject der Sünde (mithin auch allen Neigungen, sofern sie dazu verleiten) abstirbt, um der Gerechtigkeit zu leben[116]

als eine „Sinnesänderung“. Soweit ich beurteilen kann, benutzt Kant diesen Begriff nur in der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*,[117] und darunter versteht er nicht nur das Anziehen des neuen Menschen, sondern auch die zweite Geburt, die Wiedergeburt.[118] Einer der renommiertesten Verfasser jener Zeit in der Frage der Sinnesänderung war wohl der ältere Bruder des berühmten Metaphysikers, der Theologe Sigmund Jakob Baumgarten, der im *Ausführlichen Vortrag der theologischen Moral* (1767) ein spezielles Kapitel *Von der Sinnesänderung oder Bekehrung* schrieb.[119] Kant selber

112. AA VI, 74.
113. Vgl. AA VI, 75 Anm.
114. AA VI, 51.
115. Vgl. AA VI, 14.
116. AA VI, 74.
117. Vgl. AA VI, 166, 173, 174, 183, 188, 196 Anm.
118. Vgl. AA VI, 196 Anm.
119. Vgl. Baumgarten 1767: 314-373.

erklärte die Bekehrung oder eine moralische und religiöse Besserung, im Unterschied zu der bloßen Besserung in den Vorlesungen (*Moral Mongrovius*) wie folgt: „Beßerung ist wenn man anders lebt; aber Bekehrung ist wenn man den festen Grundsatz und die feste Grundlage hat, niemals anders als tugendhaft zu leben".[120] Hier kann man auch pietistische Quellen des jungen Kant in seinem Verständnis der Gesinnung vermuten.

Im Unterschied zu den früheren ethischen Werken Kants tauchen in der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* auch neue Termini auf, nämlich „Herzensgesinnung"[121] und „Religionsgesinnung".[122] Die Religionsgesinnung ist ein subjektives übersinnliches Prinzip der Moralität in uns, das „in der unbegreiflichen Eigenschaft der Freiheit verschlossen liegt".[123] Die von Kant entwickelte Vernunftreligion setzt notwendigerweise eine gute Gesinnung[124] und einen „Dienst der Herzen" in der Beobachtung aller Pflichten[125] voraus. Neu und ungewöhnlich ist auch die kantische Deutung des Gebets als „Belebung" der Gesinnung,[126] als Erweckung der Gesinnung im Gemüt.[127] Ein wahrer Geist des Gebets ist, nach Kant, ein „herzlicher Wunsch, Gott in allem unserm Thun und Lassen wohlgefällig zu sein, d.i. die alle unsere Handlungen begleitende Gesinnung, sie, als ob sie im Dienste Gottes geschehen, zu betreiben [...]".[128]

Zusammenfassend lässt sich eine ganze Reihe von neuen Eigenschaften der Gesinnung in der *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* feststellen, die in der *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, im *Naturrecht Feyerabend* und in der *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* noch gefehlt sind:

die Gesinnung ist ein Grund oder ein subjektives Prinzip der Annahme von Maximen;
die Tugend ist ein Zeugnis des Vorhandenseins von Gesinnung;
die Handlung ist die Erscheinung von Gesinnung;
die Gesinnung ist unerkennbar;
die Gesinnung hat einen noumenalen, übersinnlichen Charakter;
die Angeborenheit der Gesinnung bedeutet ihre Erwerbung außerhalb der Zeit in der Form ihrer Annahme durch eine freie Willkür;
die Gesinnung wird in die Zeitperioden nicht geteilt;
die Revolution in der Gesinnung ist von der Reform des empirischen Charakters unterschiedlich;
die Revolution in der Gesinnung ist mit der Sinnesänderung, Bekehrung und Wieder geburt verbunden.

120. AA XXVIII, 1576.
121. Vgl. AA VI, 115, 159, 184.
122. Vgl. AA VI, 147, 170 Anm., 182, 201.
123. AA VI, 170 Anm.
124. Vgl. AA VI, 116.
125. Vgl. AA VI, 192.
126. Vgl. AA VI, 195.
127. Vgl. AA VI, 193.
128. AA VI, 194-195.

In der letzten großen ethischen Schrift, in der *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797), setzte Kant zu seinem Begriff der Gesinnung wenig hinzu. Zu den Besonderheiten dieses Werkes gehören die direkten Gleichsetzungen der Moralität und der Gesinnung, die gemeinsam der Legalität entgegengesetzt sind,[129] die Interpretation der Tugend als einer auf Grundlage von fester Gesinnung vorhandenen Übereinstimmung des Willens mit allen Pflichten[130] sowie eine lateinische Übersetzung „animus“ für die Gesinnung.[131]

Kant änderte also den Begriff der Gesinnung in der kritischen Zeit so wesentlich, dass seine ethischen Schriften aus den 80er Jahren des 18. Jahrhunderts und die *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* beinahe zwei Perioden in der Auffassung der Gesinnung bilden. Und es ist eben Kant gewesen, der das Wort ‚Gesinnung‘ zu einem wichtigen Begriff der Ethik und der Religionsphilosophie endgültig gemacht hat, obwohl dieser Begriff heute auch gewisse Prägung der nachkantischen philosophischen Geschichte aufzeigt.

ABKÜRZUNGEN

AA = Kant, I. 1900. *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. v. der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 Bde., Berlin, de Gruyter.

Wo es erheblich ist, wird die Abkürzung AA mit der Abkürzung des besonderen Werks in AA ersetzt:

KdrV = *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (A/B: erste und zweite Auflage) in AA III und AA IV.

NT = *Die Heilige Schrifft, Neuen Testaments, Unsers Herrn Jesu Christi: Nach der Teutschen Ubersetzung D. M. Luthers, Mit kurtzem Inhalt eines jeden Capitels, und beygefügten vielen, richtigen, und mit Fleiß nachgesehenen Schrift-Stellen, Samt aller Sonn- und Fest-Tage Evangelien und Episteln, Auf das allersorgfälltigste eingerichtet und ausgefertiget*. Basel: by Johann Rufdolf Im Hof, 1751.

ZL = *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschafften und Künste*, Verlegt von J. H. Zedler, Bd. 10, Halle, Leipzig: Zedler, 1735.

НЗ = *Новый Завет Господа нашего Иисуса Христа на славянском и русском языках*. Санкт-Петербург: Синодальная типография,1893[4].

Биб = *Библия. Книги Священного Писания Ветхого и Нового Завета канонические. Современный русский перевод*. Москва: Российское библейское общество, 2011.

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129. Vgl. AA VI, 392-393.
130. Vgl. AA VI, 395.
131. Vgl. AA VI, 477; vgl. auch AA XIX, 235. R 7050.

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The Concept of Disposition in Kant

Alexei N. Krouglov
Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow
ORCID: 0000-0001-7682-1145
akrouglov@mail.ru

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MARIA ANTONIETTA PRANTEDA

"In contrasto con ogni equità". La perversità dei fanciulli e i "principi cattivi" nella *Critica della ragion pratica*

ABSTRACT: In the "Critical Delucidation" of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant sets out a brief discussion of the 'evil principles' of moral action that are also imputable based on the free causality of the will to children, as well as to all other persons. This passage is taken into consideration because it represents an alternative explanation of moral evil to the one mainly attributable to natural sensible causes found in the *Critique*. The coherence of the admission of evil principles with the Kantian doctrine of freedom on the one hand, and the elements of dissimilarity with other assumptions in the work on the other, are discussed. In conclusion, the hypothesis is put forward that the thesis of the evil principles is a partial restatement of ideas formulated by Kant in pre-critical times.
SOMMARIO: Nella "Delucidazione critica" della *Critica della ragion pratica*, Kant espone una breve trattazione dei "principi cattivi" dell'azione morale che sono imputabili in base alla causalità libera dell'arbitrio anche ai bambini, oltre che a tutte le altre persone. Questo passo viene preso in considerazione alla luce del fatto che rappresenta una spiegazione alternativa del male morale rispetto a quella riconducibile prevalentemente a moventi sensibili naturali presente nella *Critica*. Vengono discusse, da un lato la coerenza dell'ammissione dei principi cattivi con la dottrina kantiana della libertà e, dall'altro, gli elementi di difformità rispetto ad altri presupposti dell'opera. In conclusione, viene avanzata l'ipotesi che la tesi dei principi cattivi sia una parziale riproposizione di idee formulate da Kant in epoca precritica.
KEYWORDS: Evil Principles; Children; Freedom; Nature; Anthropological Character

1. I PRINCIPI CATTIVI: UN'ALTRA CAUSA DELLE AZIONI IMMORALI NELLA *CRITICA DELLA RAGION PRATICA*

Per chi si impegni nell'esegesi di una sola pagina della *Critica della ragion pratica*, compito preliminare è esporre i motivi per cui anche un brano così breve può contribuire a integrare la dottrina kantiana delle cause delle azioni immorali. Prendendo spunto dal suggerimento metodologico di un autorevole storico italiano della filosofia classica tedesca, qui si tratterà solo di "mettere in luce il gioco" tra le tesi generali dell'origine dell'azione immorale e il modo in cui esse "di volta in volta," si manifestano, "in una questione specifica o, magari in una delle molte digressioni illustrative che sono inserite nei testi kantiani".[1]

1. Cesa 2004: 20.

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La questione specifica che viene presa in esame è contenuta nella "Delucidazione critica dell'analitica della ragion pura pratica", là dove Kant, consapevole di pronunciare un giudizio che contrasta con quel comune senso di equità che solleva i bambini dall'accusa di macchiarsi di gravi crimini, fornisce una breve trattazione sulla perversità (*Bosheit*) di questi esseri umani che viene fatta derivare da "principi cattivi immutabili (*bösen und unwandelbaren Grundsätze*)", ammessi liberamente, dai quali dipende anche il male morale che compiono sin dalla fanciullezza.[2] Non sembra azzardato osservare che Kant, nella *Critica della ragion pratica*, definisce quasi sempre le azioni immorali come l'effetto di una scelta eteronoma dell'arbitrio in favore di moventi sensibili e patologici. Il fatto che egli qui si riferisca anche a un'origine del male morale che risiede in principi antropologici malvagi e anche immutabili comporta, però, che si esprimano con la dovuta cautela tesi secondo cui Kant, in quest'opera, avrebbe sempre e solo ricondotto le azioni cattive al predominio delle inclinazioni[3]. A questa considerazione si aggiunge anche il fatto che, nelle diverse illustrazioni del carattere empirico malvagio che occorrono sia nella seconda sia nella prima *Critica*, Kant individua le fonti della cattiveria in circostanze o propensioni naturali che non vengono definite, a loro volta, cattive.

L'esposizione seguente prende l'avvio dai due argomenti con cui Kant, nella "Delucidazione critica", giustifica l'imputazione delle azioni immorali all'essere umano, quello a priori e quello, razionale ed empirico assieme, che si esprime nel linguaggio del *Gewissen*, il tribunale davanti a cui il carattere vizioso dell'individuo è ricondotto a cause naturali. Si procede poi con l'analisi della descrizione, del tutto dissimile, del carattere degli individui perversi sin dalla fanciullezza e di quei principi cattivi che recano dentro di sé. La questione rilevante, a questo punto, diventerà capire in che rapporto si pone la tesi dei "principi cattivi" con la dottrina kantiana della libertà dell'essere umano e delle condizioni della sua colpevolezza (e quindi anche con la dottrina della relazione tra carattere intelligibile e carattere empirico, nel cui contesto è stata collocata da Kant). Saranno poi individuati ed esposti alcuni elementi di difformità tra questa tesi e l'impianto categoriale della seconda *Critica*.

L'ipotesi che si intende avanzare, in conclusione, è che questo testo costituisca una riproposizione della tesi del "principio positivo del male" esposta da Kant nella *Vorlesung über Ethik*, databile tra il 1775 e il 1781 e curata da Paul Menzer. All'analogia dell'argomento si aggiunge quell'impostazione tipicamente precritica e caratterizzata da un intreccio di trattazioni antropologiche e delucidazioni morali che sono evidenti anche nel brano sui "principi cattivi" ma che, per molti motivi, Kant ha programmaticamente escluso dall'esposizione della morale pura a priori.

2. A Sergio Landucci va il merito di aver richiamato l'attenzione su questo passo, cfr. Landucci 1994: 258-266.

3. Questa era la tesi che sostenevo nel mio libro sui diversi significati di male nell'opera di Kant, in cui questa pagina, con quello che ne consegue, non era stata presa nella dovuta considerazione, cfr. Pranteda 2002: partic. 173-223.

2. la colpevolezza dell'essere razionale

Quando, nella "Delucidazione critica", Kant affronta la questione della responsabilità delle azioni morali nel contesto del rapporto tra carattere empirico e carattere intelligibile ripropone la questione su come si possa definire interamente libero un soggetto che compie un'azione, se egli è, al tempo stesso, sottoposto ad una necessità naturale. Non solo nell'essere umano si realizza, di volta in volta, il contrasto tra legge morale e inclinazione sensibile ma sono presenti due tipi di causalità egualmente efficaci, quella naturale e quella della libertà. Ciò comporta che ad essere in tema non sia solo la singola inclinazione ma l'intera serie di azioni che il soggetto ha fatto nella sua vita, scegliendo liberamente di soddisfare quelle inclinazioni e favorendo il consolidamento degli effetti di quelle azioni in un carattere unico; questo carattere, pur originato da libere scelte, è diventato una configurazione empirica che può influire costantemente sulla volontà, spodestando l'intenzione morale libera di cui deve sempre essere considerato espressione.

È questo carattere empirico quello del quale l'essere umano può avere consapevolezza immediata ed è per questo motivo che la giustificazione delle sue azioni non può che suonare immediatamente come un'autoassoluzione: "io sono fatto così e non potevo comportarmi diversamente". La coscienza della sua libertà richiede invece che egli si renda indipendente dalla sua natura sensibile e sia consapevole di se stesso anche come "cosa in sé" per considerare "la propria esistenza in quanto essa non è sottoposta alle condizioni del tempo".[4]

Il primo argomento che Kant usa, nella "Delucidazione critica", per spiegare l'origine libera delle azioni immorali è esclusivamente a priori: è infatti lo stesso soggetto razionale a riconoscersi responsabile e da questa circostanza dipendono alcune conseguenze sul modo in cui questo essere razionale fa riferimento al proprio carattere empirico. Se un soggetto ha manifestato un certo carattere nel corso della sua esistenza, ciò significa sia che questo è l'effetto delle azioni libere che lui ha compiuto nel corso della sua esistenza, unite alle loro circostanze concomitanti, sia che ogni volta che agisce lo fa indipendentemente da quanto precede e da questo suo carattere, dando inizio a un nuovo fenomeno.

> Ogni azione e […] la stessa intera successione della sua esistenza in quanto essere sensibile devono essere considerati nella coscienza intelligibile semplicemente come conseguenza, mai come motivo determinante, della sua causalità come noumeno.[5]

Se pure è vero che ogni azione è necessaria in quanto fenomeno che si inserisce nella serie temporale dell'esistenza dell'individuo e che costituisce il suo carattere determinandolo, essa deriva dal libero arbitrio e poteva non essere compiuta. Solo il soggetto che si rappresenta come essere razionale può quindi riconoscersi responsabile di un'azione non conforme al dovere:

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4. AA V, 97; *SM* 241. Cfr., ad esempio, Delbos 1968³: 158-160; Heimsoeth 1956; Prauss 1983: 185ss.
5. AA V, 97-98; *SM* 241.

> l'essere razionale può dire fondatamente, a proposito di ogni azione fatta contro la legge (nonostante questa azione, in quanto fenomeno sia sufficientemente determinata dal passato e perciò inevitabilmente necessaria), che avrebbe potuto non compierla, perché essa appartiene con tutto il passato che la determina, al fenomeno unico del carattere che essa conferisce a se stesso e in base al quale attribuisce a sé, come causa indipendente da ogni sensibilità, la causalità di questi stessi fenomeni.[6]

L'essere razionale non considera le azioni eseguite, non tiene conto dei desideri e delle circostanze concomitanti ma del fatto che non è intervenuta la volontà di sottometterli e di essere stato disposto anche a provare dolore, a causa dell'umiliazione della presunzione che deriva dall'osservanza della legge. Dalla configurazione del carattere empirico il soggetto razionale non trae alcun elemento da far valere in sua difesa per discolparsi perché, in quanto coscienza intelligibile e incondizionata, si riconosce come causa prima dell'azione. Ciò, però, non esclude ancora la possibilità che quello stesso individuo, in quanto essere anche fenomenico, questa responsabilità non la voglia riconoscere e per tale motivo il giudizio di imputazione formulato da quella stessa "coscienza (*Bewußtsein*) dell'esistenza intelligibile", propria del soggetto razionale, deve essere confermato dalla "mirabile facoltà" della "coscienza morale (*Gewissen*)".[7] Il soggetto razionale ha coscienza della legge morale perché se la dà in piena autonomia e riconosce il valore morale dei suoi atti; l'essere umano ha però anche una natura sensibile, per questo motivo la correttezza delle sue azioni deve essere giudicata dalla coscienza morale che, attraverso un esame interiore, può mettere in luce il ruolo che desideri e inclinazioni hanno avuto nelle sue scelte.

3. La colpevolezza dell'accusato

Accostando al giudizio dell'essere razionale le sentenze della coscienza che valuta la stessa azione, Kant utilizza una metafora non molto dissimile da quella della "corte di giustizia interna"[8] che rappresenta il dibattito tra le due diverse istanze interne al soggetto, razionale ed empirica. La conferma del *Gewissen* è necessaria, perché le azioni, in quanto soggette a una legge di libertà, appartengono al comportamento degli esseri intelligibili ma anche al mondo dei fenomeni come eventi e sono pertanto oggetti del senso esterno e interno.[9]

Le sentenze (*Richtersansprüche*) della coscienza sono pronunciate da un giudice che è anche un accusatore (*Ankläger*); il giudice impersona il soggetto consapevole della legge morale in quanto essa è un fatto presente e riconoscibile dalla ragione di ognuno

6. AA V, 98; *SM* 241.

7. *Ibid*.

8. Kant aveva istituito il paragone tra corte di giustizia interna ed esterna già in *VE* 157; *LE* 152, per poi ritornare sull'equiparazione tra *Gewissen* e "*Innerer Gerichtshof*" nella *Metafisica dei costumi*, AA VI, 438. Sull'evoluzione e i differenti significati di *Gewissen* in Kant, cfr. Schmidt & Schönecker 2014; Galewicz 2015; Weskott 2020: 47-51.

9. Cfr. Baum 2016: 102.

e i suoi argomenti sono pertanto a priori. Dovendo però rispondere agli argomenti che l'accusato adduce per discolparsi e che sono attinti dalle circostanze della sua vita passata, per poterli confutare e persuaderlo della sua colpevolezza, il giudice non può più limitarsi a dire che l'azione avrebbe potuto non compierla, - ma anche spiegargli perché non l'ha compiuta. Un individuo che si rifiuta di vedere quali sono i principi che hanno mosso la sua volontà diventa un "avvocato difensore (che) non può mettere a tacere l'accusatore".[10]

Kant inizia con l'esporre gli argomenti che l'accusato porta a sua discolpa

> un uomo ha un bel cercare di rappresentarsi un comportamento contrario alla legge del quale si ricordi come di un errore involontario, come una semplice inavvedutezza che non può mai essere evitata completamente; perciò, come qualcosa in cui è stato travolto dalla corrente della necessità naturale e proclamarsi innocente a questo riguardo.[11]

Ad essere chiamato in causa è un difetto momentaneo della capacità di giudizio, un errore di valutazione che non può essere attribuito alla volontà di agire male, perché questa mancanza precede la determinazione della volontà ed è espressione di una manchevolezza di attenzione che in fin dei conti caratterizza ogni essere umano e non può essere evitata in ogni occasione. Va osservato che, in questo caso, Kant individua il motivo determinante dell'azione cattiva, nella natura sensibile nell'essere umano che coincide con il suo dato caratteriale, qui ricondotto a inclinazioni, impulsi e a tutto ciò che è oggetto della facoltà di desiderare, in accordo con quanto ha sostenuto in quest'opera sul fatto che all'origine delle azioni cattive c'è una deliberazione eteronoma dell'arbitrio. Questa colpa viene ulteriormente spiegata dall'accusato nei termini della "conseguenza naturale" di una "cattiva abitudine, contratta insensibilmente per aver trascurato di badare a se stesso".[12]

L'accusatore può dimostrare l'inconsistenza degli argomenti dell'accusato a partire da quello che si pone a loro fondamento: l'errore involontario e l'inavvedutezza. Egli è in grado di rappresentarsi il suo comportamento contrario alla legge perché ben lo ricorda; non può far tacere più l'accusatore "che è in lui quando sappia che, al momento in cui commise l'azione, egli era in sé, cioè aveva l'uso della propria libertà".[13] Il soggetto è libero sia rispetto alle sue inclinazioni naturali sia all'intera configurazione empirica e antropologica del suo carattere; Kant ha delineato sommariamente il carattere empirico del soggetto facendo riferimento ad abitudini "cattive", che sono acquisite, e non a principi immutabili o a un'indole malvagia.

A questo punto, a sostegno del riconoscimento di responsabilità da parte dell'accusato, Kant introduce un argomento di carattere molto diverso: alla disapprovazione e al rimprovero che si muove a se stessi si aggiungono anche i sentimenti di pentimen-

10. AA V, 98; *SM* 241. Sulla dimensione dialogica dei due livelli di coscienza nella giustificazione delle azioni, cfr. Sturma 2019: 129.
11. AA V, 98; *SM* 241, trad. mod.
12. AA V, 98; *SM* 242.
13. *Ibid.*

to e dolore. Kant parla di un "sentimento di dolore, prodotto dall'intenzione morale (*schmerzhafte, durch moralische Gesinnung gewirkte Empfindung*)" che si esprime anche come "pentimento per un'azione fatta molto tempo prima, ogni qual volta è ricordata".[14] Se in una prospettiva esclusivamente a priori il soggetto attribuisce a sé la responsabilità di un'azione non conforme alla legge, riconoscendosi indipendente dalla natura quindi libero, in quanto essere anche sensibile che non può non avere un'intenzione morale, ancorché assopita da negligenze, errori e costante indulgenza verso se stesso, quel riconoscimento è mediato anche da un sentimento che si manifesta ogni volta che egli si ricordi un'azione cattiva, anche se è stata commessa molto tempo prima.

Se non fosse presente nella coscienza la rappresentazione a priori della legge morale,[15] nessuno potrebbe essere chiamato a rendere ragione del proprio comportamento, ma se essa non fosse anche la sede in cui trova posto un "sentimento" di turbamento "prodotto soggettivamente", l'intero essere umano, considerato anche nella sua configurazione empirica, non sarebbe anche persuaso di non aver fatto quanto era in suo potere fare per opporsi alla sua natura. Non soltanto egli sa che l'azione gli appartiene come effetto del suo libero arbitrio ma a questo sapere si connette sempre e moralmente un sentimento.

> Come dolore, il pentimento è del tutto legittimo perché la ragione, quando è in gioco la legge della nostra esistenza intelligibile (quella morale), non riconosce alcuna distinzione di tempo e vuol sapere solo se l'evento mi appartiene come azione, nel qual caso vi si connette sempre moralmente lo stesso sentimento. [16]

Il fatto che la connessione tra un sentimento di dolore e pentimento e il riconoscimento di essere responsabile di un'azione cattiva è di natura "morale" non ci autorizza a supporre che l'individuo disponga di un carattere buono per natura. In questione non è solo il fatto che questo genere di sentimenti non può precedere la coscienza del dovere e l'esercizio del libero arbitrio e quindi non ci fa conoscere nulla dell'esistenza di predisposizioni antropologiche buone o cattive, ma che tali fondamenti antropologici non possono precedere la coscienza del dovere. Tutto ciò che possiamo affermare di un vizioso che si muove un amaro rimprovero per aver violato la legge è che egli è "già onesto per metà", solo in virtù del fatto che la legge è presente nella sua coscienza.[17]

14. *Ibid*.

15. Sulla legge morale come "fatto della ragione", cfr., ad esempio, Delbos 1968[3]: *passim*; Henrich 1960; Beck 1961; Landucci 1994: 15-54.

16. AA V, 99; *SM* 242, trad. mod.

17. AA V, 38; *SM* 177. Sul fatto che per Kant anche il pentimento che si manifesta quando il soggetto risponde alla sua coscienza morale (*Gewissen*) è solo una delle "condizioni soggettive dell'accoglimento del dovere" e non può essere una condizione oggettiva, cfr. Sirovátka 2015: 57-62.

4. LA PERVERSITÀ DEI FANCIULLI E I PRINCIPI CATTIVI AMMESSI LIBERAMENTE

Consapevole di quanto possa apparire "in contrasto con ogni equità"[18] definire colpevoli e delittuose anche le azioni di bambini e di esseri umani che un carattere malvagio lo dimostrano già partire dalla tenera età, Kant afferma di non poter procedere in maniera differente, dal momento che non disponiamo dell'intuizione che ci permette di conoscere ogni movente nella sua relazione con le circostanze esterne, sì da poter discernere cosa dipende dalla libertà del soggetto e cosa dalla sua natura sensibile. Il giudizio sulle loro azioni, per impietoso che possa essere, dovrà essere, quindi, formulato a partire dall'esame del loro carattere sensibile già fin dalla fanciullezza, senza prescindere da un'indagine sulle condizioni dell'uso della libertà anche in presenza di una malvagità che appare connaturata. Tutte le colpe, anche quelle commesse dai bambini, possono essere loro imputate sulla base del fatto che essi dispongono di un libero arbitrio e della consapevolezza della legge morale da quando dispongono dell'uso della loro ragione. Non è infrequente conoscere

> uomini (che), già dalla fanciullezza, […] sottoposti a un'educazione dimostratasi vantaggiosa per altri, rivelino una perversità (*Bosheit*) così precoce e progrediscano così costantemente in essa col passare degli anni, da essere considerati malvagi nati (*geborne Bösewichter*) e del tutto incorreggibili quanto al loro modo di pensare (*Denkungsart*).[19]

Non sarà inopportuno notare che in questo passo Kant impiega il termine *Bosheit* per designare la perversità di queste persone e non "*Bösartigkeit*", quello che ha usato precedentemente, per definire il carattere dell'accusato o anche la malvagità che inerisce al carattere empirico nella *Critica della ragion pura.*[20] Questo termine non solo non è in linea con il lessico usato in quest'epoca da Kant ma, nella *Religione entro i limiti della semplice ragione*, non verrà più adoperato per definire la cattiveria umana perché sarà accuratamente distinto dalla "*Bösartigkeit*". La prima, "perversità", sarà definita come carattere esclusivo della ragione diabolica che innalza a movente l'opposizione alla legge ed è capace di "esonerare dalla legge stessa"; la seconda, invece, è più propriamente la "malvagità", la "cattiveria", ma anche la "perversità di cuore" e il "cuore cattivo" ("*Verkehrtheit des Herzens*", "*böses Herz*") che si deve attribuire solo alla ragione umana che non vuole il male per se stesso ma solo sotto le sembianze di un bene nella forma dell'inversione dei moventi ad opera del libero arbitrio[21]. Qui la *Bosheit* è umana anche perché indica espressamente il tratto distintivo di un carattere che deve essere sottoposto ad un giudizio della ragione umana, si parla quindi di individui che ne dispongono anche loro, la legge la conoscono e, se non la osservano, non lo fanno per spirito di rivolta. Il fatto che essa si riveli già nella costanza che contraddistingue il perseverare di alcuni individui nella scelleratezza sin da quando erano fanciulli potrebbe anche avvalorare la congettura che questa malvagità sia connaturata. Si tratta

18. AA V, 99; *SM* 243.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Cfr. *infra*, §5.
21. AA VI, 35; 37; *SM* 335-356; 558.

però solo di un'ipotesi infondata: Kant definisce questo modo di pensare nei termini di un comportamento uniforme e costante che si manifesta precocemente, ma se esso fosse innato confliggerebbe con ogni principio della morale e con la stessa possibilità del libero arbitrio.[22] Si tratta invece di una peculiare conformazione cattiva del carattere empirico di queste persone che li contraddistingue sin da quando iniziano ad agire e che resiste anche alla più coscienziosa educazione ma che non ne determina la volontà. La tenera età non giustifica però soggetti che

> Sono giudicati per ciò che fanno o non fanno, si rimprovera a essi il loro delitto come una colpa; anzi essi stessi (i fanciulli) ritengono così giustificato questo rimprovero come se, nonostante la natura disperata del loro carattere, restassero responsabili né più né meno di ogni altro uomo.[23]

Kant procede coerentemente con l'impianto proprio della *Critica* quando afferma che i bambini possono essere giudicati responsabili alla stessa stregua di ogni altro essere umano, perché ammette che anche loro dispongano già della ragione, per questo le loro azioni hanno origine non dalla perversità ma dalla causalità libera. Essi non potrebbero essere considerati responsabili

> se non supponessimo che tutto ciò che proviene dal loro libero arbitrio (come indubbiamente ogni azione compiuta deliberatamente) trova fondamento in una causalità libera che, fin dalla prima giovinezza, rivela nei suoi fenomeni (le azioni) il loro carattere.[24]

L'uniformità del carattere che si offre all'osservazione antropologica viene scomposta dal filosofo morale nei fenomeni che lo costituiscono, così essi possono essere considerati per quello che sono: azioni compiute in piena libertà e ripetutamente, sin dalla prima giovinezza. Tutto ciò che si manifesta come carattere cattivo è opera del soggetto libero e deve essergli imputato. Cosa ci si può aspettare di apprendere dalla conoscenza di una tendenza naturale in merito ai motivi determinanti del libero arbitrio se non che sono anch'essi sensibili? La risposta che qui Kant dà sorprende non poco il lettore della *Critica della ragion pratica* come anche quello della *Fondazione*, perché quella connessione naturale

> non presuppone necessariamente una natura cattiva della volontà, ma deriva piuttosto dai principi cattivi liberamente ammessi e immutabili (*freiwillig angenommenen bösen und unwandelbaren Grundsätze*).[25]

22. La tesi della tesi della cattiveria innata degli esseri umani è respinta da Kant anche nell'ambito della sua confutazione della dottrina cristiana del peccato originale, cfr. AA VI, 39-45; *SM* 360-366.

23. AA V, 100; *SM* 243.

24. AA V, 100; *SM* 243-244. Sulle diverse distinzioni kantiane tra "libertà" e "libero arbitrio" precedenti quelle contenute nella *Religione entro i limiti della semplice ragione* e nella *Metafisica dei costumi*, cfr., ad esempio, Bittner & Cramer 1975; Hudson 1991; Katsutoshi 1996: 20-30, 120-128, 162-172.

25. AA V, 100; *SM* 244.

I principi del carattere empirico, descritto con gli strumenti dell'osservazione, sono cattivi, ovvero, declinati anche sotto un'accezione morale, anteriormente alla scelta libera dell'individuo, anche se coesistono con una volontà che cattiva non è, condizione che salvaguarda ulteriormente l'autodeterminazione del soggetto. Quest'affermazione, che sembrerebbe più affine alle argomentazioni della *Religione entro i limiti della semplice ragione*[26] appare, sotto certi aspetti, rilevante e significativa per la dottrina della genesi delle azioni morali e, sotto altri, dissonante con alcuni capisaldi dell'impianto categoriale della seconda *Critica*.

5. PRINCIPI CATTIVI E MALE MORALE

La perversità dell'indole e i principi cattivi che ne sono la fonte non contraddicono la dottrina dell'origine libera delle azioni immorali perché non rappresentano una condizione indomabile e necessaria. Kant, infatti, distingue in maniera netta i principi da cui deriva il carattere malvagio di questi determinati esseri umani sia dai loro moventi patologici sia dal male morale che essi commettono. Quest'ultimo dipende infatti da un libero arbitrio che ha a suo fondamento una causalità libera e si manifesta volta per volta nelle azioni, e poiché nemmeno la volontà di queste persone è cattiva e potrebbe essere determinata o dalla legge morale o dalle inclinazioni e dalla brama, se essi perseverano nel male la responsabilità deve essere imputata solo a loro.

Kant ascrive all'individuo vizioso anche i principi cattivi, non appena egli li ammette, perché avrebbe potuto agire in maniera diversa, e questa scelta lo rende "ancor più riprovevole" rispetto a quando asseconda le inclinazioni e si "lascia trascinare dalla corrente naturale". In questo caso, il soggetto non soddisfa soltanto la sua brama sensibile ma lascia che si rafforzi quello che di corrotto c'è nella sua natura. I principi cattivi sono espressione di una malvagità intrinseca di queste persone e sono immutabili, non nel senso che la loro presenza 'determina' necessariamente il loro carattere ma che costituiscono un ulteriore e permanente ostacolo all'osservanza di un dovere al quale sarebbero pienamente in grado di sottomettersi solo se lo volessero. Il male morale commesso da questi soggetti, in questo caso, non costituisce l'effetto di un arbitrio affetto soltanto da inclinazioni patologiche ma anche da un movente perverso che essi assecondano quando agiscono.[27]

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26. Nella *Religione entro i limiti della semplice* r*agione*, Kant parla, per la precisione, di un "principio del male (*Grund des Bösen*)" in virtù del quale l'essere umano "adotta massime buone cattive (contrarie alla legge)". Qui si può solo accennare a differenze fondamentali: questo principio vale per l'intero genere umano; a esso non si può pervenire tramite esperienza; è un atto della libertà e quindi razionale. AA VI, 21-22; *SM* 339-340.

27. Nella sua dettagliata interpretazione di questo passo, Landucci non ha però evidenziato la peculiarità della tesi dell'origine libera di azioni immorali che derivano da principi cattivi antropologici e la differenza tra questi principi e i moventi patologici. A suo parere, la libera ammissione dei principi cattivi va interpretata solo nei termini della "scelta globale originaria" del carattere intelligibile e non anche di una scelta libera dell'arbitrio che si esplica ripetutamente in ogni azione compiuta. Cfr. Landucci 1994: 259-260.

Per poter essere imputati all'essere umano, però, anche i principi cattivi divengono oggetti allo stesso titolo in cui lo sono i moventi patologici, nel momento in cui egli li ammette e qui sorge la domanda sul motivo e sulla forma sotto cui un individuo li accetta. Quando Kant distingue tra le due differenti specie di "male" che possono essere oggetto della facoltà di aborrire, contrappone il male morale assoluto, "*Böse*" al male sensibile che ogni essere umano prova soggettivamente, "*Uebel*", ovvero ciò che lo addolora e gli causa dispiacere. L'individuo esecra e rifugge principalmente questo male fisico e si sottrae volontariamente al male morale quando vuole assumere la legge morale nella propria massima, accettando il dolore che consegue dalla costrizione che la volontà esercita sulle sue inclinazioni.[28] I "*böse und unwandelbare Prinzipien*" sono di per sé cattivi anche moralmente e non causano né dolore né senso di privazione di un qualsivoglia benessere alla persona, la quale infatti li sceglie liberamente e regolarmente. Scelte siffatte non giustificano pertanto l'attribuzione ai soggetti che le fanno di una *Bosheit* diabolica, poiché essi non scelgono un "*Böse*" in senso morale, ovvero non si rivoltano contro la legge: come fa l'imputato di fronte al tribunale del *Gewissen*, riconoscono e ritengono giustificato il rimprovero che gli si muove contro per aver agito male, anche se, diversamente da lui, non provano pentimento.

Di fatto, però, il motivo per cui gli esseri umani non si rendono indipendenti dai moventi sensibili non è dello stesso genere di quello in base a cui non vogliono affrancarsi dall'influsso dei fondamenti perversi della loro natura: non solo non li sottomettono perché non causano sofferenza ma anche perché, a differenza dei diversi oggetti della facoltà di desiderare che, di volta in volta, affettano il libero arbitrio, i principi cattivi stanno alla base della loro intera esistenza e della loro storia. Non sceglierli significherebbe decidere di imprimere una svolta alla loro vita e sforzarsi di indirizzarla verso la virtù e, se anche questo rimane pur sempre possibile, a ciò si oppone ancora una volta la circostanza fondamentale dell'invariabilità dei principi.

Di fronte a questa circolarità, si pone una domanda sulle conseguenze che l'argomento dei principi cattivi immutabili presenti anche nei bambini comporta per la dottrina kantiana della relazione tra carattere empirico e il carattere intelligibile inteso come intenzione unitaria. Una delle caratteristiche di questi fanciulli, scrive Kant, è che essi sono "del tutto incorreggibili quanto al modo di pensare (*Denkungsart*)", anche se nella loro esistenza non hanno fatto i conti con circostanze avverse e nemmeno con un'educazione sbagliata. Come potrà risvegliarsi la capacità di queste persone di rappresentarsi la legge morale e divenire coscienti di essere liberi, se già il loro modo di pensare non si presta a nessun miglioramento? La difficoltà insita in questo passo è stata opportunamente rilevata soprattutto in riferimento alla definizione kantiana di "*Denkungsart*" nella *Critica della ragion pura* come sinonimo di "carattere intellegibile":[29] in questo carattere non è pensabile nessun mutamento determinato dal carattere empirico, sì che, in quell'opera, poteva essere giustificato attribuire l'immutabilità all'intenzione libera ed extratemporale. Nella seconda *Critica*, invece, ogni scelta viene

28. AA V, 58; 60-62; *SM* 197-198; 201-202. Cfr. Buchheim 2019: 300-301, 303-304.
29. Cfr. Landucci 1994: 261-262.

pensata come il risultato dell'azione dell'Io noumenico e di circostanze empiriche, che concorrono "alla formazione dei 'motivi' sulla cui base la volontà libera si determinerà".[30] L'elemento problematico che la tesi dei principi cattivi e immutabili comporta per la dottrina del carattere empirico e del carattere intelligibile emerge dalla compresenza dell'innegabile carattere di libertà che accompagna tutte le azioni dei soggetti, da un lato, e dell'incorreggibilità del modo di pensare, dall'altro.

Fin qui l'argomento kantiano dei principi cattivi è apparso in larga parte coerente con la sua dottrina dell'imputabilità delle azioni immorali esposta nella *Critica della ragion pratica* e molto meno con quella del carattere intelligibile inteso globalmente. Adesso si tratterà di prendere in considerazione almeno tre elementi di difformità tra questa tesi e alcuni argomenti contenuti nella seconda *Critica*: il primo è rappresentato dal fatto che Kant asserisce che non si possono definire il bene e il male prima della legge morale e dell'azione ma solo dopo di esse, come effetti possibili della libertà. Il secondo è costituito dalla preferenza che Kant accorda a fattori naturali e abituali dell'indole umana nell'individuazione delle cause del carattere antropologico malvagio, come si leggeva già nella *Critica della ragion pura* e poi nella *Fondazione della metafisica dei costumi*. Il terzo emerge dalla considerazione nel fatto che dipende proprio dall'impostazione metodologica di queste due opere, che prescinde da ogni conoscenza della natura umana quando si tratti di fondare una morale pura a priori, che non si possa risalire da una caratteristica della natura umana constatata empiricamente a un principio positivo che ne costituisce l'origine e che sia anche valido nella dottrina a priori della causalità secondo libertà. Queste tre questioni verranno affrontate separatamente, prima di esporre la tesi del "male positivo" esposta da Kant nella *Vorlesung über Ethik* che costituisce un'elaborazione precritica di questo argomento.

6. MALE COME EFFETTO E MALE COME PRINCIPIO

Definire "cattivo" un principio derivato dall'analisi di una tendenza naturale significa giudicarlo in base al criterio del male e ciò non sembra essere possibile nel contesto della morale pura a priori. Nel capitolo sul "Concetto di un oggetto della critica della ragion pura pratica", Kant afferma che il bene e il male si possono predicare solo degli "effetti" della libertà e non possono essere stabiliti anteriormente all'esercizio della morale pura e a priori. Ammettere l'esistenza di principi cattivi che sono anteriori alla scelta dell'arbitrio perché esso li "ammette liberamente", come fa per l'appunto Kant nella "Delucidazione critica", crea problemi di non poco conto nel contesto della fondazione della sua dottrina pratica pura e lo stesso sarebbe se ad essere presupposti fossero principi buoni.

Ciò, infatti, è quanto emerge dalla spiegazione di quel "paradosso del metodo della critica della ragion pura pratica"[31] per cui i concetti di bene e di male non devono essere determinati prima della legge morale ma dopo di essa e per mezzo di essa: è la legge morale la condizione a partire da cui si stabilisce cosa è bene e cosa è male. Assumere bene e male proprio in quanto "principi (*Grundsätze*)" anteriori alla determinazione

30. Landucci 1994: 262.
31. AA V, 62; *SM* 203.

della volontà, lascerebbe aperta la strada ad una distinzione tra bene e male fondata solo su un criterio empirico poiché solo l'esperienza è in grado di stabilire ciò che è conforme al sentimento di piacere. Sempre in base all'esperienza si capisce cosa è invece oggetto della facoltà di esecrare, un male che, in questa accezione, non è il male morale ma ciò che addolora. E, se anche Kant afferma che il bene e del male sono oggetti della ragion pratica, il primo della "facoltà di desiderare", il secondo della "facoltà di aborrire", "secondo un principio della ragione",[32] esiste un solo principio che salvaguarda la ragion pura pratica dal rischio dell'eteronomia: una causalità della ragion pura che presuppone solo la rappresentazione razionale della legge morale come legge della libertà.[33]

7. L'ORIGINE NATURALE DEL CARATTERE PERVERSO

Quando Kant, nella seconda *Critica*, descrive il carattere empirico malvagio, non indica tra le componenti e le origini del carattere empirico dell'essere umano cause che non ricadono nella connessione sensibile della natura. Tra esse, come si è visto, annovera "cattive abitudini", "mancanze" dovute alla negligenza e agli errori di valutazione, circostanze esterne che incidono sui moventi o anche sulla vita di un essere umano non abbastanza determinato nel resistere al loro influsso dannoso. Queste caratteristiche non dicono nulla sulla natura corrotta di alcuni esseri umani e dicono tutto invece sulla sua esistenza in quanto essere sensibile, su quel carattere empirico di cui Kant indaga la relazione con quello intelligibile, nelle pagine in cui trova posto anche l'imputazione di una cattiveria naturale all'essere razionale e libero.

A ben vedere, anche nella definizione del carattere empirico contenuta in quella parte della *Critica della ragion pura* a cui rimanda in queste stesse pagine, Kant la malvagità la definiva in una prospettiva solo antropologico-naturale e riconducibile a mancanze e non a principi positivi; per questo motivo si propone adesso un *excursus* su quell'argomento. Nella *Spiegazione dell'idea cosmologica della libertà rispetto alla necessità universale della natura*[34] Kant illustra con un esempio la tesi che la libertà è causa dei fenomeni, non solo negativamente, come indipendenza dall'ordine naturale, ma anche positivamente, come fondamento e inizio incondizionato di ogni azione volontaria. Una persona dice volontariamente una "menzogna malvagia" che ha come conseguenza il sorgere di dissidi tra persone che conosce; occorrerà, a questo punto, stabilire se la responsabilità di questa azione e delle sue conseguenze deve essere ascritta a quella persona oppure ricondotta alle diverse componenti che costituiscono il suo carattere empirico.[35] Kant procede introducendo una netta distinzione tra i procedimenti da seguire per individuare le cause determinanti dell'azione: il primo prende in esame il carattere

32. AA V, 58; *SM* 197.

33. AA V, 64-65; *SM* 205. Cfr. Baum 2016: 101; Bartuschat 2016.

34. Nella *Critica della ragion pura,* come è noto, il concetto di libertà, è solo possibile e problematico e non reale; su questo tema, cfr. per esempio, Heimsoeth 1970; Guéroult 1963; Prauss 1983: 62-69.

35. AA III, 375; *CRP* 453.

empirico dell'essere umano nella sua totalità, il secondo considera quella menzogna senza far alcun riferimento alle condizioni che l'hanno preceduta.

> Il primo punto richiede che venga preso in esame l'intero carattere empirico dell'uomo fino alle sue sorgenti, che vanno ricercate nella cattiva educazione, nelle cattive compagnie, parzialmente anche nella malvagità (*Bösartigkeit)* di un naturale (*Naturells*) indifferente alla vergogna, e risalenti inoltre alla superficialità e alla dabbenaggine; e neppure vanno trascurate le concause occasionali.[36]

La malvagità che rappresenta solo una tendenza naturale interiore dell'indole del soggetto viene qui definita da Kant come una delle fonti del carattere empirico allo stesso titolo di fattori a cui concorrono in buona misura anche circostanze esterne sfortunate come sono, per l'appunto, un'educazione sbagliata o l'essersi imbattuti solo in persone viziose. Tuttavia, Kant riconduce sia la prima sia le seconde alla responsabilità dell'individuo fenomenico perché si deve solo alla sua noncuranza e mancanza di avvedutezza se esse hanno costantemente influito sul suo carattere. Non si può ancora parlare, in questo caso, di una responsabilità morale, perché non è sotto questo punto di vista che Kant ricerca la causa libera e intelligibile della negligenza del soggetto, ma della responsabilità di quel "carattere empirico" dell'arbitrio, che determina le azioni dell'essere umano secondo la legge del tempo esclusivamente nel fenomeno.[37]

Quella malvagità che era soltanto una delle fonti del carattere dell'individuo viene subito dopo assunta da Kant come una caratteristica generale della sua indole, definita nei termini di un "naturale infelice (*unglückliches Naturell*)" che è influenzato dalle circostanze[38]. Questa disposizione naturale non sembra più porsi sullo stesso piano della cattiva educazione e delle cattive compagnie ma di una tendenza che si rinvigorisce e influenza le scelte del soggetto grazie alla sua ostinazione nel non volersene allontanare.

La sostanziale differenza rispetto a quello che Kant sosterrà nella *Critica della ragion pratica* sul rapporto tra la cattiveria dell'indole naturale dell'individuo e la scelta libera di un arbitrio non empirico ma che ha a suo fondamento la legge della libertà consiste nel fatto che, in questo caso, dall'osservazione antropologica non si trae nessun principio che può essere ammesso liberamente e che sia "cattivo". Questo significherebbe risalire da una condizione che determina la scelta nel tempo a un principio che dovrebbe essere preceduto dalla scelta dell'arbitrio secondo la legge della libertà e che, pertanto, non può più essere di natura antropologica ma razionale. Quello che invece Kant scrive sulle condizioni empiriche che conducono il soggetto ad avere un comportamento difforme dalla legge della ragione è solo riferito agli impulsi sensibili e non a principi di derivazione naturale moralmente definiti. "La causalità della ragione" può essere considerata come una "causalità piena, anche nel caso in cui gli impulsi sensibili non solo non la favoriscono, ma addirittura la contrastano".[39]

36. *Ibid.*
37. AA III, 374; *CRP* 452.
38. AA III, 375; *CRP* 454.
39. AA III, 376; *CRP* 454.

8. OSSERVAZIONE ANTROPOLOGICA E PRINCIPI MORALMENTE IMPUTABILI

L'impostazione metodologica che Kant adotta nella *Critica della ragion pura* per delucidare i rapporti tra carattere empirico e carattere intelligibile contribuisce a spiegare una delle peculiarità del passo di cui ci stiamo occupando: la sovrapposizione di argomenti di esperienza ed argomenti morali che pone qualche difficoltà quando si vuole comprendere come si possa ammettere, nel contesto della *Critica della ragion pratica*, la derivazione di principi morali dell'azione dal carattere empirico. Nella prima *Critica*, Kant distingue nettamente il metodo antropologico e descrittivo delle cause motrici attive nel carattere empirico da quello che invale nella delucidazione a priori del carattere intelligibile. Kant non esclude che possa esserci un posto anche per l'osservazione antropologica, purché resti confinata nei limiti di una descrizione che non può andar oltre i confini di "tutte le azioni dell'uomo nel fenomeno (che) risultano determinate dal suo carattere empirico e dalle altre cause concomitanti, in conformità all'ordine della natura".[40] Quando ci si interroga sull'origine di un'azione, se essa sia libera o necessitata, la risposta non può essere trovata nell'osservazione del carattere dell'individuo, sebbene

> soltanto in base a questo carattere noi possiamo prendere in esame l'uomo, se vogliamo limitarci ad osservare, e, come fa l'antropologia, vogliamo indagare le cause motrici delle sue azioni.[41]

Proprio perché, in questo caso, i moventi delle azioni del soggetto sono accessibili alla conoscenza antropologica, questo approccio consente una certa cognizione delle attitudini morali dell'essere umano per come si sono costituite nel tempo, ancorché la libertà noumenica che si esprime fenomenicamente nel carattere resti imperscrutabile.

Anche nel contesto profondamente diverso della *Fondazione della metafisica dei costumi* e della *Critica della ragion pratica*, Kant elabora una struttura metodologica e concettuale che non permette che, a partire da una caratteristica della natura umana osservata empiricamente, si possa risalire a principi validi nella dottrina a priori della causalità secondo libertà. Entrambe le opere prendono le mosse dall'intento di determinare il fondamento e la possibilità della legge morale e della libertà prescindendo dalla conoscenza dell'essere umano anche per evitare il rischio che i principi puri della morale vengano snaturati da un casuismo accondiscendente nei confronti della negligenza, debolezza e fragilità umana. Già a partire dalla *Fondazione* Kant delimita la conoscenza teoretica dei doveri da ogni genere di conoscenza antropologica in ragione del fatto che, se non si prescinde dalla considerazione del cuore umano, dei suoi desideri e dei suoi impulsi, la dottrina morale a cui si perviene non può che essere "ambigua". In essa troverebbero posto moventi derivanti da sentimenti e inclinazioni frammisti a principi della ragione, con il risultato che le "cause dell'agire non si" lascerebbero "ricondurre sotto nessun principio" e "solo casualmente possono condurre al bene, ma sovente possono condurre anche al male"[42]. Con questo Kant asserisce, a differenza di quanto

40. AA III, 372; *CRP* 450.
41. AA III, 372-373; *CRP* 451.
42. AA IV, 411; *SM* 68.

afferma nel brano sui principi cattivi, che il male morale deriva da inclinazioni sensibili, che non si possono ammettere nella dottrina morale razionale elementi derivati dalla considerazione della natura e del "cuore umano" e, soprattutto, che essi non possono essere nemmeno essere considerati alla stregua di principi ma solo di moventi. L'ammissione nella dottrina morale di quanto si apprende dall'esperienza umana costituisce solo un'"aggiunta estranea"[43] che conduce ad imbattersi nel "caro io", nell'immancabile "dialettica naturale" e nel "sofisticare contro le pure leggi del dovere".

Già a partire dalla *Fondazione*, Kant farà esplicito riferimento a tratti che sono propri della natura umana, "la fragilità (*Gebrechlichkeit*), l'impurità (*Unlauterkeit*)" e la "debolezza (*Schwachheit*)", ma precisa anche che essi vengono chiamati in causa da molti filosofi al solo scopo di giustificare il fatto che gli individui non possono obbedire alla legge del dovere, anche se ne riconoscono la validità. Il soggetto, infatti, potrà anche tributare rispetto all'idea di dovere ma è troppo debole per osservarlo.[44] Non solo in quest'opera dalla fragilità e dall'impurità dell'essere umano non si può risalire ad un loro fondamento che è anche un principio positivo che determini il libero arbitrio, ma esse sono relegate tra gli argomenti addotti da coloro che la morale la "irridono come una chimera dell'immaginazione umana".[45]

9. IL MALE POSITIVO NELLA *VORLESUNG ÜBER ETHIK*

Le "aggiunte estranee" alla dottrina morale (fragilità, debolezza) venivano ancora accolte da Kant nelle sue lezioni di etica tenute in epoca precritica, anche per trarne conclusioni in merito all'imputabilità delle azioni ed è in uno di questi corsi che si trova quella che è una formulazione per molti aspetti analoga all'argomento contenuto nella "Delucidazione critica". La tesi dell'origine libera delle azioni cattive da un principio positivo è presente nella *Vorlesung über Ethik*, contrassegnata dalla mescolanza di trattazioni antropologiche con argomentazioni morali.[46] Questa trattazione è stata considerata come un'anticipazione precritica della dottrina del "male radicale";[47] si può anche sostenere che la breve trattazione dedicata da Kant alla perversità e ai principi cattivi si pone in continuità con quella tesi, pur sullo sfondo di altrettanto significative differenze. Qui si legge, infatti:

> La debolezza (*Schwäche*) della natura umana consiste in questo, che essa difetta del grado di bontà morale necessario per rendere l'azione adeguata alla legge morale. La fragilità (*Gebrechlichkeit*) della natura umana consiste in questo, che in essa non vi è soltanto una mancanza di bontà morale ma vi sono persino consistenti principi e moventi che spingono a fare il male.[48]

43. *Ibid*.
44. AA IV, 406; *SM* 63.
45. AA IV, 407; *SM* 64.
46. Sull'etica precritica di Kant, in generale e sul rapporto tra morale e antropologia in questo testo, cfr. Schmucker 1961: 105-116, 256-261, 303-310, 312-313.
47. Cfr. De Pascale 1989; Pranteda 2002: 179-188.
48. *VE* 78; *LE* 73.

In questo passo si individua una notevole differenza rispetto all'argomento contenuto nella "Delucidazione critica" che consiste nel fatto che Kant non fa riferimento al carattere di una precisa categoria di persone, coloro che manifestano malvagità sin da bambini, ma a due caratteristiche dell'intero genere umano, con la conseguenza che i principi e moventi all'origine di azioni cattive sono presenti in tutte le persone e non solo in quelle che agiscono in maniera riprovevole nel corso della loro intera esistenza. La 'perversità', inoltre, non è nemmeno menzionata da Kant tra le caratteristiche della natura umana.

Nel caso della debolezza, si individua una spiegazione convincente di come essa impedisca all'essere umano di rendere le sue azioni conformi al principio della moralità: essa è propriamente un'assenza di bene. Se la debolezza è causa difettiva delle azioni cattive lo si deve al fatto che l'idea di perfezione morale attinta dall'intelletto non ha nessuna "capacità impulsiva di forza pari a quella dei motivi sensibili". Per quanto l'intelletto distingua chiaramente che il motivo più alto che deve spingere all'azione è la "rettitudine morale", spesso esso soccombe di fronte ad impulsi sensibili che sono però molto più forti e ai quali l'essere umano dà la priorità.[49] Questo non riduce l'imputabilità del soggetto poiché Kant, per un verso, ammette già che "il principio che si può trarre dalla debolezza dell'essere umano è che le leggi morali non devono mai essere adattate a essa"; per l'altro, esprime ancora l'idea che quella coscienza del dovere possa essere rafforzata attraverso la formazione di pratiche virtuose. Non solo, infatti, la legge deve essere rappresentata dall'intelletto nella sua purezza, ma occorre anche associare a questa rappresentazione una "molteplicità di principi impulsivi" che trasformino la virtù in abitudine.[50]

Nel caso della fragilità non è in questione solo un difetto di bene ma un male positivo che è presente in tutti gli individui:

> riguardo alla fragilità umana v'è da notare che essa deriva dal fatto che nell'uomo non vi è solo un'assenza di bene positivo ma anche una presenza di male positivo. Nondimeno ogni male morale deriva dalla libertà, altrimenti non sarebbe tale. Per quanto vi possa essere una tendenza naturale ad esso; tuttavia, le azioni cattive hanno la loro origine nella libertà ed è anche per questo che vengono ascritte come vizi.[51]

Seppur usando una terminologia differente da quella impiegata nel passo sui principi cattivi, Kant procede in maniera analoga: risale da un tratto costante dell'essere umano ad una sua causa che è il male positivo e lo connette con la libertà, allo scopo di sta-

49. *Ibid.*

50. *VE* 79; *LE* 74.

51. *VE* 80; *LE* 75. Kant rimanda alle definizioni di "*infirmitas*" e "*fragilitas*" contenute nel manuale di Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten che utilizzava per le sue lezioni, *Initia Philosophiæ practicæ primæ*, Halæ Magdeburgicæ 1760, §§168-169. "Infirmitas humana est impotentia naturalis actuandi in liberis suis determinationis certum gradus rectitudinis [...]. Fragilitas (lubricitas) naturæ humanæ est inclination (propensio, pronitas) naturalis in malum morale, s. illa humanæ naturæ conditio, qua facile est homine in malum morale impellere". Va osservato che, tanto il male positivo quanto la derivazione del male morale dalla libertà sono idee originali di Kant.

bilire la piena imputabilità delle azioni malvagie. Il male positivo non coincide con il male morale: il primo è alla base di una tendenza che, in quanto "naturale", non può essere imputata, il secondo invece è prodotto dalla libertà e non è espressione solo di un difetto di capacità impulsiva ma di una vera e propria determinazione opposta al bene. Distinguendo tra male morale e libertà, da un lato, e male positivo e fragilità, dall'altro, Kant affronta la spiegazione dell'origine delle azioni cattive in termini strettamente pratico-morali e non antropologici perché stabilisce che non si può definire morale ciò che non deriva da libertà e che solo per questo motivo quelle azioni sono imputabili al soggetto in quanto vizi e non in quanto mancanze.

> Riguardo alla fragilità della natura umana vale il principio secondo cui, nel giudizio delle azioni, non si deve fare alcun conto di essa [...]. La *fragilitas humana* non può mai dunque costituire una ragione per ridurre l'imputabilità. Il giudice interno è giusto, egli considera l'azione per se stessa, senza riguardo alla fragilità umana, se soltanto intendiamo la sua voce e ci ripromettiamo non di sopprimerla, ma di ascoltarla.[52]

È all'azione che ogni soggetto deve far riferimento quando si riconosce responsabile di una colpa e non al proprio carattere; il giudice interno è anche il "legislatore"[53] che è consapevole della "legge morale in tutta la sua purezza e santità" e sa anche che "il crimine supremo è quello di sottrarre qualcosa alla sua purezza".[54] Quando l'essere umano agisce male sopprime deliberatamente la legge e non si limita a cedere per debolezza a impulsi sensibili.

In queste riflessioni si possono individuare alcuni elementi che anticipano l'esposizione dei principi cattivi nella *Critica*. Il male positivo, a cui Kant di fatto accenna soltanto, rappresenta comunque il principio da cui deriva una tendenza naturale; Kant non precisa se l'individuo è anche responsabile di questo male positivo poiché il giudizio sull'imputazione deve avere come oggetto solo il male morale che deriva dalla libertà. Da queste righe, pertanto, non si evince con chiarezza in che rapporto il male positivo si ponga in relazione con la libertà, quello che Kant non fa è annoverarlo tra i "vizi".

Un'ulteriore specificità che contraddistingue il passo di Kant che si sta commentando, confermata anche dalla *Vorlesung über Ethik*, è costituita dal fatto che egli ha preso in considerazione non l'intero genere umano ma solo i bambini precocemente perversi e gli adulti che da questa indole non si sono mai liberati, che non solo non rispondono al tribunale della coscienza ma si dimostrano pure indifferenti alla vergogna.

Comprendere il motivo di questa scelta richiederebbe che si procedesse per congetture; infatti, nelle opere e nel *Nachlaß* di Kant, almeno sino alla *Religione*, è possibile trovare molte descrizioni del carattere di esseri umani che si comportano abitualmente male, ma questo viene ricondotto a cause naturali. In altri casi, Kant si sofferma su caratteri apparentemente morali propri di individui che compiono azioni buone solo le-

52. *VE* 80; *LE* 75-76.
53. *VE* 80; *LE* 76.
54. *VE* 78; *LE* 75.

galmente, nei quali dominano l'ipocrisia e la dissimulazione. Sulla base di queste comparazioni, una risposta alla domanda sul perché Kant, nel brano che è stato commentato, individua la presenza di principi cattivi solo nei bambini perversi e negli individui che saranno da adulti, non sembra possa essere formulata con la dovuta sicurezza. Si può, però, far riferimento a come cambierà la prospettiva di Kant su questo argomento prima della redazione del libro sul "male radicale". In una *Vorarbeit* alla *Religione entro i limiti della semplice religione*, egli segue un procedimento inverso che muove dall'attribuzione della corruzione all'essere umano per riconoscerla anche a coloro che sono ancora giovani e immaturi:

> Nella prima giovinezza, quando l'uomo è guidato anche da altri nel giudizio su se stesso, si risveglia già in lui, anche se oscuramente, il concetto di dovere (la disposizione al bene nella sua natura), ma si trova già corrotto, non nello stato di innocenza ma già di trasgressione; con lui non si ha più a che fare con una 'res integra'.[55]

È l'essere umano, e non il bambino, a dover "imputare con forza a se stesso" le colpe commesse "fin dalla prima giovinezza"[56]. Né l'uno né l'altro sono più "*res integra*" innocente; ogni individuo, sin da quando viene ancora accudito e educato da adulti, trasgredisce un dovere che oscuramente conosce, non "a causa di uno stato di inettitudine e insipienza a fare il bene che egli vuole", e neanche spinto dalla "rozzezza di istinti naturali non coltivati" ma "a causa di una volontà malvagia (*bösen Willen*)"[57] per cui fa "ciò che sa benissimo di non dover fare".[58] La malvagità e la corruzione rappresentano caratteristiche universali degli esseri umani e a partire da questa considerazione si possono attribuire anche ai bambini.

Nella *Critica della ragion pratica*, quando Kant non ha ancora formulato in termini razionali e morali il principio del male, procede in maniera diversa: per sostenere in maniera inappellabile che le azioni cattive devono essere imputate a tutti, a partire soltanto dall'osservazione della natura dell'essere umano, è necessario far ricorso a un argomento che sia definitivo ed efficace. Se si vuole che questi giudizi siano rigorosi, allora bisognerà emetterli anche su quelle persone nei confronti delle quali si manifesta sempre indulgenza: i fanciulli. Questo apparente contrasto con ogni equità è un servizio reso all'universale.

55. AA XX, 101-102.

56. AA XX, 102.

57. Nel primo libro della *Religione* Kant non attribuisce una "volontà malvagia" all'essere umano perché essa, in quanto eleva a movente l'opposizione alla legge, farebbe di lui un essere diabolico: AA VI, 35; *SM* 355-356.

58. AA XX, 102.

ABBREVIAZIONI

AA = I. Kant, *Werke. Akademie-Textausgabe*, 23 vol., Berlin, De Gruyter, 1902-1923. Segue in numeri romani il numero del volume e, in numeri arabi, quello della pagina.

CRP = I. Kant, *Critica della ragion pura*, trad. it. P. Chiodi, Torino, UTET, 1967.

LE = I. Kant, *Lezioni di etica*, trad. it. A. Guerra, Bari, Laterza, 1991.

SM = I. Kant, *Scritti morali*, trad. it. P. Chiodi, Torino, UTET, 1970.

VE = *Eine Vorlesung Kants über Ethik*, hg. von P. Menzer, Berlin, Pan-Verlag Rolf Heise, 1924.

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"In Contrast to All Equity".
The Perversity of Children and the "Bad Principles" in the Critique of Practical Reason

Maria Antonietta Pranteda
Dipartimento di Filosofia e Scienze dell'Educazione
Università di Torino
ORCID: 0000-0003-2195-5896
mariaantonietta.pranteda@unito.it

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MORAN GODESS-RICCITELLI

The Figurative Language of Nature: Expression and Meaning in Kant's Aesthetic Judgment

ABSTRACT: Drawing on the intimate connection between beauty and morality in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the aim of this paper is to elucidate Kant's doctrine of the moral meaning that natural beauty is said to carry for us in the act of aesthetic judgment. I propose that the key to this meaning lies in the *expressive* nature of beauty. "Expression" is to be analyzed in terms of the way in which nature, according to Kant, "figuratively *speaks* to us in its beautiful forms" when we experience it aesthetically. Such language that nature brings to us, as Kant states, "seems to have a *higher* meaning". I propose that there is a triadic connection between 1) the figurative language of natural beauty, 2) the expression of the judgment of natural beauty, and 3) its higher (moral) meaning. This connection is most clearly demonstrated by the intellectual interest that a person of a "good moral disposition" takes in the presentation of beauty in nature.
KEYWORDS: Aesthetic Judgement; Figurative Language; Intellectual Interest; Moral Meaning; Natural Beauty

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between beauty and morality in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* has long been the subject of scholarly study. The vast majority of these studies have tended to focus on the following: the contribution of judgments of beauty to an account of moral feeling, the analogy between beauty and morality that allows the former to be a symbol of the latter, the claim of judgments of beauty to universal validity as based on an appeal to the moral 'ought', and the relationship between beauty and moral ideas.[1]

The common motivation of all these accounts is to present the essentiality of aesthetic judgments in grounding the possibility of morality for human beings, in accordance with Kant's famous reference to the faculty of judgment as bridging "the great chasm" between the concept of nature and that of freedom.[2]

1. Prominent accounts of the connection between beauty and morality include Allison 2001; Chignell 2007; Crawford 1974; Cohen 1982; Guyer 1979 and 2003; Henrich 1992; Nuzzo 2008; Rogerson 2004. More recent accounts include: Matherne 2019; Savile 2021; Tinguely 2017.
2. See *CJ* 5: 195.

Against this ample background, the present paper endeavors to draw attention to a somewhat overlooked convergence between beauty and morality.[3] The aim of this paper is to elucidate Kant's doctrine of the *moral meaning* that natural beauty supposedly carries for us in the act of aesthetic judgment.[4] By "moral meaning" I refer to Kant's description of natural beauty as containing a "language that nature brings to us and that seems to have a *higher* meaning".[5] What "meaning" would this be? I suggest that the key to this meaning is the *expressive* nature of beauty. "Expression" is to be analyzed in terms of the way in which nature, according to Kant, "figuratively *speaks* to us in its beautiful forms" when we experience it aesthetically.[6] Several questions arise here: What precisely does nature express in its beautiful forms? Does the beauty of nature possess semantic power, or is it merely our interpretation of nature? If nature does indeed speak to us, how do we know how to respond to that expression in a manner that aligns with the meaning embodied in its beautiful forms?

Kant does not provide a direct response to these questions. Instead, he leaves the ambiguity around them through his use of enigmatic terminology of 'cyphers', 'hints', 'traces' and 'signs' in regard to our aesthetic experience of nature and its meaning.

This paper proposes to examine these questions through the language and response embodied in the act of aesthetic judgment of natural beauty. On the one hand, the paper examines the *expressive* nature of the figurative language of natural beauty, which is composed of 'cyphers', 'hints', 'traces' and 'signs'. On the other hand, it considers the manner in which we must be attentive to these hints and signs and recognize them in order to provide those beautiful forms a *response* by aesthetically judging them. This peculiar dialogue, I argue, has a moral meaning.

I propose that there is a triadic connection between 1) the figurative language of natural beauty, 2) the expression of the judgment of natural beauty, and 3) its "higher" moral meaning.[7] This connection is made most clearly by the intellectual interest that a person of a "good moral disposition" takes in the presentation of beauty in nature.[8]

3. The objective is to delineate a more specific connection between aesthetic appreciation of natural beauty and moral character. As will be demonstrated throughout this paper, my proposed account addresses the majority of the aforementioned accounts.

4. There are several accounts that take the meaning of aesthetic judgment to be justified by epistemological or normative considerations alone, without any reference to morality, e.g., Crawford 1970; Kneller 1986; Rind 2000. Against these accounts, I argue that while the first sections of the *CJ* are indeed primarily epistemological (see especially §§1-22 and §§30-40), the moral meaning of aesthetic judgment is to be found in the later sections of the "Deduction" and the "Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment" (§§41-60), which proceed in terms of the relation of aesthetics to morality.

5. *CJ* 5: 302. Emphasis mine.

6. *CJ* 5: 301.

7. *CJ* 5: 302.

8. *CJ* 5: 301.

I find textual support for my proposed line of argument in the "Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments", or rather in what is taken to be its justification.[9] In particular, I focus on §42, "On the Intellectual Interest in the Beautiful", where I take Kant to be drawing precisely on the moral significance that natural beauty has for human beings as moral agents, through the intellectual interest that we take in nature's beautiful forms. In what follows, I suggest that the intellectual interest in the beautiful plays a more significant role in aesthetic judgment than merely explaining why taste can demand a universal agreement, and thus I point to its ramifications beyond the mere justification of the deduction of aesthetic judgments.

I proceed as follows: I begin by asking what is being *expressed* in judgements of natural beauty? I examine first, what kind of 'expression' is nature making when it "figuratively speaks to us in its beautiful forms"?[10] And second, how is the same meaning that nature expresses articulated into the form of the expression of aesthetic judgment: "this X is beautiful"?

Then I draw a connection between what is *expressed* in the judgment of natural beauty and its moral meaning through the *intellectual* interest we have in it, as Kant claims in §42.[11]

Finally, I suggest that the intellectual interest in the beautiful is essentially bound up with our interpretation of nature's presentation of its beautiful forms as an aesthetic expression of nature's subjective formal purposiveness. That is, a form of purposiveness in which nature seems to conform to our moral way of thinking. In doing so, I will try to answer the question of whether Kant provides any reason to think that we are justified in interpreting nature's presentation of beauty in this particular way, and on that basis, in taking an immediate interest in it.

9. The "Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments" (§§30-38) consists in our "peculiar ability" (*sonderbares Vermögen*) (*CJ* 5: 281), to make universally valid judgments about particulars on the basis of feeling alone, and without recourse to concepts. Its justification lies in Kant's assertion that this peculiar ability makes certain demands on us, i.e., on how we aesthetically appreciate nature. Kant argues that it would be easier for us to grasp the deduction of judgments of taste if we saw that the demand for universal agreement expressed in these judgments "must already carry with it an *interest* for us", *CJ* 5: 296. According to Kant, this interest helps us to understand why we demand that others experience the pleasure *we* take in beauty. This understanding is based on the affinity between beauty and morality. That is, similar to our understanding that reason has an interest in the morally good, and that this interest is in some way bound up with our duty to be moral, our interest in the beautiful will be bound up with a kind of *duty* to be attuned to beauty by being sensitive to its hints. *CJ* 5: 296, 300.

10. *CJ* 5: 301.

11. In §42 Kant argues that an immediate interest in the beauty of nature is always a mark or sign of a good moral disposition. And that nature must manifest in itself at least a "trace or give a hint" (*CJ* 5: 299) that it provides a ground for our assumption of a harmony between nature's products and reason's moral interest in realizing its ideas in nature. By emphasizing elusive terms such as 'mark', 'trace', and 'hint' in Kant's discussion of natural beauty, I further emphasize Kant's attempt to bring out the implicit expressive nature of beauty as well as its moral significance.

2. EXPRESSIVE BEAUTY

The expression of the judgment "This X is beautiful" is arguably the most identified with Kant's aesthetics. Nevertheless, the precise meaning of this expression remains unclear.[12] When I judge a rose to be beautiful, I am predicating something about the object before me. Yet, being beautiful is not a fact about the rose in the same way that having four thorns is a fact about the rose. This means that when we judge something to be beautiful, we are not trying to understand beauty in the conventional sense of expressing some content about the object. The idea is that the very *act of articulating* our experience of beauty, i.e., the utterance "this rose is beautiful", is in itself an expression of beauty.[13]

There are two points here that need to be clarified: one refers to what exactly nature presents to us when we experience it aesthetically. The other refers to our aesthetic response to this presentation in nature which is embodied in the judgment "this X is beautiful". These two points complement each other and together constitute what I call *the expression of the beautiful*.[14]

2.1 Nature Speaks

In §42, Kant claims that nature *speaks* to us "figuratively" in its beautiful forms.[15] On the basis of Kant's careful choice of words, it can be assumed that this description is not merely a figure of speech, but a genuine attempt on Kant's part to find *in* nature the possibility of perceiving the *meaning* of beauty in accordance with the way in which human beings aesthetically respond to it. The obvious question, then, is what exactly does nature express in its beautiful forms? The answer lies in the meaning of the unique form of the beautiful, which Kant refers to as *subjective formal purposiveness*.[16]

In §23 Kant states that natural beauty "carries with it a purposiveness in its form, through which the object seems as it were to be predetermined for our power of judgment, and thus constitutes an object of satisfaction in itself".[17] This means that because we have an actual experience of natural beauty, our judgment must take as its own principle the view that nature sets up its empirical laws for the purpose of judgment. In other words, it is as if natural beauty were designed to suit our own cognitive faculties.[18]

12. It clearly expresses a certain kind of pleasure we feel in relation to the object as I discuss in 1.2. Nevertheless, the meaning of the expression remains opaque, as it does not provide any information about the object.

13. Cf. Chaouli 2017: 20; Friedlander 2015: 32.

14. I discuss the moral dimension of that expression in Part 2.

15. *CJ* 5: 301. See original text: "die Natur in ihren schönen Formen figürlich zu uns spricht".

16. I have scrupulously examined the principle of subjective formal purposiveness of nature in my Godess-Riccitelli 2020. In the present paper I focus on its complementary aspect, namely, the nature of the expression "this X is beautiful".

17. *CJ* 5: 245.

18. Cf. Förster 2002: 10.

Kant's basic idea is that although "beauty" itself is not actually in nature, we judge certain objects that we encounter in aesthetic experience as beautiful, *as if* nature itself is purposive to our cognitive faculties. This means, that when nature "*speaks* to us figuratively in its beautiful forms" it *actually* expresses its own subjective purposiveness, i.e., its purposiveness with respect to our faculties. It follows, that the principle of subjective formal purposiveness indicates a connection between nature's form and our own, insofar as nature is now perceived as compatible with our capacity to judge it and thus perceive it.

It turns out that the compatibility between the beautiful forms in nature and our cognitive powers is accidental in the sense that it does not occur intentionally, as Kant claims in the introduction: "one cannot determine *a priori* which object will or will not suit taste, one must *try it out*".[19] From the perspective of the aesthetic judge, in my experience of the subjective formal purposiveness of nature, my own abilities are revealed, namely my capacity to evaluate and judge nature.

Before proceeding to the moral implications of this correspondence, it is necessary to consider the complementary aspect of the figurative expression of nature. This entails an account of aesthetic expression from the point of view of the aesthetic judge when she asserts that something is beautiful in response to nature's presentation of its own purposiveness. Moreover, it is also necessary to clarify the manner in which this expression of the judgment of beauty has meaning for us when it is based on a *feeling* rather than a predicate.

2.2 Predictive Pleasure

The first point to note for our purposes is that judgments of beauty predicate their object in a non-determining manner. In contrast to determinate judgments, which contribute to our knowledge of objects of experience, Kant emphasizes that reflective judgments contribute *nothing* to our empirical knowledge.[20] Thus, when I judge that "this rose is beautiful", I do not add any information about the quality of the rose in terms of its objectively determined properties. However, the fact that I am not determining anything *objective* about the rose, does not mean that aesthetic judgment has no part whatsoever in determination. The point is that aesthetic judgment does not determine the object, as in the judgment "this rose has four thorns", but rather the *subject* and its feeling.[21]

This peculiar determination of the subject and its feeling means, for Kant, that instead of standing for an object, "the predicate [of beauty in aesthetic judgment] expresses the relation of the representation *immediately to the feeling of pleasure* and not to the faculty of cognition".[22] Stated differently, although in judgments of beauty, "the

19. *CJ* 5: 191. Emphasis mine.
20. See *CJ* 20: 222; 5: 169; 5: 194.
21. See *CJ* 20: 223.
22. *CJ* 20: 224. Emphasis mine.

predicate of the judgment *cannot be* a predicate of an *object*",[23] it can be predicated *aesthetically* in the literal sense. That is, it is immediately connected with the feeling of pleasure. The question thus arises as to how a mere feeling can be the predicate of a judgment.[24]

Unlike judgments of what Kant refers to as "the agreeable", which also entail a feeling of pleasure by which we express a mere liking for the object, judgments of beauty are not merely expressions of personal or private feeling at a given time. Rather, as Kant states, "[to] say 'This flower is beautiful' is the same as merely to ascribe its own claim to *everyone's* satisfaction".[25] Put another way, the feeling of pleasure expressed by judgments of beauty is attributed to everyone.

If we think of the feeling of pleasure in terms of a predicate,[26] we may say that the difference between the two judgments lies in the kind of connection that is predicated between the subject and the object. Judgments of agreeableness relate an object to a particular subject at a particular moment, whereas in judgments of beauty the object is related to the feeling of the subject, which in principle can (and should) be shared by everyone at all times.[27] This means that the judgment "this rose is beautiful" consists

23. "[B]ecause it does not belong to the faculty of cognition at all", *CJ* 20: 224. Emphasis mine. See also *CJ* 5: 286: "The judgment of taste differs from logical judgment in that the latter subsumes a representation under concepts of the object, but the former does not subsume under a concept at all, for otherwise the necessary universal approval could be compelled by proofs".

24. Or as Kant puts it in the "Deduction": "How is a judgment possible which, merely from one's own feeling of pleasure in an object, independent of its concept, judges this pleasure, as attached to the representation of the same object in every other subject, a priori?", *CJ* 5: 288.

25. *CJ* 5: 282. Emphasis mine. Translation modified, see original text: "Sagen: diese Blume ist schön, heißt eben so viel, als ihren eigenen Anspruch auf jedermanns Wohlgefallen ihr nur nachsagen".

26. As Kant himself does in §36 when he presents contrary to a perception of an object that "can be immediately combined with the concept of an object in general, for which the former contains the empirical predicates, for a judgment of cognition, and a judgment of experience can thereby be produced", a perception that can "be immediately combined with a feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) and *a satisfaction that accompanies the representation of the object and serves it instead of a predicate*, and an aesthetic judgment, which is not a cognitive judgment, can thus arise", *CJ* 5: 288. My emphasis.

27. See *CJ* 5: 237: "whoever declares something to be beautiful wishes that everyone should [*solle*] approve of the object in question and similarly declare it to be beautiful". Kant claims that when we make judgments of beauty, we not only expect the agreement of other people, but to a some extent also consider it "as if it were a duty", *CJ* 5: 296. There are three main interpretive approaches that have addressed Kant's description of general agreement in terms of "demand". The first holds that the demand should be understood as a rational expectation or ideal prediction: someone who judges an object to be beautiful is claiming that, under ideal circumstances, everyone *will* share his or her pleasure. See, for example, Guyer 1979; Savile 1987; Chignell 2007. The second emphasizes the normative language that Kant uses to describe the demand for general agreement so that the "should" is to be understood as rational, and more specifically moral, rather than merely predictive. See, for example, Rogerson 1982. The third approach, on the other hand, takes the "should", and the corresponding claim to agreement to be non-moral, but still genuinely normative as opposed to predictive. See, for example, Ginsborg 2016; Rind 2002; Kalar 2006. I support the interpretive positions of the

not only in having a certain response to the rose in question, but also in taking one's response to that rose to be valid for all judging subjects.[28]

What is claimed (*a priori*) in a judgment of beauty, then, is Kant's familiar 'universal validity' of the judging subject's liking for an object.[29] The expression of beauty, thus, must be valid by virtue of something that is universal and at the same time aesthetic. It follows that what is being *expressed* in judgments of beauty is a feeling of pleasure, which is universally communicable because it serves "instead of a predicate", as Kant puts it.[30] Its significance lies in the fact that the pleasure one feels in the presence of the beautiful is not a feeling that merely accompanies the judgment but can also be seen as its determining ground.[31]

Kant characterizes the peculiar nature of the pleasure we take in beauty as 'disinterested pleasure'. For Kant, a disinterested pleasure is a pleasure that is not connected with desire (*begehren*) in the sense that it is neither based on desire, nor does it produce desire. Such a pleasure can thus satisfy the claim to universal validity, since it involves *no* sensuous, cognitive, or moral interest in the empirical object. See:

> The agreeable and the good both have a relation to the faculty of desire, and to this extent bring satisfaction with them, the former a pathologically conditioned satisfaction (through stimuli, *stimulos*), the latter a pure practical satisfaction, which is determined not merely through the representation of the object but at the same time through the represented connection of the subject with the existence of the object. [...] Hence the judgment of taste is [...] a judgment that, *indifferent* with regard to the existence of an object, merely connects its constitution together with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure.[32]

If 'disinterest' is defined as a complete indifference to the object, how are we to explain the nature of the connection between the empirical object and the subject's disinterested pleasure in it? A clear understanding of this relationship is essential if we are to explain how judgments of beauty refer to natural objects in the first place, and, perhaps more importantly for our present purpose, how we derive their moral meaning from nature itself.

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first and second approaches by arguing that the moral terminology Kant uses is an integral part of the predicate of the beautiful. To understand this claim, one must examine the *indirect* connection between beauty and morality. Kant describes the possible basis for this connection in §§41-42. I expand on this in Part 2 of this paper.

28. See *CJ* 5: 289: "It is an empirical judgment that I perceive and judged an object with pleasure. But it is an a priori judgment that I find it beautiful, i.e., that I may require that satisfaction of everyone as necessary".

29. See: *CJ* 5: 190.

30. *CJ* 5: 288.

31. See: "a perception can also be immediately combined with a feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) and a satisfaction that accompanies the representation of the object and serves it instead of a predicate, and an aesthetic judgment, which is not a cognitive judgment, *can thus arise*", *CJ* 5: 288. My emphasis.

32. *CJ* 5: 209. My emphasis.

Rather than focusing on the "Analytic of the Beautiful", which is the conventional approach to analyzing the disinterested pleasure we take in the beautiful, I would like to direct attention to the one aspect in which disinterest pleasure does not signify total indifference to the beautiful object. It refers to the intellectual interest we take in the beautiful object, which helps us to understand why we demand that others experience the pleasure *we* take in the beautiful.

3. DISINTERESTED INTEREST

As noted above, Kant contrasts the pleasure involved in judgments of beauty with the pleasure involved in judgments of the agreeable and judgments of the good. One of the main differences is that in the latter two, the pleasure is in one way or another bound up with our representation of the *existence* of the object,[33] whereas aesthetic judgment is described as "merely *contemplative*, i.e., a judgment that [is] indifferent with regard to the existence of an object", thus the feeling of pleasure involved in it is disinterested.[34]

Later in the text, however, in §42, Kant argues that we *can* find a basis for an interest in the beauty of nature which is "an immediate [*unmittelbar*] and certainly intellectual interest".[35] Kant states that such intellectual interest in natural beauty takes place insofar as we take the natural *existence* of beautiful objects, which serve our basic cognitive purpose, as a kind of evidence that nature is also hospitable to the realization of our ultimate moral purpose.

Before looking more closely at this argument and at the broader implications it has for the *moral* meaning of the beautiful, it is necessary to briefly discuss Kant's doctrine of "interest" and the notion of "existence" referred to here.

At the beginning of *CJ*, Kant describes interest (*Interesse*) in general as "the satisfaction that we combine with the representation of the *existence* [*der Existenz*] of an object".[36] Further on in §41 he repeats this description with a slight modification that emphasizes its aesthetic character by saying that all interest consists in "*pleasure in* its [the object's] *existence*".[37] An interest, according to Kant, can be considered either immediately (*unmittelbar*), when something is desired for its own sake – in which case the interest appeals to the senses,[38] or mediately (*mittelbar*), when something is desired for its usefulness for some other end – this interest usually refers to the good (in the sense of something useful) and is referred by reason to ends.[39] Against the background

33. See *CJ* 5: 209: "Not merely the object but also its existence please".

34. *CJ* 5: 209.

35. *CJ* 5: 299.

36. *CJ* 5: 204. Emphasis mine. Later we shall see that Kant sometimes uses different words for existence in the context of beauty. Thus, while we are being *indifferent* to the *Existenz* of the beautiful object in the empirical sense, we take an immediate intellectual interest in its *Dasein* which relates to the disinterested pleasure we take in it. Cf. *CJ* 5: 299.

37. *CJ* 5: 296.

38. Kant calls this immediate interest 'pathological' (§5) and identifies it with the agreeable. See *CJ* 5: 208.

39. See *ibid*.

of this distinction, Kant describes two things in which we take an interest that is both immediate *and* universalizable: the morally good and the beautiful.[40]

In the moral nexus, Kant describes interest as "that through which reason becomes practical, i.e., becomes a cause determining the will. Hence one says only of a rational being that it takes an interest in something".[41] It follows, that to take "an interest in something" (in a general sense and not merely in a moral sense) is to *rationally* desire its existence.[42] Thus, when Kant describes judgments of natural beauty as being "*indifferent* with regard to the existence of an object"[43] he is referring to both rational desire and empirical inclination to possess the object due to some pleasurable stimulus. Stated differently, in judging natural beauty we are interested in the representation of the object *regardless* of whether its existence would be useful to us (not even in a practical-moral sense), and *regardless* of whether or not we are inclined to respond to the sensuous pleasure we derive from its existence. It can be argued that the kind of interest we have in beautiful objects is the result of our disinterest in them in all other respects.[44]

In what follows, I take a closer look at the peculiar interest we take in the beautiful in nature, as it is described in §42. My aim is to demonstrate that the connection between what is *expressed* in the judgment of natural beauty, i.e., disinterested pleasure, and its moral meaning is best illustrated by the intellectual interest we take in it.

3.1 On the Intellectual Interest in the Beautiful

After characterizing aesthetic judgments of beauty as devoid of *all* interest, Kant states that "to say that it [the representation of an object] is *beautiful* [...] what matters is what I make of this representation in myself, not how I depend on the existence of the object".[45] As previously discussed, the direct implication of this characterization is that, according to Kant, our *pleasure* in the object of the judgment of beauty is not bound up with the desire for the object's existence. This is what it means to say that we take a disinterested pleasure in the beautiful.

"But" Kant continues to argue in §41, "from that it does not follow that after it has been given as a pure aesthetic judgment no interest can be combined with it". And he immediately clarifies:

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40. See *CJ* 5: 208-209. 'Immediate' here means that the interest is not mediated by a purpose of communication.

41. *G* 4: 459.

42. In the aesthetic sense, to take an interest in something is to *feel* the need for its existence, where this feeling is itself determined by reason. Cf. Kneller 2007: 61. This definition does not exclude empirical desire. Indeed, in the *CJ*, Kant defines "interest" to include a desire for the existence of something that is determined directly by the sensation that arouses a desire for the object rather than by reason (e.g., *CJ* 5: 207-208).

43. *CJ* 5: 209.

44. I am not suggesting that aesthetic disinterest is a form of interest in itself (cf. Crawford 1974; Kneller 1986), but rather that it arises against the background of the absence of other kinds of interest in the existence of natural beautiful objects.

45. *CJ* 5: 205.

> This combination, however, can always be only *indirect*, i.e., taste must first of all be represented as combined with something else in order to be able to connect with the satisfaction of mere reflection on an object a further *pleasure* in its *existence* (as that in which all interest consists).[46]

Kant explains here that the judgment of beauty does not produce an interest *of itself*, so to speak, but can only do so *indirectly,*[47] that is, when it is "combined with something else".[48] This means that if judgments of beauty are themselves disinterested (in the sense discussed above), then any connection between the initial disinterested pleasure we feel in pure aesthetic judgment, which is merely contemplative, and a further pleasure in the existence of the beautiful object must *necessarily*[49] be an indirect connection, namely, mediated by some third element.

Kant offers two possibilities for this third element: it can be "something empirical" or "something intellectual". The first is described as "an *inclination* that is characteristic of human nature" the second as "a property of the will of being determinable *a priori* through reason".[50] Since Kant characterizes both options as involving interest, both can, in principle, serve as the mediating element between disinterested pleasure in the beauty of nature and pleasure in its existence.

Kant links the empirical interest we have in beauty to an interest in the universal communicability of our pleasure in the existence of the beautiful object, which is based on an (assumed) inclination to society as something *inherent* in human nature.[51] Since the empirical interest is described as a mere inclination, albeit a deeply rooted one, it is easily confused with other social inclinations and desires, and thus could provide "only a very ambiguous transition from the agreeable to the good",[52] as Kant put it. Thus, empirical interest is incapable of establishing an *a priori* connection between disinterested pleasure and pleasure in the existence of the beautiful object.[53]

Put differently, Kant's main concern is the kind of interest that can be brought into a *universal* and *necessary* connection with the disinterested pleasure we take in the beautiful. The reason for this is that only such a connection (i.e., universal and necessary) would be capable of generating a *duty* to also take an interest in the existence of the beautiful object, and, as a result, to develop the aesthetic human capacity to appreciate its beauty. The kind of interest Kant has in mind is the second option he raises, i.e. *something intellectual*, which he elaborates on in section §42.

46. *CJ* 5: 296. My emphasis.

47. *Ibid.*: "Diese Verbindung wird aber immer nur indirect sein können".

48. *Ibid.*

49. See *CJ* 5: 299. Kant's position seems to be that not only is the pleasure in judgments of beauty *can* be connected with an intellectual interest in the existence of beautiful objects, but that it *must* be inextricably linked to this intellectual interest, as he further claims in §42. I will further discuss this point below.

50. *CJ* 5: 296.

51. *CJ* 5: 297.

52. *CJ* 5: 298.

53. For a helpful discussion of the role of the empirical interest in beauty, see Allison 2001: Chapter 4; Baxley 2005: 34-35; Guyer 1979: Chapter 5.

It is here in §42 that we find the link Kant draws between the interest in natural beauty and the moral interest.[54] Kant asserts that

> [T]o take an immediate interest in the beauty of nature (not merely to have taste in order to judge it) is always a mark of a good soul, and that if this interest is habitual, it at least indicates a disposition of the mind that is favorable to the moral feeling, if it is gladly combined with the *viewing of nature*.[55]

When Kant asserts that an immediate (i.e., non-instrumental) interest in the beautiful "is always a mark of a good soul", he does not imply that interest in beauty, even if it is an a priori interest, is identical to moral interest.[56] Rather, their affinity lies in the fact that both moral judgment and aesthetic judgment are disinterested, that is, neither judgment is *grounded* in interest.

Although not grounded in interest, we know from Kant's moral theory that moral judgment *gives rise* to an interest that we call 'moral feeling', which is an interest in acting according to the moral law.[57] This moral interest in the moral law is also a practical interest of reason in doing what the moral law commands. This is to bring about (or promote the realization of) its 'object' (i.e., the highest good). In other words, to paraphrase Kant, reason has an interest, in the "objective reality" of its moral ideas.[58]

Kant returns to this issue in §42, arguing that when we contemplate the beauty in nature, we cannot be indifferent to the fact that nature "show some trace or give a sign [*Wink*] that it contains in itself some sort of ground for assuming a lawful correspondence of its products with our [disinterested] satisfaction".[59] Kant insinuates here that natural beauty gives us indications that it is ordered in a way that can contribute to our moral interest (our striving to realize the highest good), so that we cannot be indifferent to it. "We thus", Kant continues, "have cause at least to suspect a predisposition to a good moral disposition in one who is immediately interested in the beauty of nature".[60] Before delving into the relationship between immediate interest in natural beauty and moral disposition in more detail (3.2), let me briefly delineate the pivotal distinction between aesthetic and moral interest.

Kant articulates this difference by saying that the intellectual interest in the beautiful is a "free interest", while the intellectual interest in the moral is "grounded on

54. Kant begins his discussion of the morally based (intellectual) interest in the beautiful in §42 by referring to the opposite interest we take in artistic vs. natural beauty, arguing that an *intellectual* interest can only be taken in regard to beauty in *nature*, see *CJ* 5: 298.

55. *CJ* 5: 299.

56. See: "the feeling for the beautiful is […] specifically different from the moral feeling", *CJ* 5: 298.

57. Kant here refers to the feeling of respect for the moral law, and says that "it produces an interest in compliance with the law which we call moral interest – as, indeed, the capacity to take such an interest in the law (or respect for the moral law itself) is, properly, moral feeling", *CPR* 5: 80.

58. *CJ* 5: 300.

59. *Ibid*.

60. *CJ* 5: 300-301.

objective laws".[61] Indeed, this difference is precisely why Kant can call our interest in the beautiful an *immediate* interest, since we care about the existence of the object simply because of what it is, not because of its instrumental connection to our own moral interests, as Kant puts it:

> One will perhaps say that this is also the case if an object of nature interests through its beauty only insofar as a moral idea is associated with it; but it is not this, but rather the quality inherent in it by means of which it qualifies for such an association, which thus pertains to it internally, that interests immediately.[62]

Kant states here that what we are immediately interested in is the *quality* of beauty that qualifies for such a connection between our interest in the natural beautiful object and our moral interest, *in itself*, which therefore belongs to it intrinsically.

This can be explained as follows, since the immediate interest is an intellectual one, i.e., non-empirical, Kant reminds us that it is an interest in the *forms* of beauty in nature and not in the many sensory charms (*Reize*) that nature tends to associate with those beautiful forms.[63] Kant illustrates this by telling us to consider a person alone in nature, contemplating on some of its beautiful forms, with no interest in communicating his or her observations to others. This person takes pleasure in the *existence* of these beautiful objects in nature regardless of any benefit or harm they might bring to them.[64] In other words, their interest in natural beauty is immediate because the pleasure they take in its existence is independent of any purpose it might serve for them. This means that to take an immediate, intellectual interest in natural beauty is to value it for its own sake, independent of any empirical inclination it might satisfy.

But this explanation is not complete. Its complement lies in the idea that beauty must be produced by *nature itself*. Kant claims that "[t]he thought that nature has produced that beauty must accompany the intuition and reflection, and on this alone is grounded the immediate interest that one takes in it".[65] Kant explains this claim with another illustration. He says that if we were to deceive the person from the first example by planting artificial flowers in her garden or placing artistically carved birds on her trees, the immediate interest she had previously taken in the beautiful would disappear at the moment she realized she had been deceived. This example shows that the immediate, intellectual interest one takes in natural beauty must be based solely on the thought that nature has produced that beauty. "Otherwise", Kant continues, "there remains either a mere judgment of taste without any interest, or only one combined

61. *CJ* 5: 301.

62. *CJ* 5: 301-302.

63. See: "It must be remembered, however, that I mean here strictly the beautiful forms of nature, and by contrast set to one side the charms that it usually combines so abundantly with them, since the interest in them is to be sure also immediate, but nevertheless empirical", *CJ* 5: 299.

64. *Ibid*.

65. *Ibid*.

with a mediate interest, namely one related to society: which latter affords no sure indications of a morally good way of thinking".[66]

Both scenarios are undesirable: "a mere judgment of taste without any interest" removes from the table the immediate interest in the *existence* of the beautiful object, leaving us with a pure aesthetic judgment with no way of justifying it as universally valid. And a judgment of taste that *is* linked to a mediate interest cannot, as we have seen, guarantee any connection to morality.

The two explanations above can be summarized as follows, the reason why we are able to desire the natural object for its own sake, has to do with our intellectual and moral need to find *in* nature "*at least some trace or* [...] *a sign* [*Wink*]"[67] that our moral actions are not in vain.

3.2 Interest in Nature's Hints

As discussed earlier, Kant presents the intellectual interest in beauty as being an *immediate interest*. This means, based on Kant's own examples, that we value natural beauty for its own sake and not for any other purpose it may serve us.[68] To put it another way, according to Kant, the beauty of nature is pleasing to us independently of *all* interests, including moral interests. It is this abstraction of beauty from all human interests that subsequently makes it possible to associate beauty with morality. Kant explains this in a somewhat puzzling way:

> But since it also interests reason that the ideas (for which it produces an immediate interest in the moral feeling) also have objective reality, i.e., that *nature should at least show some trace or give a sign* [*Wink*] [69] that it contains in itself some sort of ground for assuming a lawful correspondence of its products with our satisfaction that is independent of all interest (which we recognize *a priori* as a law valid for everyone, without being able to ground this on proofs), reason must take an interest in every manifestation in nature of a correspondence similar to this; consequently the mind cannot reflect on the beauty of *nature* without finding itself at the same time to be interested in it. Because of this affinity, however, this interest is moral.[70]

The idea is that natural beauty arouses an immediate interest in us because there is an intimate "affinity" (*Verwandtschaft*) between our moral interest in the realization of our moral ends and the interest we take in any traces, signs or hints of nature's harmony with those ends. Since nature's beautiful forms gives us a hint of this harmony, through the idea of subjective formal purposiveness that underlies this assumption,[71] we take pleasure in their existence. In other words, similar to the pleasure we feel in

66. *Ibid.*
67. *CJ* 5: 300. My emphasis.
68. See *CJ* 5: 299.
69. My emphasis.
70. *CJ* 5: 300.
71. As previously stated in 2.1 of this paper.

the fact that nature in aesthetic experience is amenable to our cognitive ends and seems to satisfy our intellectual needs, so too any hint, trace, or sign that nature is amenable to the realization of our practical ends and is in accord with our moral intentions is significant to us and will please us.

This means that when we take an intellectual interest in natural beauty we experience pleasure not only in the form of natural beautiful objects, but also in their very existence, even though "no sensory charm has a part in this and [we do] not combine any sort of end with it".[72] In this manner, we feel as if nature itself is giving us hints of its possible correspondence with "the ultimate end of our existence", namely, our moral vocation.[73] "We thus have cause at least to suspect", Kant goes on to argue, "a predisposition to a good moral disposition in one who is immediately interested in the beauty of nature".[74] This is a somewhat more careful way of arguing "that to take an immediate interest in the beauty of nature [...] is always a mark of a good soul".[75]

The final step in establishing the view that we have an intellectually and morally grounded interest in natural beauty is to consider certain aspects of Kant's practical philosophy that underpin it. In particular, it must take into account the substantive idea that the moral law dictates the pursuit of certain ends, and that the impact of the moral law depends on whether these ends are realizable.[76] In other words, our overarching task as practical rational agents, in Kant's account, is not only *to have* various moral ends, as a definition of pure practical reason, but also to strive to realize (or promote the realization of) them. In this context, the reference is to the final end of pure practical reason, which is the "highest good".[77] Consequently, it can be posited that our moral disposition is imbued with an "immediate interest" in beauty.

The rationale is that if the highest good is to be realized in the world of nature, nature must be constituted in such a way as to make possible the realization of this moral order. That is to say, nature must manifest in itself at least "a trace or give a sign" that it provides a ground for our assumption of a harmony between the products

72. *CJ* 5: 299.

73. See the full quote: "[N]ature [...] in its beautiful products shows itself as art, not merely by chance, but as it were intentionally, in accordance with a lawful arrangement and as purposiveness without an end, which latter, since we never encounter it externally, we naturally seek within ourselves, and indeed in that which constitutes the ultimate end of our existence, namely the moral vocation", *CJ* 5: 301.

74. *CJ* 5: 300-301.

75. *CJ* 5: 299.

76. There are several commentators who argue that the effect of the moral law cannot depend on whether moral ends are possible or not see, e.g., Beck 1960: 242-245. I challenge this view in my Godess-Riccitelli 2019.

77. Towards the end of the *CJ* (§84) Kant describes the highest good as the final end of *nature.* In order to be an end of nature, men in their moral capacity must be conceived of as *existing* in nature. This means that it cannot be merely human virtue that is the end of nature, but a *natural* condition, namely human happiness. The connection between the significance of the highest good as the final end of nature and our aesthetic experience of natural beauty I draw in my Godess-Riccitelli 2019.

of nature and our disinterested aesthetic feeling of pleasure in its forms. By attending to those "traces and signs" and by recognizing the affinity between our moral and aesthetic interests, we can discern our attempt to *interpret* nature through ascribing a "higher [moral] meaning" to the way nature "speaks" to us in its beautiful forms, as Kant put it.[78]

In conclusion, I endeavor to ascertain whether Kant provides any rationale for the assumption that we are justified in interpreting nature's presentation of beauty in this specific manner and, consequently, in taking an immediate interest in it.

4. CONCLUSION: THE AESTHETIC AND MORAL PURPOSIVENESS OF NATURE

As we delve deeper into section §42 it seems to draw a clear outline for the argument supporting the account of the connection between the intellectual interest in natural beauty and its *moral* significance. At one point, Kant seems to provide a kind of analogy between aesthetic and moral judgments and their corresponding capacities by saying that

> We have a faculty of merely aesthetic judgment, for judging of forms without concepts and for finding a satisfaction in the mere judging of them which we at the same time make into a rule for everyone without this judgment being grounded on an interest or producing one. – Alternatively, we also have a faculty of intellectual judgment, for determining a priori for mere forms of practical maxims (insofar as they qualify in themselves for universal legislation) a satisfaction which we make into a law for everyone without our judgment being grounded on any interest, although it produces one. The pleasure or displeasure in the first judgment is called that of taste, in the second that of moral feeling.[79]

To formulate this paragraph in the form of an analogy,[80] the first parallel would be 1) aesthetic judgments are concerned with the *forms* of objects, just as moral judgments are concerned with the forms of practical maxims. The second would be that 2) both judgments involve a satisfaction that is made into a rule or law for everyone. The third parallel would be that 3) neither of the pleasures involved in the two judgments – the feeling of pleasure in the case of aesthetic judgments and the moral feeling in the case of moral judgments – is based on an antecedent interest, that is, either in the existence of the object of aesthetic evaluation or in the existence of an end that the agent seeks to realize through her action.

78. *CJ* 5: 302.

79. *CJ* 5: 300.

80. I follow Baxley's 2005: 37 helpful division of this paragraph. In contrast to Baxley's analysis, I argue elsewhere that when we experience the beauty of nature we are not yet engaged in analogical representation. For, there is a difference between *having* an intellectual interest in the beautiful and *articulating* it. While the articulation of the intellectual interest requires culture and the perfection of one's abilities, *having* an intellectual interest is integral to the very fact of practical reason. See, Godess-Riccitelli 2020: 345-346.

Despite these compelling similarities, there is one point where aesthetic and moral judgments differ, as discussed above (3.1). For reason has an interest in the "objective reality" of its moral ideas.[81] Following Kant in §42, I have shown that insofar as we take the natural existence of beautiful objects, which serve our basic cognitive purpose, as an indication that nature is also hospitable to the realization of our ultimate moral purposes, we can find a ground for the moral significance of the beautiful.[82] This means, that insofar as we are truly committed to our moral ends, we must assume that they are (at least in principle) realizable, and this involves interpreting nature in a certain way. Namely, as compatible with the realization of our final moral end, which embodies all other moral ends and is thus referred to as our moral vocation, i.e., the highest good.[83]

With this in mind, we can now sketch the crucial claim that Kant makes in §42 as follows: since we have a moral interest in realizing the highest good in the natural world, and since we must assume that nature and its lawful order are amenable to our moral vocation as a condition for its realizability, we have an intellectual interest in any sign, hint, or trace that nature gives us that it is in harmony with our final moral end. Moreover, since natural beauty apparently gives us a hint of this alleged harmony, i.e., that nature is hospitable to the realization of our final moral vocation, it satisfies both intellectual interest and the disinterested pleasure in its existence.[84]

The main critical argument that emerges from this is that rational agents whose way of thinking is morally oriented toward the highest good, will inevitably interpret natural beauty in the particular way mentioned above, and for this reason will take an immediate intellectual interest in it. The obvious question is whether Kant gives us any reason to think that we are justified in interpreting nature's presentation of beauty in this particular way? Kant himself raises this concern by saying that some people might

81. *CJ* 5: 300.

82. This moral significance, taken from a broader perspective on the *CJ*, could be further related to Kant's well-known description in the introduction to the *CJ* of the 'incalculable gulf' between the realm of the concept of nature and the realm of the concept of freedom. This 'incalculable gulf' seems to imply that the moral ends that we should strive to realize in the world of nature, culminating in the highest good, may not have any effect in nature. But, Kant insists that "the concept of freedom should make the end that is imposed by its laws real in the sensible world; and nature must consequently also be able to be conceived in such a way that the lawfulness of its form is at least in agreement with the possibility of the ends that are to be realized in it in accordance with the laws of freedom", *CJ* 5: 176.

83. In the final sections of the *CJ* Kant makes the same claim, only this time from the 'side' of nature. He argues that what begins as a purely scientific experience, the observation of organisms in nature, inevitably leads us to the idea of a purpose for nature that can only be provided by morality. I elaborate on this in my Godess-Riccitelli 2020: 349-353.

84. This is demonstrated by the principle of subjective formal purposiveness of nature, as I discussed in 2.1. The purposiveness of nature is not a constitutive principle about what nature really is apart from our cognitive aims, but Kant describes it as a regulative idea that governs how we *should think* about nature, cf. *CJ* 5: 176. The crucial point is that this regulative principle finds itself in correspondence with nature in an exemplary way. Thus, the significance of the beautiful is not that it should be subjectively purposeful, but that it *is*.

take the interpretation that nature's presentation of beauty is an indication of our *moral* purposiveness, to be "too studied to be taken as the true interpretation [*wahre Auslegung*] of the cipher by means of which nature figuratively speaks to us in its beautiful forms".[85] Nevertheless, despite his reservations, Kant persists in employing the terminology of nature's expressiveness through its beautiful forms, and asserts that this expression of nature has meaning for us.

He then goes on to explain that the immediate intellectual interest in beauty in nature is not very common, but

> belongs only to those whose thinking is either already trained to the good or especially receptive to such training; and then, even without clear, subtle, and deliberate reflection, the analogy between the pure judgment of taste, which, without depending on any sort of interest, allows a pleasure to be felt and at the same time to be represented a priori as proper for mankind in general, and the moral judgment, which does the same thing on the basis of concepts, leads to an equally immediate interest in the object of the former as in that of the latter.[86]

Kant reminds us here that moral interest is a condition for taking an immediate interest in beauty in the particular way described. From this, we can deduce that a person who is not morally purposive, that is, someone who is not concerned with the realization of his or her moral ends, may not care whether nature is in harmony with those ends, and thus will not take an interest in the hints, traces, and signs that nature expresses in its beautiful forms of such harmony.[87] However, a person with a good moral disposition who is striving to realize her moral ends (as she ought to do in Kant's moral view) will *necessarily* interpret any manifestation of nature's subjective formal purposiveness as an indication of nature's *moral* purposiveness and will take an immediate intellectual interest in its beautiful forms.

Kant emphasizes this last point by adding that

> the admiration of nature, which in its beautiful products shows itself as art, not merely by chance, but as it were intentionally, in accordance with a lawful arrangement and as purposiveness without an end, which latter, since we never encounter it externally, we naturally seek within ourselves, and indeed in that which constitutes the ultimate end of our existence, namely the moral vocation.[88]

Kant's claim is that what nature shows in its beautiful products is that it is not organized "by chance", but is made in the way that art is made, according to a structure that we know from purposes. This kind of *aesthetic* purposiveness presented in nature is a form of purposiveness in which nature seems to be in tune with us, in accordance with

85. *CJ* 5: 301.
86. *Ibid*.
87. In this case, we have no reason to assume that someone has a good moral disposition simply because he or she finds, say, a rose beautiful. Kant would classify such an interest in natural beauty as empirical.
88. *CJ* 5: 301.

our moral way of thinking. The way that we can understand the meaning of this attunement, is to relate it to our moral vocation.[89]

The moral meaning of beauty, then, implies that a person with (1) a morally good way of thinking, and (2) the capacity for aesthetic judgment – that is, the capacity to appreciate nature aesthetically by asserting that something is beautiful – will *necessarily* interpret any manifestation of nature's aesthetic purposiveness as an indication of its moral purposiveness and be immediately interested in it.

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ABBREVIATIONS

All citations from Kant are according to the Akademie edition by reference to volume and page number: the *Akademie Ausgabe* (AA), *Kants Gesammelte Schriften, edited by Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften* 29 vols., Berlin, De Gruyter, 1902-1923.

I use the following abbreviations:

CJ = Kant, I. 2002. *Critique of the Power Judgment* (1790), ed. and tr. by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, New York, Cambridge University Press.

CPR = Kant, I. 2002. *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), tr. by W. S. Pluhar, with an introduction by S. Engstrom, Indianapolis-Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Co.

G = Kant, I. 2002. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), ed. and tr. by A. W. Wood, New York, Yale University Press.

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89. This reading could be a way to better understand the symbolic relation between beauty and the morally good presented in §59. Here, Kant presents the analogical function of reflection that allows him to establish beauty as a symbol of morality. This relation is famously read as Kant's *aesthetic* solution to the problematic demand to realize the highest moral good in the natural world. I suggest that the intellectual interest described in §42 already hints at the possibility of a higher congruence of humans' moral ends and nature. Rather than providing us with an *analogical* experience of moral freedom, however, it shows how our *immediate* interest in the beauty of nature can suggest precisely of this higher vocation.

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Moran Godess-Riccitelli
ORCID: 0000-0003-1766-0972
Bar-Ilan University/Universität Potsdam
moran.godess@gmail.com

LEXICON PHILOSOPHICUM
International Journal for the History of Texts and Ideas

ROBERT THEIS

„Beweisgrund“

ABSTRACT: The paper examines Kant’s use of the lexeme “argument” or “proving reason”. As is known, this is prominently featured in the title of his 1762 (1763) paper *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, where it has a programmatic significance. In a first step, the source history will explain the localization of the lexeme in the treatises on the doctrine of reason by George Friedrich Meier and Christian August Crusius, who are reference authors for Kant (1). Starting from this, Kant’s explanations of the lexeme are first presented in his lectures on logic (2.1), then its uses in the published writings (2.2) and in the *Nachlass* (2.3) are identified and analyzed. In spite of some variations, a high consistency of meaning of the lexeme in the sense of *ratio probans* is shown.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Der Beitrag untersucht Kants Verwendung des Lexems „Beweisgrund“. Wie bekannt, findet sich dieses an prominenter Stelle im Titel der 1762 (1763) erschienenen Schrift *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes*, wo es eine programmatische Bedeutung hat. In einem ersten Schritt wird quellengeschichtlich die Verortung des Lexems in den Traktaten über die Vernunftlehre bei George Friedrich Meier und Christian August Crusius, die als Referenzautoren für Kant in Frage kommen, eruiert werden (1). Von da ausgehend werden Kants Erklärungen zum Lexem zunächst in seinen Vorlesungen über Logik dargelegt (2.1), sodann dessen Verwendungen in den veröffentlichten Schriften (2.2) sowie im Nachlasswerk (2.3) identifiziert und analysiert werden. Es zeigt sich, trotz einiger Schwankungen eine hohe Bedeutungskonstanz des Lexems im Sinn von *ratio probans.*

KEYWORDS: Proving Reason; *ratio probans*; Proof; Demonstration

EINLEITUNG

Das Lexem „Beweisgrund“ findet sich an prominenter Stelle im Titel von Kants 1762 (1763) erschienener Schrift *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes.* Es hat dort eine programmatische Bedeutung. In anderen Zusammenhängen in Kants veröffentlichten Schriften taucht es immer wieder, wenngleich nicht prominent, auf.

In einem ersten Schritt soll quellengeschichtlich die Verortung des Lexems in den Traktaten über die Vernunftlehre bei George Friedrich Meier und Christian August Crusius, die als Referenzautoren für Kant in Frage kommen, eruiert werden (1). Von da ausgehend sollen Kants Erklärungen zum Lexem zunächst in seinen Vorlesungen über Logik dargelegt (2.1), sodann dessen Verwendungen in den veröffentlichten Schriften (2.2) sowie im Nachlasswerk (2.3) identifiziert und analysiert werden.[1]

1. Die hier vorliegende Untersuchung greift Elemente auf, die unter dem Titel „Beweisgrund in neueren französischen Kantübersetzungen“ erschienen ist (siehe Kant 2020: 461-489).

1. DAS UMFELD, IN DEM DAS LEXEM „BEWEISGRUND“ KANT BEGEGNET IST

1.1 Georg Friedrich Meier

In seinen Vorlesungen über Logik hat Kant von Beginn seiner Lehrtätigkeit im Wintersemester 1755/56 an bis zum Jahr 1796 Schriften von George Friedrich Meier als Kompendien benutzt. Mit Hinweis auf Emil Arnoldt[2] bemerkt Elfriede Conrad, dass Kant im Wintersemester 1755 und im Sommersemester 1756 nach Meiers 1752 erschienener *Vernunftlehre* gelesen habe, ab dem Sommersemester 1757 dann, und bis zum Ende seiner Vorlesungstätigkeit durchgängig Meiers ebenfalls 1752 erschienenen *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* benutzt habe.[3] Die Vernunftlehre oder Vernunftkunst ist die Wissenschaft, „welche die Regeln abhandelt, die man beobachten muß, wenn man vernünftig denken will“.[4] Meier unterscheidet zwischen verschiedenen Graden der vernünftigen Erkenntnis, deren höherer die gelehrte und philosophische Erkenntnis ist.[5] Sie besteht in der deutlichen Erkenntnis einer Sache aus Gründen.[6]

„Zu einer solchen Erkenntniss wird dreierlei erfodert: 1) eine Erkenntniss einer Sache, 2) eine Erkenntniss ihres Grundes, und 3) eine deutliche Erkenntniss des Zusammenhangs der Sache mit ihrem Grunde“.[7] Ist letzteres nicht der Fall, handelt es sich um eine sogenannte „gemeine oder eine historische Erkenntniss“.[8]

Die *Wahrheit* (oder Richtigkeit) einer Erkenntnis ersieht man an einer Reihe von sogenannten „Kennzeichen der Richtigkeit“ oder „Gründen, aus denen erkannt werden kann, dass eine Erkenntnis wahr, oder dass sie falsch sei“;[9] diese sind entweder innerlich oder äußerlich, d.h. in der Erkenntnis selbst vorhanden oder nicht. Meier führt zwei innerliche Kennzeichen der Wahrheit an: 1. die Nichtwidersprüchlichkeit bzw. innere (oder innerliche Möglichkeit); 2. die Möglichkeit einer Erkenntnis „in einem Zusammenhang“. Eine Erkenntnis ist insofern wahr, wenn sie 1) eine Folge richtiger Gründe, und 2) ein Grund richtiger Folgen ist“.[10]

Von der Wahrheit einer Erkenntnis ist die *Gewissheit* zu unterscheiden. Diese ist das „Bewusstsein der Wahrheit, oder die klare Erkenntnis der Wahrheit“.[11] Eine derartige Gewissheit wird im Beweis erlangt.[12] Unter einem „Beweis“ versteht Meier,

2. Siehe Arnoldt 1909: V, 173-344 (*Möglichst vollständiges Verzeichnis aller von Kant gehaltenen oder auch nur angekündigten Vorlesungen nebst dazu bezüglichen Notizen und Bemerkungen*).

3. Siehe Conrad 1994: IX, 66.

4. Meier 1752: §V, 5.

5. Siehe Wolff 1983: I.I, 3 (*Discursus praeliminaris* §6: „*Cognitio* rationis eorum, quae sunt, vel fiunt, philosophica dicitur).

6. Meier 1752: §31, 31.

7. AA XVI, §17, 93. Auszug aus der Meiers *Vernunftlehre* (§17) nach dem Abdruck in Kants *Gesammelte Schriften*.

8. AA XVI, §18, 94.

9. AA XVI, §94, 238 f.

10. AA XVI, §96, 241.

11. AA XVI, §155, 359.

12. Meier 1752: §223, 318.

sowohl in der *Vernunftlehre* als auch im *Auszug*, „dasjenige, was zu einer Wahrheit hinzugethan wird, damit sie gewiß werde“.[13] Der Beweis enthält insofern „den Grund, aus welchem die Wahrheit, welche erwiesen wird, klar erkant werden kann“,[14] und das heißt soviel wie: damit die Wahrheit einer Erkenntnis gewiss werde. Im *Auszug* wird die Definition des Beweises in einer etwas anderen Weise eingeführt: „Der Beweis (probatio) ist dasjenige, was zu einer Wahrheit hinzugethan wird, damit sie gewiss werde“.[15] Die *Vernunftlehre* kommentiert dies so: Durch den Beweis können wir einer Wahrheit gewiss sein, „und es ist ohne fernern Beweis klar, daß alle Beweise zu dem Ende geführt werden, damit wir von der Wahrheit einer Sache überzeuget werden“.[16]

In diesen Rahmen taucht der Ausdruck „Beweisthum“ auf, der für unser Thema signifikant ist. Während im *Auszug* der Begriff ohne weitere Erklärung eingeführt wird,[17] definiert ihn die *Vernunftlehre* ausdrücklich: Der Beweis enthält „die Kennzeichen der Wahrheit“, aus denen diese klar erkannt wird, und diese werden als „Beweisthümer der Wahrheit“[18] bezeichnet. Mit dem Begriff des „Beweisthums“ wird die innere Konfiguration des Beweises ausdifferenziert: Ein Beweis besteht aus dem Beweisthum und der Folge aus diesem: „Die Folge des Beweises bestehet in dem Zusammenhange, in welchem die Wahrheit mit dem Beweisthume stehet“.[19] Es reicht nicht, wenn ein Beweis lediglich den Beweisthum enthält, „es muss auch in demselben eine Folge angetroffen werden“.[20]

Im *Auszug* führt Meier eine terminologische Präzisierung ein, die gerade mit Blick auf Kants Verwendung des Begriffs „Beweisgrund“ von Interesse ist:

> Der Beweisthum (probatio materialiter sumta, ratio probans) ist der Grund, aus welchem die Wahrheit klar erkannt werden kann, und das sind die Kennzeichen der Wahrheit [...]. Die Folge des Beweises (probatio formaliter sumta, consequentia) ist der Zusammenhang der Wahrheit mit dem Beweisthum [...]. Ein jeder Beweis besteht demnach aus dem Beweisthum und der Folge [...].[21]

Beweise werden weiterhin von Meier in zureichende und unzureichende eingeteilt. Ein unzureichender Beweis kennzeichnet sich dadurch, dass er nur eine sogenannte unausführliche oder wahrscheinliche Gewissheit hergibt. Das Unzureichende besteht nicht in einer Fehlerhaftigkeit des Folgerns selber, sondern in der nicht erzielten Gewissheit beim Subjekt. Zureichend hingegen ist ein Beweis, durch den eine „ausführliche Gewißheit der Wahrheit“[22] erlangt wird, d.h. außer welchem „nichts weiter mehr erfodert

13. AA XVI, §191, 483.
14. Meier 1752: §223, 318.
15. AA XVI, §191, 483.
16. Meier 1752: §223, 318.
17. AA XVI, §191, 483.
18. Meier 1752: §223, 318.
19. Meier 1752: §223, 319.
20. *Ibid.*
21. AA XVI, §191, 483 f.; siehe auch Meier 1752: §223, 319.
22. Meier 1752: §223, 319.

wird, um von einer Wahrheit völlig überzeuget zu werden".[23] Ein solcher Beweis wird auch als *Demonstration* bezeichnet. Der *Auszug* fügt diesbezüglich die lateinischen Termini „probatio sufficiens" und „demonstratio" hinzu.[24] Als Beispiel eine Demonstration führt Meier in der *Vernunftlehre* folgendes an: „Wenn ich denke: Ein Ding, das würklich denkt, kan nicht bloß möglich, sondern es muß zugleich würklich seyn; da ich nun würklich denke, so bin ich würklich vorhanden".[25] Von diesem Beweis heißt es, er sei „vollkommen zureichend, um mich von meiner eigenen Würklichkeit völlig zu überzeugen, und [...] demnach eine Demonstration".[26]

1.2 Christian August Crusius

Die eben gemachten Darlegungen zeigen, dass sich weder in Meiers *Vernunftlehre* noch im *Auszug* das Lexem „Beweisgrund" vorfindet. Diesem begegnet man jedoch bei einem anderen Autor, nämlich bei Christian August Crusius, dessen Schriften Kant seit den 1750er Jahren bekannt waren, und dessen Logik er als „fanatische Logik" bezeichnet.[27] In dessen 1747 erschienenem *Weg zur Gewißheit und Zuverläßigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntniß* taucht der Begriff „Beweisgrund" im 6. Kapitel auf, das „Von den Beweisen" handelt.[28]

Crusius, der sich in seinen Ausführungen an die *Vernunftlehre* seines verehrten Lehrers Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann anlehnt,[29] definiert den Beweis als „Verknüpfung eines Satzes mit einem oder etlichen andern als wahr angenommenen Sätzen, um welcher willen er selbst vor wahr gehalten werden soll".[30] Er unterscheidet zwischen der Form und der Materie des Beweises. Ein Beweis erfolgt durch Schlüsse, vermittelst derer „die Sätze verknüpft seyn müssen".[31] Diese machen die Form des Beweises aus; die Materie des Beweises besteht in den als wahr angenommenen Sätzen, „mit welchen die Conclusion verknüpft seyn, und deswegen als wahr angenommen werden soll".[32] Sie werden nun von Crusius ausdrücklich als „Beweisgrund (praemissae, principium)"[33] bezeichnet und stehen Meiers „Beweisthum" nahe.

23. *Ibid.*
24. AA XVI, §191, 485.
25. Meier 1752: §223, 320.
26. *Ibid.* Diese Kennzeichnung der Demonstration ist, zumindest terminologisch, weniger präzise als dies z.B. bei Wolff der Fall ist, für den wir es dann mit einer *demonstratio* zu tun haben, wenn nur solche Prämissen angenommen werden, die auf Definitionen, unbestreitbaren Erfahrungen, Axiomen und vorher bewiesenen Sätzen fußen (siehe Wolff 1983: I.II, §498, 379).
27. Siehe *Reflexionen*, 1629, 48. Der Ausdruck hat wohl den Sinn von: „sich von der (religiösen) Orthodoxie abgrenzend".
28. Crusius 1747: §921 ff.
29. Hoffmann 1737: Th. II, Kap. VI, 982 ff.
30. Crusius 1747: §516, 921.
31. Crusius 1747: §517, 922.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*

Vom Beweisgrund heißt es, er sei „mit der Schlussregel nicht zu verwirren“.[34] Was hiermit gemeint ist, findet sich deutlicher bei Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann:

> Der Beweiß-Grund ist, das, woraus man erweiset; und bestehet also in einem oder etlichen Säzen, die man vor bekandt annimmt. Er ist daher mit der logicalischen Schluß-Regel nicht zu vermengen, durch die man beweiset; das ist, welche den Zusammenhang zwischen ihm und der Conclusion zeiget.[35]

Crusius unterscheidet weiterhin zwischen hypothetischem und absolutem Beweis.[36] Unter ersterem versteht er solche, in denen klar gemacht wird, welche „Sätze zugegeben werden müssen, wenn gewisse andere als wahr angenommen werden“.[37] Ein absoluter Beweis ist ein solcher, in dem die Wahrheit der Konklusion allererst erkannt wird oder aus einem andern Satze, dessen Wahrheit eher als die Konklusion gewusst ist, hergeleitet wird. Dies führt Crusius dann dazu, in einem absoluten Beweise „drey Stücke“ zu unterscheiden:

> die Wahrheit der Vördersätze, eine gnugsame Verknüpfung der Conclusion mit denselben, und ein solches Verhältniß des Beweisgrundes gegen die Conclusion, vermöge welches man die Wahrheit desselben eher als die Wahrheit der Conclusion wissen, und also diese aus jener erkennen kan.[38]

Was unterscheidet bei Crusius einen Beweis von einer Demonstration? Im §359 erklärt er den „Erkentnißweg [...] der Demonstration“ auf folgende Weise:

> Unter zwey Sätzen, welche einander *contradictorie* opponiret sind [...] ist nothwendig einer wahr [...]. Aus eben dem Grunde ist auch unter allen Sätzen, welche einander *contrarie*, aber adäquat, opponiret sind, nothwendig einer wahr. Wenn sich nun im ersten Falle der widersprechende Gegensatz, oder in andern Falle, alle widrigen Gegensätze bis auf einen, gar nicht dencken lassen, also daß die Begriffe bey versuchter Verbindung oder Trennung einander aufheben, oder sonst verschwinden müßten; so wird der übrig bleibende Satz als wahr erkannt, und dieser Erkenntnißweg heisset der *Weg der Demonstration*.[39]

Auf diese Definition aufbauend kommt er in §521 zurück: Eine Demonstration wird als ein solcher Beweis bezeichnet, „da die Conclusion an ihren Beweisgrund dergestalt verknüpft wird, daß sich ihr Gegentheil wenigstens bey den gesetzten Umständen gar nicht weiter dencken läßt“.[40] Diese Art von Demonstration, die auf dem Satz vom Widerspruch beruht, wird auch als „geometrische“ bezeichnet.[41]

34. *Ibid.*
35. Hoffmann 1737: Th. II., Kap. VI, §4, 983.
36. Crusius 1747: §518, 923f.
37. Crusius 1747: §518, 923.
38. Crusius 1747: §518, 924. Zur Definition bei Hoffmann, siehe Hoffmann 1737: Th. II, Kap. VI, §11, 986.
39. Crusius 1747: §359, 639f.
40. Crusius 1747: §521, 929.
41. Crusius 1747: §521, 930.

Ein letzter Punkt – gleichsam als Parergon – soll in diesem Rahmen noch hervorgehoben werden. Er betrifft die sogenannten „streitenden Beweise". A. F. Hoffmann hatte dieses Thema in seiner *Vernunftlehre* behandelt;[42] Crusius nimmt es, mit Hinweis auf seinen Lehrer, im *Weg zur Gewißheit* auf;[43] von dort könnte es zu Kant gelangt sein. Unter „streitenden" oder „collidirenden Beweisen" versteht Crusius solche,

> deren Conclusionen einander widersprechen, und welche gleichwohl durch richtige Schlüsse aus solchen Gründen hergeleitet werden, welche überhaupt, und ohne gewisse auszunehmende Applicationen betrachtet, Wahrheit lehren, und vor wahr anzunehmen sind, und deren Collision, da, wo sie sich ereignet, aus höhern Gründen entschieden werden muß.[44]

2. Kants Ausführungen zum Lexem „Beweisgrund" bzw. dessen Verwendungen in seinen Logikvorlesungen, in den veröffentlichten Schriften und im handschriftlichen Nachlass

2.1 „Beweisgrund" in den Logikvorlesungen

In *Kants Logikvorlesungen* finden sich mehrfach Erklärungen des Lexems „Beweisgrund". Aufgrund des zur Verfügung stehenden Materials lassen sich die frühesten Belege in Nachschriften zur Logik aus den 1770er Jahren (*Logik Blomberg*, *Logik Philippi*) nachweisen.

In der *Logik Blomberg* (Anfang der 1770er Jahre) lesen wir, mit Bezugnahme auf den Paragrafen 191 bei Meier, diejenige Erkenntnis, „welche den Grund der Wahrheit einer anderen Erkenntniß in sich enthält", sei als „*Beweisthum*" zu bezeichnen.[45] In einem Beweis – so Kant in Anlehung an Crusius und Meier ergänzend – sind *drei* Stücke anzutreffen: 1. Das Beweisthum oder die Materie. Dies entspricht Meiers „probatio materialiter sumta" bzw. der „ratio probans"; 2. Der Beweis oder die Konsequenz, oder die Form. Dem entspricht Meiers „probatio formaliter sumta". 3. „[D]ie *Conclusion, welche aus dem consequens folget*".[46] Kommentierend fügt er hinzu, bei einem Beweis untersuche man eigentlich nicht den zu beweisenden Satz, sondern die *rationem probandi*.

Vom Beweis zu unterscheiden ist die Demonstration. Von einer solchen spricht man, wenn der Beweis so beschaffen ist, „daß er jedermann überzeuget, das ist, der Beweis muß nicht vor mich allein, sondern auch vor andere gelten".[47] In der Demonstration reicht demnach nicht, wie es später heißt, bloße Gewissheit, sondern es muss in ihr Evidenz herrschen, so dass es unmöglich ist „seinen Beyfall bey derselben zurück zu halten".[48] Gewissheit wird hier – im Unterschied zu Meier – nicht mehr als alleiniges

42. Siehe Hoffmann 1737: Th. II, Kap. VII, 1028-1074.
43. Crusius 1747: §540 ff, 954 ff.
44. Crusius 1747: §540, 957.
45. AA XXIV.I, 230 (*Logik Blomberg*).
46. AA XXIV.I, 231.
47. AA XXIV.I, 234.
48. *Ibid.*

Merkmal angeführt, sondern unter dem Stichwort der Evidenz, allgemeine Konsensfähigkeit. In der Philosophie sind demzufolge (!) „Demonstrationes […] nur sehr selten anzutreffen“.[49]

Interessanterweise taucht in dieser Logikvorlesung soweit ersichtlich das Lexem Beweisgrund nicht auf.

Anders in der *Logik Philippi*, die ebenfalls Anfang der 1770er Jahre datiert wird, und, was unser Thema betrifft, etwas ausführlicher ist. Im Unterschied zur *Logik Blomberg* beginnt Kant damit, den „Beweis“ zu definieren: Er ist „diejenige Erkenntniß vermittelst welcher die Wahrheit kann erkannt werden“.[50] Hier taucht nun der Ausdruck „Beweisgrund“ auf: „Die Materie des Beweises ist der Beweißgrund oder die unmittelbar gewisse Erkenntniß. Die Form ist die Art der Consequenz wie nemlich die Wahrheit des Satzes aus dem Beweißgrunde folgt“.[51] Die Materie des Beweistums wird als *ratio probandi* bezeichnet. In dieser Logikvorlesung unterscheidet Kant weiterhin den Beweis von der *Demonstration*: Wenn die Form des Beweises nicht unmittelbar, sondern nur mittelbar erkannt werden kann, handelt es sich um einen Beweis, aber nicht um eine Demonstration.[52]

An späterer Stelle kommt Kant auf die Demonstration zu sprechen. Zu Meiers §197 des *Auszugs* heißt es:

> Zur Demonstration wird erfordert die Evidenz, so daß es unmöglich sey seinen Beyfall aufzuschieben. Nur von dem was in die Sinne fällt kann der Beyfall nicht versagt werden. Es giebt demnach wenige Demonstrationes […]. Der Demonstrirgeist wird durch die Mathematik excolirt.[53]

Kant geißelt in diesem Zusammenhang die „blinde Neigung zu demonstriren“, die er als „Demonstrirsucht“ bezeichnet,[54] ein Begriff, den er bei Meier vorgefunden hat.[55] Sie entspringt „aus einer vermeinten Leichtigkeit zu demonstriren“ oder „aus Charlatanerie“ oder „aus Pedanterie“.[56] Interessanterweise heißt es von Wolff, er habe die Demonstrirsucht nicht.

Ansonsten enthält die *Logik Philippi* die gleiche Aufzählung der Elemente des Beweises wie die *Logik Blomberg* (Materie, Form, Conclusio). Kant fügt in der *Logik Philippi* als Beispiel einer Conclusio folgendes an: „Alles was zufällig ist hat eine fremde Ursache; das beweise ich aus der Zufälligkeit. Also ist die Zufälligkeit die Materie. Wie aber daraus fließt daß alles zufällige eine fremde Ursache habe, das ist die Consequenz, die Form“.[57]

49. *Ibid*. Siehe auch Kant 1998: I, 150 (*Logik Bauch*).
50. AA XXIV.I, 442 (*Logik Philippi).*
51. *Ibid*.
52. Siehe *ibid*.
53. AA XXIV.I, 445.
54. *Ibid*.
55. AA XVI, §200 (Auszug).
56. *Ibid*.
57. AA XXIV.I, 442.

Von den Vorlesungen aus den 1780er Jahren wollen wir, für die frühen 80er Jahre, die *Logik Pölitz*, die *Wiener Logik* und, für die späten 1780er Jahre, die *Logik Busolt* berücksichtigen.

In der *Logik Pölitz* finden sich im Abschnitt „Von Beweisen und zwar von den apodiktischen" folgende weiterführende Bemerkungen: Beweise werden eingeteilt in sogenannte akroamatische, d.h. solche, die diskursiver Natur sind, und mathematische, die intuitiv sind. Wie bereits mehrfach angemerkt, finden sich drei Elemente im Beweis vor: „1) Die Sache die bewiesen werden soll. 2) der Beweisgrund und 3) die Consequenz, wie der Saz aus dem Beweisgrund folgt".[58] Des weiteren vermerkt Kant, man könne den Beweisgrund, also die *materia probationis* kennen, ohne die Form bzw. die Konsequenz zu kennen.[59] Kant unterscheidet in dieser Vorlesung weiterhin zwischen mathematischem und philosophischem Beweis: „Ein Beweis der der Grund mathematischer Gewisheit ist, heist demonstration, und ein Beweis der der Grund philosophischer Gewisheit ist, heist acroamatischer Beweis".[60]

Die *Wiener Logik* enthält die nämliche Aufzählung der Elemente des Beweises,[61] darüber hinaus aber auch eine terminologisch nicht uninteressante Bemerkung bezüglich des Beweisgrundes: „Der Beweisgrund heißt argument. Bisweilen wird auch der Schluß argument genannt. In der philosophie muß man immer den Beweisgrund untersuchen, ob er bey der Erkenntniß möglich sey".[62]

In der *Logik Busolt* begegnet der Begriff „Beweisgrund" im Abschnitt über mathematische Gewißheit.[63] Der Beweis wird definiert als „deutliche Erkenntniß des richtigen Zusammenhangs eines Sazzes mit hinreichenden Gründen".[64] Wiederum finden wir die Aufzählung der drei Elemente, die von einem Beweis erfordert sind, wenngleich in anderer Anordnung: a. Bewiesene Erkenntnis; b. Zusammenhang der Beweisgründe mit der Erkenntnis; c. Gewissheit, die aus diesem Zusammenhang besteht.[65]

Ein Beweis, der vollkommene oder apodiktische Gewissheit durch die Vernunft enthält, wird als *Demonstration* bezeichnet. Kant gibt zu bedenken, dass eine solche nur in der Mathematik möglich sei, insofern diese auf apriorischer Intuition fußt. In der Philosophie Demonstrationen aufzeigen zu wollen, wird als „Demonstrirsucht" bezeichnet.[66]

Im Gegensatz zum Beweis, der zu kompletter Gewissheit führt, heißt es, der Beweisgrund sei ein „unkompleter Beweis";[67] es fehlt die conclusio.

Die Logik *Jäsche*, der einzige Text, der zumindest mit Zustimmung von Kant zur Veröffentlichung bestimmt war, geht kurz auf das Thema ein. Im Rahmen des

58. AA XIV.II, 561 (*Logik Pölitz*) Siehe auch Kant 1998: II, 599 (*Warschauer Logik*).
59. Siehe *Logik Pölitz*: AA XIV.II, 561.
60. *Ibid.*
61. AA XIV.II, 892 (*Wiener Logik*).
62. *Ibid.*
63. Siehe: AA XIV.II, 649 ff. (*Logik Busolt*).
64. AA XIV.II, 650.
65. Siehe AA XIV.II, 649.
66. Siehe AA XIV.II, 651.
67. AA XIV.II, 650.

Abschnitts über die „logische Vollkommenheit des Erkenntnisses der Modalität nach“ erwähnt Kant kurz, dass die „wesentlichen Stücke eines jeden Beweises überhaupt“, ob mathematischer oder philosophischer, die Materie und die Form sind, „oder der *Beweisgrund* und die *Consequenz*“.[68] Im Unterschied zu den Ausführungen in den Vorlesungen werden hier nur zwei der drei Elemente des Beweises angeführt. Die hier vorliegende Erklärung ist näher am Meierschen Basistext (*probatio materialiter* und formaliter *sumta*).

Wir ersehen aus den unterschiedlichen Vorlesungsnachschriften, dass es einesteils eine konstante Interpretation des „Beweist(h)ums“ bzw. des „Beweisgrundes“ gibt als *Materie* des Beweises, als dasjenige, das die *ratio* oder die *raison* – eben den „Grund warum bzw. woraus erkannt wird“ – enthält und vom (formalen) Beweis(verfahren) zu unterscheiden ist.

Weiterhin zu beachten ist – insbesondere mit Blick auf Kants *Einzig möglichen Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* (1762/63) – die Unterscheidung zwischen Beweis und Demonstration, die sich in der *Logik Philippi* vorfindet. In diesem Zusammenhang ist Kants späte Bemerkung betreffend Demonstrationen in der Philosophie hervorzuheben, weil sie im Gegensatz steht zu seinen eigenen Bestrebungen in den 60er Jahren, es in der Metaphysik zu „höchstmögliche[r] metaphysische[r] Gewißheit“[69] zu bringen.

Auffallend sind *Schwankungen* in der Beschreibung von „Beweisgrund“, insbesondere die Bemerkung in der *Logik Busolt*, der Beweisgrund sei ein inkompletter Beweis.

Es wird sich allerdings in der Verwendung des Lexems bei Kant zeigen (siehe unten), dass dieses auch dem Sinn nach als „Beweis“ gedeutet werden kann.

2.2 Verwendungen des Lexems „Beweisgrund“ in den veröffentlichten Schriften

Wir wollen uns nun den Verwendungen des Lexems in Kants veröffentlichten Schriften zuwenden. Überblickt man diese, so lässt sich eine verstärkte Häufigkeit in drei Schriften feststellen: im *Einzig* möglichen *Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* (26 Verwendungen), in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (33 Verwendungen), in der *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (31 Verwendungen). In den übrigen veröffentlichten Schriften liegt die Häufigkeit zwischen 1 und 3 Verwendungen.

2.2.1 Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren (1762)

Häufigkeit: 1 (II: 49_{20}).

In der Diskussion des „oberste[n] Grund[es] aller bejahenden Vernunftschlüsse“ (II $49_{17f.}$), der darin besteht, dass das, „was von einem Begriff allgemein bejaht wird, [...] auch von einem jeden bejaht [wird], der unter ihm enthalten ist“ (II $49_{18ff.}$), gibt Kant zu bedenken, dass dieser keines Beweises fähig ist und den allgemeinen und letzten

68. AA IX, 71 (*Logik Jäsche*).

69. AA II, 285 (*Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*).

Grund aller vernünftigen Schlussart enthält. Dies begründet er wie folgt:

> Der Beweisgrund hievon ist klar. Derjenige Begriff, unter welchem andere enthalten sind, ist allemal als ein Merkmal von diesen abgesondert worden; was nun diesem Begriff zukommt, das ist ein Merkmal eines Merkmals, mithin auch ein Merkmal der Sachen selbst, von denen er ist abgesondert worden, d.i. er kommt den niedrigen zu, die unter ihm enthalten sind. (II $49_{20ff.}$)

In diesem Rahmen ist das Lexem im Sinn der „ratio probans“ zu verstehen.

2.2.2 Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes (1762/veröffentlicht 1763)

Häufigkeit: 26; II $63_{02\ (\text{Titel})}$; 66_{09}; 69_{13}; 70_{03}; 87_{19}; 89_{01}; 90_{20}; 91_{03}; 91_{21}; 108_{09}; 108_{12}; 113_{02}; 124_{05}; 134_{35}; 144_{11}; $155_{02f.}$; 155_{06}; 155_{12}; 155_{23}; 156_{11}; 157_{28}; 162_{07}; 162_{17}; 162_{20}; 162_{24}; 162_{29}.

Hinzuziehen sind ebenfalls die Verwendungen von „Beweist(h)um“ (Gesamthäufigkeit: 12): II 65_{15}; 67_{03}; 107_{24}; 111_{29}; 116_{24}; 118_{02}; 123_{31}; 131_{34}; $132_{05f.}$; 144_{20}; 159_{18}; 163_{02}.

Im Titel der Schrift (II 63_{02} und 63_{04}) werden die Lexeme „Beweisgrund“ und „Demonstration“ voneinander unterschieden. Der Titel benennt genau das Programm, das Kant verfolgt, nämlich den einzig möglichen ‚Beweisgrund’ *zu* einer ‚Demonstration’ des Daseins Gottes zu eruieren.[70]

In der Schrift finden sich umrisshafte – wenngleich nicht immer ein-eindeutige – Anmerkungen zum Begriff „Beweisgrund“. In der Vorrede gibt Kant zu bedenken, dass im Rahmen „gemeiner Einsichten“ für die gesunde Menschenvernunft „genugsam überführende Beweistümer von dem Dasein und den Eigenschaften“ (II $65_{15f.}$) Gottes vorhanden sind, wenngleich „der subtile Forscher allerwärts die Demonstration und die Abgemessenheit genau bestimmter Begriffe oder regelmäßig verknüpfter Vernunftschlüsse vermißt“ (II $65_{16ff.}$). Die Formulierung „übrerführende Beweistümer“ lässt sich hier im Sinn von „Beweisgründen“ also „rationes probantes“ lesen, die überzeugen.

Was er selber in der Schrift liefern wolle, ist, wie es der Titel anzeigt, nicht eine vollständige Demonstration, sondern „nur de[n] Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration, ein mühsam gesammeltes Baugeräth“ (II 66_{09}). Dem Kenner obliege es, aus diesem Material „nach den Regeln der Dauerhaftigkeit und der Wohlgereimtheit das Gebäude zu vollführen“ (II $66_{11f.}$). Dem entspräche die Demonstration; der Beweisgrund liefert sozusagen die Elemente oder die Argumente. So schreibt Kant an späterer Stelle, er begnüge sich bloß, „den Beweisgrund vollständig zu machen“, seine Absicht sei nicht „eine förmliche Demonstration darzulegen“ (II $89_{01f.}$) sondern die Analyse, „dadurch man sich zur förmlichen Lehrverfassung tüchtig machen kann“ (II $89_{11f.}$).

Werden so „Beweisgrund“ und „Demonstration“ unterschieden, so ist die Abgrenzung von „Beweisgrund“ gegenüber „Beweis“ nicht so eindeutig: Im „Beschluss“ der ersten Abteilung der Schrift wird darauf hingewiesen, dass der Beweisgrund lediglich darauf erbaut ist, weil etwas möglich ist (II $91_{4f.}$). Dies ist im engen Sinn das

70. In der *Religionslehre Pölitz* ist indes die Rede vom „einzig[] mögliche[n] Beweisgrund meiner Demonstration vom Daseyn Gottes“ (AA XXVIII, 2, 2, 1034).

Argument, auf dem er erbaut ist. Kant folgert, der Beweisgrund sei, „ein Beweis, der vollkommen *a priori* geführt werden kann“ (II 91_{05}). Weiter: Aus diesem Beweisgrund erhellet, dass „alle Wesen anderer Dinge und das Reale aller Möglichkeit in diesem einigen Wesen gegründet [sind]“ (II $91_{21ff.}$). Der Beweisgrund ist demnach *mehr* als bloße *ratio probans*. Er ist, in seiner Entfaltung betrachtet, *probatio*. An anderen Stelle lässt sich das Lexem auch im Sinn von Beweis lesen (II 124_{05}; II 144_{11}; 155_{06}; 155_{23}…).

An einer weiteren Stelle findet sich ein interessanter zusätzlicher Hinweis, in dem der Beweisgrund hinsichtlich seiner beweisenden Kraft thematisiert wird, nämlich der ihm innewohnenden Notwendigkeit, mit der das Dasein Gottes *bewiesen* werden kann. Eine solche besteht nicht in der bloßen formalen Richtigkeit des Folgerns, sondern in der inhaltlichen Bestimmung der in ihm gebrauchten Begriffe, kraft welcher die Nichtexistenz Gottes undenkbar ist:

> Es ist […] gezeigt worden, daß der Beweis aus den Eigenschaften der Dinge der Welt auf das Dasein und die Eigenschaften der Gottheit zu schließen einen tüchtigen und sehr schönen Beweisgrund enthalte, nur daß er nimmermehr der Schärfe einer Demonstration fähig ist. Nun bleibt nichts übrig, als daß entweder gar kein strenger Beweis hievon möglich sei, oder daß er auf demjenigen Beweisgrunde beruhen müsse, den wir oben angezeigt haben. Da von der Möglichkeit eines Beweises schlechthin die Rede ist, so wird niemand das erstere behaupten, und die Folge fällt demjenigen gemäß aus, was wir angezeigt haben. Es ist nur ein Gott und nur ein Beweisgrund, durch welchen es möglich ist, sein Dasein mit der Wahrnehmung derjenigen Nothwendigkeit einzusehen, die schlechterdings alles Gegentheil vernichtigt. (II $162_{14ff.}$)

Andererseits scheint Kant das Lexem auch in einem weiteren Sinn von „Grund“ zu verstehen. So z.B. ist der zweite Punkt der 7. Betrachtung der 2. Abteilung überschrieben mit: „Gründe für einen mechanischen Ursprung unserer Planetenwelt überhaupt“ (II $141_{19f.}$). Im Anschluss an diesen Punkt heißt es dann: „Die eben jetzt angeführte Beweisgründe für einen mechanischen Ursprung sind so wichtig…“ (II $144_{11f.}$). Hier scheint mit „Beweisgrund“ eher auf Phänomene angespielt zu werden, die zu Schlüssen Anlass geben, ohne dass speziell auf deren strenge Notwendigkeit gepocht wird.

Das Lexem „Beweist(h)um“ wird in der Beweisgrundschrift, wie aus den Kontexten ersichtlich, einerseits in der Meierschen Bedeutung der „ratio probans“, andererseits aber auch in der Bedeutung von „Beweis“, verwendet: So etwa wenn Kant davon spricht, er habe „öfters nur Beweisthümer angeführt“ (II 67_{03};), dann sind wohl damit „rationes probandi“ gemeint (siehe 107_{24}; 116_{24}; $118_{02;}$ 131_{34}; 159_{17}); andererseits aber lässt sich das Lexem auch im Sinn von „Beweis“ lesen, so wenn es heißt, es gebe innerhalb der Schranken gemeiner Einsichten „genugsam überführende Beweistümer von dem Dasein und den Eigenschaften“ (II $65_{14ff.}$) Gottes. Im Zusammenhang mit Newtons Demonstrationen ist die Rede von seinen „sichere[n] und überezeugende[n] Beweisthümern“ (II 144_{20}). In den Schlusssätzen der Schrift wird „Beweisthum“ dann auch im Sinn von „Beweisgrund“ verwendet (II 163_{02}). Man könnte all dem noch einen allgemeineren Sinn hinzufügen, nämlich den von „Beleg für“ (etwa II $132_{05f.}$).

2.2.3 Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral (1763/ veröffentlicht 1764)

Häufigkeit: 2; II 288_{27}; $295_{34f.}$
Die Fragestellung der vorliegenden Schrift betrifft die „höchstmögliche Gewißheit" in der Metaphysik. Die zweite Betrachtung, in der sich das Lexem zum ersten Mal vorfindet, handelt von der „einzige[n] Methode, zur höchstmöglichen Gewißheit in der Metaphysik zu gelangen" (II $283_{11f.}$). In diesem Rahmen führt Kant ein Beispiel an, an dem das Fehlerhafte der Argumente der traditionellen Metaphysik aufgewiesen werden soll. Dieses betrifft das Problem der Anziehung der Körper in der Entfernung, die bei Newton und bei den Newtonianern behauptet wird. Dagegen lauten die „Beweisgründe der Metaphysiker" (288_{27}) wie folgt:

> Zuvorderst erscheint die Definition: Die unmittelbare gegenseitige Gegenwart zweier Körper ist die Berührung. Hieraus folgt: wann zwei Körper ineinander unmittelbar wirken, so berühren sie einander. Dinge, die sich berühren, sind nicht entfernt. Mithin wirken zwei Körper niemals in der Entfernung unmittelbar in einander u.s.w. (II $288_{27ff.}$)

Dazu heißt es lapidar: „Die Definition ist erschlichen" (II $288_{32f.}$).

Das zweite Auftreten des Lexems findet sich in der dritten Betrachtung, die „Von der Natur der metaphysischen Gewißheit" (II 290_{28}) handelt. In diesem Rahmen diskutiert Kant die These von Crusius, gemäß der die „oberste Regel aller Gewißheit" (II 295_{24}) darin besteht, dass das, was ich nicht anders als wahr denken kann, auch wahr ist. Kant gibt zu bedenken, dass auf diese Art ein Gefühl der Überzeugung angesichts unerweislicher Erkenntnisse ist und demnach eher einem Geständnis entspricht, „aber nicht ein Beweisgrund davon, daß sie wahr sind" (II $295_{34f.}$).

Wird in der ersten Verwendung des Lexems ein *form*gerechter Beweis als Beweisgrund angeführt, so ist in der zweiten eher eine „ratio probandi" gemeint.

2.2.4 Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Auflage B)

Häufigkeit: 32; B XXXIII = III 20_{28} ; B XXXVII = III 22_{29} ; B XLII = III 25_{10} ; B 72 = III 73_{03}; B 144 = III 115_{31} ; B 246 = III 174_{27} ; B 409 = III 268_{32} ; B 426 = III 277_{29}; B 467 = III 305_{04}; B 487 = III 317_{20}; B 529 = III $344_{35f.}$; B 611 = III 392_{12}; B 615 = III 394_{33}; B 633 = III 405_{08}; B 634 = III 406_{01}; B 648 = III 413_{31}; B 652 = III 415_{36}; B 653 = III 416_{19}; B 655 = III 417_{27}; B 657 = III 418_{29}; B 666 = III 424_{16}; B 762 = III 481_{18}; B 765 = III 483_{16}; B 769 = III 485_{34}; B 777 = III $490_{12f.}$; B 782 = III $493_{17f.}$; B 804 = III 506_{02} und $506_{14f.}$; B 815 = III 512_{32}; B 816 = III 513_{05} und 513_{13}; B 822 = III 516_{18}.

In B XXXVII spricht Kant davon, dass er in den Sätzen und ihren *Beweisgründen* für die zweite Auflage des Werks nichts geändert hat. Siehe auch B XLII; B 409 („eine Folge aus dem nämlichen Beweisgrunde"); B 487: („Es zeigt sich [...] in dieser Antinomie ein seltsamer Contrast: daß nämlich aus eben demselben Beweisgrund, woraus in der Thesis das Dasein eines Urwesens geschlossen wurde, in der Antithesis das Nichtsein desselben [...] geschlossen wird"); B 611; B 633; B 634 (der empirische Beweisgrund); B 648; B 652; B 655; B 657; B 762; B 765 (empirische Beweisgründe;

Erfahrung als Beweisgrund); B 804 spricht von „Vermehrung der Beweisgründe“. Unspezifische Verwendungen: B 769; B 777; B 782.

In B 144 findet sich eine interessante Formulierung: Kant spricht hier vom Beweisgrund, der „auf der vorgestellten *Einheit der Anschauung*“ *beruht*. Es wird hier die Grundlage des Beweisgrundes selber hervorgehoben. Ähnlich B 246: „Der Beweisgrund dieses Satzes [...] beruht [...] auf folgenden Momenten“.

In B 653 spricht Kant vom ontologischen Beweis – in Anlehnung an den Titel der Beweisgrundschrift als dem *„einzig möglichen Beweisgrund“*. Diese Formulierung – allerdings ohne Bezug auf den ontologischen Beweis – findet sich in B 816 wieder.

Im Abschnitt über „die Disziplin der reinen Vernunft im dogmatischen Gebrauch“ (B 740ff.) kommt Kant auf das Thema der „Demonstration“ zu sprechen (B 762). Sie wird definiert als „apodiktischer Beweis, so fern er intuitiv ist“ (*ibid.*). Demzufolge findet man Demonstrationen nur in der Mathematik. Empirische Beweisgründe hingegen können „keinen apodiktischen Beweis verschaffen“ (*ibid.*), weil Erfahrung lehrt, was ist, aber nicht, dass es notwendig so ist.[71]

Im Abschnitt über die „Disziplin der reinen Vernunft in Ansehung ihrer Beweise“ in der „Transzendentalen Methodenlehre“ (B 810ff.) könnte man eine gehäuftere Verwendung des Lexems erwarten. Indes taucht es nur an vier Stellen auf. B 815 unterscheidet Beweisgrund von Beweis: Ein transzendentaler Satz geht bloß von *einem* Begriff aus, „und sagt die synthetische Bedingung der Möglichkeit des Gegenstandes nach diesem Begriffe. Der Beweisgrund kann also nur ein einziger sein, weil außer diesem Begriffe nichts weiter ist, wodurch der Gegenstand bestimmt werden könnte“ (B 815f.). Demnach kann der Beweis, der „nichts weiter als die Bestimmung eines Gegenstandes überhaupt nach diesem Begriffe“ (B 816) ist, auch nur ein einziger sein. Als Beispiel verweist Kant hier auf den in der Transzendentalen Analytik erwogenen Grundsatz „alles, was geschieht, hat eine Ursache“, der aus der „einzigen Bedingung der objectiven Möglichkeit eines Begriffs, von dem, was überhaupt geschieht, gezogen“ ist, nämlich, „daß die Bestimmung einer Begebenheit in der Zeit, mithin diese (Begebenheit) als zur Erfahrung gehörig, ohne unter einer solchen dynamischen Regel zu stehen, unmöglich wäre“ (B 816). Dies wird dann als „einzig mögliche[r] Beweisgrund“ (*ibid.*) bezeichnet.

Allgemeiner heißt es in B 822 mit Blick auf streitende Parteien: „Ein jeder muß seine Sache vermittelst eines durch transscendentale Deduction der Beweisgründe geführten rechtlichen Beweises, d.i. direct führen“.

Das angeführte Material zeigt, dass das Lexem in der engen Bedeutung von „ratio probans“ verwendet wird.

2.2.5 Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können (1783)

Häufigkeit: 3; IV 308_{18}; 356_{20}; 376_{09}.
In IV $308_{18f.}$ ist die Rede davon, dass man auf den Beweisgrund achten muss, der die Möglichkeit einer Erkenntnis a priori entdeckt.

71. Siehe diesbezüglich auch OP 61_{11}, 76_{25}.

In 356_{20} diskutiert Kant Humes Kritik am Deismus und am Theismus: Erstere trifft wohl die „Beweisthümer", d.h. die Beweisgründe, aber nie „den Satz der deistischen Behauptung selbst" (IV $356_{08f.}$). Was nun seine Angriffe auf den *Theismus* betrifft, so sind diese gefährlicher. Während er vorher nur die „Beweisgründe des Deismus gestürmt hatte" (356_{20}), betrifft die Kritik am Theismus den Anthropomorphismus.

In $376_{09f.}$ spricht Kant, im Rahmen seiner Stellungnahme zur Rezension der Kritik der reinen Vernunft in den *Göttingischen Gelehrten-Anzeigen* von 1782 davon, dass der Rezensent eine Menge von Sätzen aus „dem Zusammenhange mit ihren Beweisgründen und Erläuterungen gerissen" habe.

In den drei Fällen ist das Lexem „Beweisgrund" im Sinn von „ratio probans", nicht hingegen als Beweis zu verstehen.

2.2.6 Metaphysische Anfangsründe der Naturwissenschaft (1786)

Häufigkeit: 2; IV 484_{15}; 526_{26}.
Das erste Auftreten des Lexems findet sich im Rahmen der Diskussion der Bewegung eines Dinges. In einer Anmerkung (Anmerkung 3) behandelt Kant die Frage nach der Richtung der Kreisbewegung. Der Unterschied, so seine These, lässt sich zwar in der Anschauung geben, kann aber nicht auf Begriffe gebracht werden. Insofern gibt er „einen guten bestätigenden Beweisgrund zu dem Satze [...], daß der Raum überhaupt nicht zu den Eigenschaften oder Verhältnissen *der Dinge an sich selbst*, [...], sondern blos zu der subjectiven Form unserer sinnlichen Anschauung von Dingen oder Verhältnissen [...] gehöre" (IV $484_{14ff.}$).

Das zweite Auftreten des Lexems findet sich im Kontext der Behandlung der Dynamik. In der „Allgemeine[n] Anmerkung zur *Dynamik*" (IV 523ff.) bespricht Kant das Problem der „Anziehung, *so fern sie blos als in der Berührung wirksam gedacht wird*" (IV $526_{12f.}$). Diese heißt „Zusammenhang" (*ibid*). Darunter ist eine allgemeine Eigenschaft der Materie zu verstehen; diese Allgemeinheit muss aber *disjunktiv* verstanden werden. Die Anziehung ist nicht durchdringend, sondern flächenhaft, „wie es verschiedene Beweisgründe darthun können" (IV $526_{25f.}$).

In der ersten Verwendung ist das Lexem im Sinn einer „ratio probans" gemeint, wie es die Formulierung „ein[] gute[r] bestätigende[r] Beweisgrund *zu* dem Satze [...]" nahelegt. Die zweite Verwendung ist, wie uns scheint, in eben derselben Bedeutung zu verstehen.

2.2.7 Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (1788)

Häufigkeit: 1; V 47_{07}.
Das Lexem findet sich im Zusammenhang der Diskussion um die Möglichkeit einer Deduktion der objektiven Gültigkeit des obersten Grundsatzes der praktischen Vernunft. Hier kann nicht, im Gegensatz zum theoretischen Gebrauch der Vernunft, auf Erfahrung rekurriert werden. „Denn was den Beweisgrund seiner Wirklichkeit von der Erfahrung herzuholen bedarf, muß den Gründen seiner Möglichkeit nach von Erfahrungsprincipien abhängig sein, für dergleichen aber reine und doch praktische Vernunft schon ihres Begriffs wegen unmöglich gehalten werden kann" (V $47_{07f.}$).

Das Lexem ist in diesem Zusammenhang als „ratio probans“ zu deuten und vom Beweis, von dem Kant in V 47_{06} spricht, zu unterscheiden.

2.2.8 Kritik der Urteilskraft (1790)

Häufigkeit: 31; V 281_{20}; 284_{03}; 284_{17}; 284_{22}; 284_{35}; 285_{32}; 285_{35}; 304_{30}; 338_{18}; 399_{01}; 438_{11}; 438_{23}; 444_{36}; 447_{17}; 458_{06}; 461_{19}; 463_{15}; 463_{20}; 465_{26}; 466_{06}; 474_{19}; 476_{37}; 477_{28}; 477_{30}; 477_{36}; 478_{06}; 478_{13}; 478_{26}; 479_{22}; 480_{01}; $482_{11f.}$.

In der *Kritik der Urteilskraft* findet sich, wie bereits angedeutet, eine bemerkenswerte Häufigkeit des Lexems.

281_{20}: Das Geschmacksurteil ist *a priori* allgemein gültig und notwendig; letzteres hängt aber nicht von Beweisgründen a priori ab; siehe auch 284_{03}; 284_{17}; 284_{22}; 284_{35}; 285_{32}; 285_{35}. 304_{30} spricht davon, dass es keine Wissenschaft vom Schönen gibt. Wäre dies so, so würde man in ihr „wissenschaftlich, d.i. durch Beweisgründe“ vorgehen. Einige Zeilen später (305_{05}f.) argumentiert Kant, dass, wenn man in der „schönen Kunst“ als Wissenschaft nach *Gründen und Beweisen* fragte, man durch „geschmackvolle Aussprüche [...] abgefertigt“ würde.

338_{18} diskutiert die Frage, ob über Geschmack gestritten oder disputiert werden kann. Bei Letzterem wird erhofft, dass Einhelligkeit „nach bestimmten Begriffen als Beweisgründen“ entsteht.

In $398_{35ff.}$ ist die Abgrenzung zwischen Beweis und Beweisgrund ziemlich subtil: Die Naturdinge, die wir „nur als Zwecke möglich finden, [machen] den vornehmsten Beweis für die Zufälligkeit des Weltganzen aus und sind der einzige für den gemeinen Verstand eben sowohl als den Philosophen geltende Beweisgrund der Abhängigkeit und des Ursprungs desselben“ von einem außerweltlichen verständigen Wesen. Hier wird die Zufälligkeit des Weltganzen als Folge (*consequens*) aus den als Zwecke gedachten Naturdingen (*praemissae*) gedacht. Diese sind eigentlich die Beweisgründe; zusammengenommen mit dem *consequens* bilden sie den Beweis.

438_{23} spricht vom Mangel dessen, was Beweisgründe leisten, und was dann durch willkürliche Zusätze ergänzt wird.

444_{36}; 447_{17} (die physische Teleologie gibt einen hinreichenden Beweisgrund an die Hand, das Dasein einer verständigen Weltursache anzunehmen); 458_{06} (der moralische Beweis ist nur ein neu erörterter Beweisgrund); 461_{19}; 463_{15}; 465_{26} (Beweisgründe, von denen wir ausgehen); 466_{06}; 474_{19}; 476_{37} (Das aus der physischen Teleologie genommene „Argument“ [476_{34}] ist verehrungswürdig. Reimarus hat „diesen Beweisgrund mit der ihm eigenen Gründlichkeit und Klarheit weitläufig aus[ge]führt“); 477_{28}; $477_{29ff.}$ („es mischt sich unvermerkt der jedem Menschen beiwohnende und ihn so innigst bewegende moralische Beweisgrund in den Schluß mit ein“); 477_{36}; $478_{04ff.}$ („die moralische Beziehung auf Zwecke und die Idee eines eben solchen Gesetzgebers und Welturhebers, als theologischer Begriff, ob er zwar reine Zugabe ist, [scheint] sich dennoch aus jenem Beweisgrunde von selbst zu entwickeln“); $479_{22f.}$; („Wenn der physisch-teleologische Beweisgrund zu dem gesuchten Beweise zureichte ...“); 480_{01}; $482_{11f.}$.

Eine interessante Differenzierung findet sich in 478_{13}: Der moralische Beweisgrund ergänzt nicht bloß den physisch-teleologischen, sondern ist ein „besonderer Beweis“. Ein Beweis kann demnach in einem anderen Zusammenhang als Beweisgrund fungieren (hier als Ergänzung).

Eine weitere hervorhebenswerte Formulierung findet sich in 438_{11}, wo Kant von „widerstreitenden Beweisgründen“ spricht. Vielleicht ist dies eine Anspielung auf Crusius’ Lehre von den collidirenden Beweisen?

Wie ersichtlich wird das Lexem in den meisten Verwendungen in der die Bedeutung von „materia probationis“ oder „ratio probandi verwendet. Siehe jedoch 478_{13}.

2.2.9 Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll (1790)

Häufigkeit: 2; VIII 190_{25}; 237_{19}.
Gegen J.A. Eberhards These, es sei unnötig, sich in der Metaphysik auf die Frage der objektiven Realität der Begriffe einzulassen, wie dies ja auch in der Mathematik nicht der Fall ist, gibt Kant ironisch zu verstehen, man solle sich „ja nicht auf Beweisgründe aus Wissenschaften, die man nicht versteht [...] berufen“ (VIII $190_{25f.}$).

Das zweite Vorkommen des Lexems tritt im Rahmen der Diskussion über synthetisch apriorische Sätze in der Metaphysik auf. Als metaphysisches von Eberhard angeführtes Beispiel steht der Satz „Alle endliche Dinge sind veränderlich, und: das unendliche Ding ist unveränderlich“ (VIII $235_{37f.}$), und zwar mit dem Zusatz: „wenn die Metaphysik einen solchen Satz bewiese“ (VIII 235_{36}). Es ist genau dieser Zusatz, auf das Kant anspielt, wenn er schreibt, er habe „den Beweisgrund [...] sofort mit angezeigt“ (VIII $237_{29f.}$), um das darin Täuschende aufzuzeigen.

In dieser Streitschrift wird das Lexem in der Bedeutung von *ratio probans* verwendet.

2.2.10 Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft (1793)

Gesamthäufigkeit: 2; VI $164_{14f.}$; $187_{20f.}$
Im Rahmen der Diskussion über die christliche Religion als gelehrte Religion (VI $163_{08ff.}$) im vierten Stück der Schrift stellt Kant die These auf, der christliche Glaube als gelehrter Glaube stütze sich auf Geschichte und sei insofern „nicht ein an sich *freier* und von Einsicht hinlänglicher theoretischer Beweisgründe abgeleiteter *Glaube*“ ($164_{14f.}$).

Das zweite Vorkommen begegnet ebenfalls im vierten Stück: Die Frage ist die, ob Geistliche ein auf der Grundlage eines positiven Offenbarungsgesetzes den Gläubigen eine an sich erlaubte Handlung als *Glaubensartikel* auferlegen dürfen. Kant sieht dies als Nötigung, „da die Überzeugung keine andere als historische Beweisgründe für sich hat“ ($187_{20f.}$).

Auch in dieser Schrift ist die Bedeutung des Lexems im Sinn von „ratio probans“ zu verstehen. Interessant ist die Nuance, gemäß der hinlängliche Beweisgründe nicht auf geschichtlichen Daten ruhen dürfen.

2.2.11 Metaphysik der Sitten (1797)

Gesamthäufigkeit: 2; VI 304_{23} (*Rechtslehre*); $425_{23f.}$ (*Tugendlehre*).
In dem Abschnitt der *Rechtslehre*, wo das Lexem auftaucht (VI 303ff.), geht es um die Frage der Eidesablegung: Für die Rechtsprechung ist es unentbehrlich, dass der Schwörende sich zu einer unsichtbaren Macht bekennt. „Ein Gesetz, das hiezu verbindet, ist also offenbar nur zum Behuf der richtenden Gewalt gegeben. Aber nun ist die Frage: worauf gründet man die Verbindlichkeit, die jemand vor Gericht haben soll, eines Anderen Eid als zu Recht gültigen Beweisgrund der Wahrheit seines Vorgebens anzunehmen [...]?“ ($304_{19ff.}$). Kant vertritt die Meinung, letzten Endes handle die gesetzgebende Gewalt unrecht, weil ein Zwang zu Eidesleistungen der menschlichen Freiheit zuwider ist.

In der *Tugendlehre* begegnet das Lexem im Rahmen der Diskussion der Unzulässigkeit der „Selbstschändung“. Ein Vernunftbeweis für diese Verletzung der Pflicht gegen sich selbst ist aber „nicht so leicht geführt. – Der *Beweisgrund* liegt freilich darin, daß der Mensch seine Persönlichkeit dadurch (wegwerfend) aufgiebt, indem er sich blos zum Mittel der Befriedigung thierischer Triebe braucht“ ($425_{23ff.}$).

Die Bedeutung des Lexems ist hier ebenfalls die von „*ratio probans*“.

2.2.12 Streit der Fakultäten (1798)

Häufigkeit: 3; VII 09_{02}; $40_{16f.}$; 69_{10}.
Das erste Vorkommen des Lexems findet sich in der Vorrede in Kants Antwortschreiben an König Friedrich Wilhelm II. (aus dem Jahr 1794). In diesem Zusammenhang ist die Rede von „historischen Beweisgründen“, auf die sich der Glaube bezieht, die aber als zufällige Glaubenslehren außerwesentlich, wenngleich nicht unnötig und überflüssig sind. In eine ähnliche Richtung geht auch die Bemerkung in VII $69_{10f.}$: Die Zeugnisse der Schrift sollen nicht die Wahrheit der moralischen Lehren bestätigende „historische Beweisgründe sein“, sondern bloß Beispiele der Anwendung der praktischen Prinzipien.

In $40_{16f.}$ diskutiert Kant die Frage nach dem möglichen Sinn der paulinischen Predigt von der Auferstehung bzw. des künftigen Lebens. Der diesbezügliche allgemeine moralische Glaube bewog den Apostel zum „historischen Glauben an eine öffentliche Sache [...], die er treuherzig für wahr annahm und sie zum Beweisgrunde eines moralischen Glaubens des künftigen Lebens brauchte“ ($40_{15ff.}$).

Im ähnlichen Sinn wie in der Religionsschrift (VI $187_{20f.}$) wird hier moniert, dass historische Zeugnisse keine Beweisgründe sein können, da wo es um die Wahrheit moralischer Lehren geht. Die Bedeutung des Lexems ist die von „*ratio probans*“.

2.2.13 Logik Jäsche (1800)

Häufigkeit: 3; IX $71_{37.}$; 133_{13}; 135_{20}.
Die Logik Jäsche, auf die bereits im ersten Teil dieser Untersuchung eingegangen wurde, hält in IX $71_{35ff.}$ fest, dass die „wesentlichen Stücke eines jeden Beweises überhaupt [...] die *Materie* und die *Form* desselben [sind], oder der *Beweisgrund* und die *Consquenz*“.

Die Verwendung in IX 133_{13} kommt im Kontext der Unterscheidung zwischen Induktion und Analogie vor. Als Beispiel eines Schlusses nach der Analogie schreibt Kant: „So ist z.B. der Beweisgrund für die Unsterblichkeit aus der völligen Entwicklung der Naturanalagen eines jeden Geschöpfs ein Schluß nach der Analogie" (IX $133_{13ff.}$).

Die dritte Verwendung in IX 135_{20} findet sich im Paragrafen über die *petitio principii*. Unter einer solchen „versteht man die Annehmung eines Satzes zum Beweisgrunde als eines unmittelbar gewissen Satzes, obgleich er noch eines Beweises bedarf" (IX $135_{19f.}$).

Stehen die Verwendungen des Lexems in IX 71 und in IX 135 auf der Linie der Unterscheidungen, die sich bei Meier und Crusius vorfinden, so ist die Anwendung in IX 133 nicht ein-eindeutig, insofern der Beweisgrund hier als *Schluss* bezeichnet wird.

2.2.14 Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnitzens und Wolff's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat? (1804)

Gesamthäufigkeit: 1; XX $298_{24f.}$.
Im Rahmen von Überlegungen über den Glauben in moralisch-praktischer Hinsicht gibt Kant zu bedenken, dass ein derartiges „credo" als freies Fürwahrhalten keinen „Imperativ verstattet" und „der Beweisgrund dieser seiner Richtigkeit [...] kein Beweis von der Wahrheit dieser Sätze, als theoretischer betrachtet [ist]" (XX 298 $_{24ff}$).

Der „Beweisgrund" ist hier im Sinn der „materia probationis" zu verstehen und ist ausdrücklich von der „probatio" zu unterscheiden.

2.3 Verwendungen des Lexems „Beweisgrund" im Handschriftlichen Nachlass

In den Notaten des Handschriftlichen Nachlasses (*Reflexionen)* zur Anthropologie, Logik, Metaphysik, Rechtsphilosophie, Religionsphilosophie sowie im *Opus postumum* findet sich das Lexem mehrfach wieder. Es soll im Folgenden indes nur punktuell auf Verwendungen eingegangen werden.
- *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*:
Häufigkeit: 2; Nr. 454, XV: 187_{02}.; Nr. 992, XV 436_{18}.
- *Reflexionen zur Logik:*
Häufigkeit: 3: Nr. 1985, XVI 183_{19}; Nr. 2724, XVI 486_{11}; Nr. 3265, XVI 747.

Interessant ist die Bemerkung in XVI 486_{11}: Man kann andern nur etwas beweisen, „wo die Beweisgründe und deren Zusammenhang sich mittheilen lassen". Zum Beweis gehört also neben den Gründen der Aufweis des Zusammenhangs. Dieser Bemerkung entspricht auch das in XVI 183_{19} Behauptete („Viele Beweisgründe, deren jeder gar nichts beweiset").
- *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik:*
Häufigkeit: 10; Nr. 4086, XVII 410_{01}; Nr. 4670, XVII 634_{07}; Nr. 4957, XVIII 41_{08}; Nr. 5495, XVIII 199_{01}; Nr. 5528, XVIII 209_{07}; Nr. 5645, XVIII 291_{29}; Nr. 5653, XVIII 308_{14}; Nr. 6245, XVIII 524_{15}; Nr. 6275, XVIII 541_{24}; Nr. 6351, XVIII 677_{25}.

In Nr. 5653 taucht, im Rahmen der Kritik am materialen Idealismus, am Rande die an den Titel der Schrift aus dem Jahre 1762 (1763) erinnernde Formulierung „Daß dieses der eintzige Mogliche Beweisgrund sey“ auf.

Das Lexem findet sich in den Nr. 4086, 5495, 5528, 6245, 6275 im Kontext von Erörterungen zur Theologie.

- *Reflexionen zur Rechtsphilosophie:*

Häufigkeit: 1; Nr. 8077, XIX $605_{20f.}$

- *Reflexionen zur Religionsphilosophie:*

Häufigkeit: 1; Nr. 8090, XIX 634_{30}.

- *Opus postumum:*

Häufigkeit: 8; 1. Convolut: XXI 61_{11} und 76_{25}; 2. Convolut: XXI $221_{04f.}$ und 222_{05}; 4. Convolut: XXI 363_{17}; 5. Convolut: XXI 549_{03}; 7. Convolut: XXII 113_{04}; 9. Convolut: XXII 260_{19}.

61_{11}, 76_{25}, thematisieren das Lexem im Zusammenhang der Frage, dass Erfahrung als Beweisgrund empirischer Urteile keine Gewissheit ergibt.

In 221_{04} und 549_{03} geht es um die Existenz eines Weltstoffs (221) bzw. Wärmestoffs als Elementarstoff (549), der nicht direkt bewiesen werden kann und dessen Beweisgrund demzufolge subjektiv ist, da er von den Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung hergenommen ist.

***

Überblickt man das gesamte Spektrum der Verwendungen des Lexems Beweisgrund, so lässt sich eine hohe Bedeutungskonstanz feststellen: Mit „Beweisgrund“ wird, auf der Linie der Ausführungen von G. F. Meier und C. A. Crusius die *materia* oder *ratio probationis* gemeint. Sie wird generell vom Beweis bzw. von der Demonstration unterschieden. Die Beweiskraft eines Beweises liegt nicht im Beweisgrund, der die *materia probationis* enthält, sondern in der Form. In vielen der angeführten Verwendungen wird dies als selbstredend vorausgesetzt.

Einige Verwendungen (*Logik Busolt*: inkompletter Beweis; *Logik Jäsche*: Beweisgrund als Schluss nach der Analogie) lassen indes eine ein-eindeutige Bedeutung des Lexems vermissen bzw. fungieren in unspezifischer Form, etwa in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (B 769; B 777; B 782).

Von ausdrücklich *programmatischer* Relevanz ist das Lexem – wie bereits eingangs bemerkt – lediglich im *Einzig möglichen Beweisgrund*. Aber selbst in dieser Schrift mutiert der besagte Beweisgrund als einzig möglicher in seiner Entfaltung zum Beweis: Das apriorische Argument, das „von den Möglichkeiten der Dinge als Folgen auf das Dasein Gottes als einen Grund“[72] schließt, wird interessanterweise von Kant selber als ontologischer *Beweis* bezeichnet,[73] der allerdings als solcher den Beweisgrund zu einer (noch zu führenden) *Demonstration* bildet, die unter dieser Voraussetzung dann auch die *einzig mögliche* Demonstration vom Dasein Gottes ist.[74]

72. BWG, 157.
73. Siehe BWG, 161.
74. Siehe BWG, 162.

ABKÜRZUNGEN

AA = Kant, I. 1900. *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. v. der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 Bde., Berlin, De Gruyter.

Wo es nötig ist, wird neben der Abkürzung AA auch die Abkürzung des besonderen Werks in AA angegeben:

OP = *Opus postumum*, in AA XXI und AA XXII.

BWG = *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes*, in AA II.

Reflexionen = *Reflexionen zu G. Fr. Meiers 'Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre'* (1752), in AA XVI Nr. 1562-3488

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"Argument"
Robert Theis
Universität Luxemburg
robert.theis@education.lu

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ROBERTA PICARDI

Il *Weltbürgerrecht* nel lessico filosofico tedesco: le prime occorrenze e l'innovazione kantiana

ABSTRACT: The essay aims at shedding light on the innovation that Kant's concept of *Weltbürgerrecht* represents – moving from an examination of the hitherto ignored pre-Kantian occurrences of the term. The starting point will be an analysis of the different meanings with which the lemma is used in non-philosophical works which, although dealing with disparate topics, share significantly the direct or indirect reference to different forms of cross-border movements (§1). In the central part, attention will focus on the most significant pre-Kantian occurrence, contained in the German translation of a French natural law treatise: the third volume of the *Science du gouvernement* by the French jurist Gaspard de Réal de Curban (§2). In conclusion, we will reconsider – in the light of the background outlined – Kant's notion of *Weltbürgerrecht*, in order to highlight the conceptual twist that Kant gives to the expression and the eccentric stance he takes in the modern debate on the right of hospitality, by identifying cosmopolitan right and universal right to hospitality (§3).
SOMMARIO: Il saggio si propone di offrire un contributo per chiarire l'innovazione concettuale rappresentata dall'introduzione kantiana della categoria di *Weltbürgerrecht*, attraverso un esame delle occorrenze pre-kantiane del termine, sinora ignorate. Il punto di partenza sarà un'analisi delle differenti accezioni con cui il lemma è usato in opere non-filosofiche che, pur affrontando argomenti disparati, sono in modo significativo accomunate dal rinvio, diretto o indiretto, a forme diverse di movimenti transfrontalieri (§1). Nella parte centrale l'attenzione si concentrerà sull'occorrenza pre-kantiana che appare più significativa, contenuta nella traduzione tedesca di un trattato di diritto naturale francese: il terzo volume della *Science du gouvernement* del giurista francese Gaspard de Réal de Curban (§2). In conclusione, si riconsidererà – alla luce dello sfondo delineato – la nozione kantiana di *Weltbürgerrecht,* per mettere a fuoco la torsione concettuale che Kant imprime all'espressione ed il carattere eccentrico della posizione che egli assume nel dibattito moderno sullo *jus hospitalitatis,* attraverso l'identificazione tra diritto cosmopolitico e ospitalità universale enunciata nel terzo articolo definitivo (§3).
KEYWORDS: Cosmopolitan Right; Natural Right; Hospitality; Migration; Sovereignty

INTRODUZIONE

L'introduzione del diritto cosmopolitico come terzo ramo del diritto pubblico – oltre al diritto costituzionale e allo *jus gentium* – è generalmente riconosciuta come "una delle più importanti innovazioni giuridico-filosofiche di Kant".[1] A prescindere dalle controversie riguardanti il fondamento e il contenuto di tale innovazione concettuale,

1. Eberl & Niesen 2011: 248. Sul diritto cosmopolitico come innovazione si vedano anche, tra gli altri: Kleingeld 1998: 72-74; Höffe 2012: 257 e ss.; Benhabib 2004: 25.

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essa appare legata all'uso del termine *Weltbürgerrecht* che, come è stato notato, compare nel corpus kantiano molto più di rado e con un significato molto più circoscritto rispetto al sostantivo *Weltbürger* e agli aggettivi *weltbürgerlich/kosmopolitisch*:[2] in linea con la tradizione del cosmopolitismo stoico, Kant utilizza infatti sia i due aggettivi sia il sostantivo in un senso prevalentemente apolitico, che rinvia all'appartenenza degli uomini a un unico universo morale; di contro, egli attribuisce all'espressione *Weltbürgerrecht* una "connotazione prettamente politica",[3] adoperandola per designare quella sfera del diritto pubblico che ha per oggetto le relazioni tra uno Stato e tutti coloro che non siano suoi cittadini.

Il termine *Weltbürgerrecht* non è tuttavia un neologismo coniato da Kant, come è stato sostenuto da alcuni interpreti.[4] Nel corso del diciottesimo secolo, il lemma compare già, sia pure in modo sporadico, in scritti di vario genere e argomento. Questo saggio si propone di offrire un contributo per chiarire la portata dell'innovazione concettuale kantiana, attraverso un esame delle occorrenze pre-kantiane del termine, sinora ignorate. Dopo avere rilevato, senza pretese di esaustività, la pluralità di accezioni con cui l'espressione è utilizzata in opere non-filosofiche (§1), l'attenzione si concentrerà sull'occorrenza pre-kantiana che appare più significativa: quella contenuta nella traduzione tedesca della *Science du gouvernement* del giurista francese Gaspard de Réal de Curban, ad opera di Johann Philipp Schulin[5] – cui si deve anche la traduzione tedesca del diritto delle genti di Vattel,[6] posseduta e usata da Kant (§2).[7] Questa occorrenza merita un'analisi approfondita e sistematica, perché si trova in un trattato di diritto naturale, comprendente anche una specifica sezione sul diritto d'ospitalità: pur essendo senz'altro ignoto a Kant, il trattato di de Réal riflette e sviluppa posizioni e orientamenti diffusi nel corso della seconda metà del Settecento, alla cui luce è possibile determinare meglio lo sfondo culturale in cui si colloca la scelta kantiana di utilizzare il lemma *Weltbürgerrecht,* la torsione concettuale che Kant imprime all'espressione e l'originalità della posizione che egli assume nel dibattito moderno sullo *jus hospitalitatis,* attraverso l'identificazione tra diritto cosmopolitico e diritto d'ospitalità enunciata nel terzo articolo definitivo (§3).

2. Per una visione d'insieme della storia dell'idea di "cosmopolita"– che prescinde dalle occorrenze e dai modi d'uso dei termini – si rinvia alla voce *Kosmopolit/Kosmopolitismus* dello *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Busch & Horstmann 1977). Per quanto riguarda i termini francesi *cosmopolite* e *cosmopolitisme* in epoca moderna, è invece disponibile l'indagine semantica e storico-concettuale di van der Heuvel che, senza alcuna pre-comprensione normativa, ricostruisce il significato e la funzione dei due lemmi – in quanto fattori costitutivi nella storia della mentalità - così come emerge dalle loro modalità d'uso nell'ambito di scritti disparati, comprendenti anche la pubblicistica (van der Heuvel 1986). Una utile ricostruzione ragionata dell'ormai vasta letteratura sulla storia del cosmopolitismo – che esamina criticamente i diversi approcci metodologici adottati (storia delle idee, *Begriffsgeschichte,* semantica storica, analisi storico-semantica del discorso) – è contenuta in Albrecht 2005: 9-55.

3. Reinhardt 2022: 101-113.

4. Cf. per esempio Meckstroth 2018: 543-544.

5. Su Schulin si veda Weidlich 1783: 290-291.

6. Vattel (1757) 1760.

7. Cf. Warda 1922; *Naturrecht Feyerabend*: 226-227.

1. IL *WELTBÜRGERRECHT* PRIMA DI KANT: TRA LETTERATURA, ALCHIMIA E MEDICINA

Le occorrenze pre-kantiane dell'espressione *Weltbürgerrecht* si trovano in contesti disparati, che spaziano dalla letteratura alla medicina, ma risultano significativamente accomunate dal rinvio, diretto o indiretto, a forme diverse di movimenti transfrontalieri.

Appena un anno prima dell'uscita dello scritto kantiano *Per la pace perpetua,* il termine ricorre nella nota introduttiva alla commedia di Isabelle de Charrière *L'Inconsolable* (*Der Trostlose*),[8] che nel 1794 lo scrittore, critico e saggista Ludwig Fernand Huber – amico di Schiller e marito della vedova di Georg Forster[9] – traduce e pubblica nel periodico da lui edito *Friedensprӓliminarien* (1793-1796), dedicato agli avvenimenti della Francia rivoluzionaria. Nel presentare l'opera tradotta, Huber ne rileva l'"affinità naturale" con l'intento programmatico del periodico – che è quello di indirizzare gli animi verso l'armonia e la "pace interiore" –[10] e si sofferma sulle località in cui è ambientata la pièce, affermando che non necessitano di essere specificate, perché l'autrice ha il merito di avere conferito ad esse, attraverso "l'evidenza poetica", "il diritto cosmopolitico (*Weltbürgerrecht)*" che "l'arte richiede".[11] Il termine *Weltbürgerrecht* è quindi utilizzato in questo contesto in un senso estetico, per rinviare alla capacità universalizzante della poesia, che trascende la specificità di luoghi e circostanze. È tuttavia significativo che il lemma sia usato per introdurre una commedia che verte su un'esperienza storica realmente accaduta, su cui lo stesso Huber richiama l'attenzione, ritenendo utile offrire un "chiarimento fattuale" a tutti coloro che hanno "conservato una partecipazione più limitata, semplicemente umana": l'esperienza dei numerosi nobili francesi rifugiatisi,

8. Charrière 1979: 303-327. Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805), nata in Olanda e trasferitasi dopo il matrimonio nel principato di Neuchâtel, rappresenta una figura di primo piano della vita culturale dell'epoca, sia per la sua produzione letteraria sia per le relazioni che intrattiene con alcuni delle principali personalità intellettuali (come per esempio Benjamin Constant). Sulla vita e sulle opere di Isabelle de Charrière, si rimanda a: Courtney 1993; Van Dijk *et al*. 2006; Trousson 2013.[2]

9. Sulla figura di Ludwig Fernand Huber (Parigi, 1764-Ulm, 1804), si veda Jordan 1978. Nato da madre francese e padre tedesco, Huber è perfettamente bilingue e appartiene alla cerchia di intellettuali che – dopo il crollo della Convenzione e la caduta di Robespierre – auspicano e promuovono la diffusione del pensiero di Kant in area francofona, nella speranza che il criticismo sia in grado di salvare la Francia dalla scissione tra dommatismo reazionario e scetticismo rivoluzionario (Bellantone 2006: 46-47).

10. Charrière 1794b: 210. Questo argomento sembra non essere risultato convincente tra i contemporanei, a giudicare dalla recensione dei *Friedensprӓliminarien* uscita sulla *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* alla fine del 1795, in cui il recensore anonimo – oltre a mettere in discussione l'intero impianto del periodico e, più in generale, ogni pretesa di "neutralità" rispetto agli avvenimenti della Francia rivoluzionaria – rileva il forte "contrasto" delle commedie della de Charrière con il "restante contenuto" del periodico, di argomento politico (*Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 1794, Bd. 4, No. 371-372, 24-25 November 1794, Berlin b. Voss: *Friedens-Prӓliminarien*. Herausgegeben von dem Verfasser des *heimlichen Gerichts*. Erstes bis Zwanzigstes Stück. 1793. 1794, col. 409-422, in particolare col. 419 et 421-422).

11. Charrière 1794b: 210.

dopo la Rivoluzione, nei territori della "Svizzera",[12] che nella "galérie des émigrés" messa in scena nelle opere della de Charrière[13] funge non solo da ambientazione realistica, ma anche da luogo ideale di intesa tra opposti partiti.[14]

Nel decennio precedente, un'ulteriore e significativa occorrenza del lemma *Weltbürgerrecht* si trova sulle colonne del *Der Teutsche Merkur* (1773-89)*,* il fortunato periodico culturale fondato ed edito da Christoph Martin Wieland. Si tratta di un dato che non sorprende: Wieland è infatti uno dei più influenti "pensatori sociali e politici" dell'epoca[15] e occupa una posizione centrale nella discussione sul cosmopolitismo che anima la Germania nell'ultimo trentennio del diciottesimo secolo.[16] Ciò è attestato anche dal numero in questione del *Der Teutsche Merkur,* ossia il fascicolo mensile del giugno del 1783, che contiene la risposta di Wieland alle proposte di radicale sovvertimento dell'ordine sociale dell'Ancien regime formulate, in nome del cosmopolitismo, nell'articolo *Neugierden eines Weltbürgers. Oder Zweifel und Anfragen eines Menschen-Freundes* (*Curiosità di un cosmopolita. O dubbi e interrogativi di un amico dell'umanità*), uscito anonimo sulle *Staatsanzeigen* di Schlözer.[17] Nella sua replica, Wieland stigmatizza come falso questo cosmopolitismo radicale – che riflette la posizione degli Illuminati bavaresi – contrapponendo ad esso il proprio cosmopolitismo morale aristocratico e moderato, fondato sull'assunto che i "contadini illuminati" sono "garanti pericolosi dei diritti dell'umanità" e che tutti i tentativi di "accelerare" i miglioramenti del genere umano sono destinati a produrre conseguenze peggiori dei mali che intendono superare.[18] In questo contesto polemico si inserisce anche lo scritto pubblicato nelle pagine immediatamente successive dello stesso fascicolo del *Der Teutsche Merkur*, dove compare il lemma *Weltbürgerrecht*. Si tratta di un breve articolo intitolato *Innungsartikel der Goldmacher zu ****, ein Landstädtschen* (*Articoli per la gilda degli alchimisti di ****, *una cittadina di campagna*):[19] uno statuto immaginario della corporazione degli alchimisti che, come Wieland stesso scrive pre-annunciandone la pubblicazione, intende offrire una "presa in giro divertente e spiritosa" dell'arte di trasmutare i metalli vili in oro, da lui definita come un "vecchio berretto a sonagli delle creature terrestri (*alten Narren-*

12. *Ibid*. Sulla condizione degli *émigrés* che, lasciata la Francia rivoluzionaria senza autorizzazione, sono dichiarati nemici del nuovo corso politico, si veda Carpenter 2015: 332-334.

13. Si veda in particolare la precedente pièce della de Charrière *L'Emigré* (Charrière 1979: 273-301), che Huber aveva tradotto e pubblicato sempre sui *Friedenspräliminarien*, con il titolo differente e significativo *Schweizersinn* (Charrière 1794a).

14. Vercruysse 1985: 983-985.

15. Beiser 1992: 335-362 (in particolare, 335-336).

16. Kleingeld 1999.

17. Anonymus 1782-1783.

18. Wieland 1783: 234-235. Sulla replica di Wieland allo scritto anonimo *Neugierden eines Weltbürgers* – che molto probabilmente è attribuibile a un membro dell'Ordine degli Illuminati – si veda Albrecht 2005: 82-94.

19. Anonymus b 1783: 245-274.

knappe der Erdsöhne)".[20] Lo scritto è anonimo e di incerta attribuzione,[21] ma è coerente con la condanna illuministica dell'alchimia come pseudo-scienza[22] che, in Wieland, appare strettamente intrecciata alla condanna dello "pseudo-cosmopolitismo" politicamente sovversivo delle logge massoniche e di tutte le società segrete[23] – sia quelle in cui erano ancora diffuse le teorie alchimiste sia quelle che, come gli Illuminati bavaresi, avevano aderito al materialismo ateo. È alla luce di queste considerazioni che va letta la sezione dello *Innigungsartikel* riguardante il conseguimento del titolo di "maestro" fabbricante di oro, che stabilisce come unico requisito il raggiungimento del livello di formazione corrispondente, specificando che non occorre la "nazionalizzazione" o la "cittadinanza" richiesta dalle altre corporazioni, in quanto i maestri *Goldmacher* hanno "solo il diritto cosmopolitico (*Weltbürgerrecht*)" e "sono dunque veri cosmopoliti": affermazione ridicolizzata nei passaggi immediatamente successivi, dove si legge che per la verifica del livello di formazione raggiunto è sufficiente il superamento di un esame "sulla vera polvere astrale, sul latte dolce nel sentiero bagnato e sulle gocce di sole".[24] Al di là del tono satirico, è degno di attenzione il fatto che in questo contesto il lemma *Weltbürgerrecht* – contrapposto ai "diritti di cittadinanza" e alla "nazionalizzazione" – è utilizzato in un'accezione specificamente politica, che ha come bersaglio polemico generale il carattere trans-nazionale delle società segrete, con un particolare riferimento alle "peregrinazioni" dei "maestri erranti" in paesi stranieri, oggetto di una satira sferzante, cui è dedicato un intero paragrafo.[25]

Infine, merita di essere menzionata anche l'occorrenza del termine *Weltbürgerrecht* contenuta nello scritto del 1782 *Diätetische Pastoral Arzney Kunde für Seelsorger* (*Dietetica, Pastorale, Farmacologia per pastori delle anime)* del medico bavarese Johann Nepomuk Anton von Leuthner.[26] Si tratta del secondo volume di un'opera in cui Leuthner – partendo dal presupposto di un "rapporto reciproco" tra la cura della salute fi-

20. *Der Teutsche Merkur,* 1783/1: 191.

21. Alcuni ipotizzano che l'autore sia Johann Christian Wiegleb (Langensalza, 1732-1800) - "uno dei padri fondatori della chimica e farmacia moderne" (Gruber 2012) ed aspro critico dell'alchimia – perché Wieland annuncia la pubblicazione dello *Innigungsartikel der Goldmacherei* proprio alla fine di un articolo firmato da Wiegleb, che è però di argomento scientifico e presenta un tono e uno stile molto diversi (Wiegleb 1783).

22. Federhofer 2008: 105-108.

23. Wieland 1788. Su quest'articolo – interpretato come reazione di Wieland all'equazione tra cosmopolita e ribelle proposta da Göchhausen - si veda Albrecht 2005: 97-105.

24. Anonymus b 1783: 252.

25. *Ibid.*: 255-257.

26. Dopo avere terminato gli studi universitari a Ingolstadt, Johann Nepomuk Anton von Leuthner (Westerheim, 1722-1798) lavora come medico praticante a Monaco, dove è anche medico personale del principe elettore di Baviera Massimilano III e membro del Consiglio medico reale (cf. Baader 1825: 164-165). È uno dei medici che interviene nell'accesa controversia sulla figura del sacerdote Johann Joseph Gassner (1727-1779), schierandosi dalla parte dei non pochi medici *believers*, che credono nell'efficacia terapeutica dei riti esorcistici praticati da Gassner (cf. Midelfort 2005: 43-44).

sica e la cura dell'anima[27] – si propone di illustrare i principi e le più recenti acquisizioni della scienza medica che possono risultare utili ai membri del clero, ai fini dell'esercizio della propria funzione pastorale. L'espressione *Weltbürgerrecht* si trova nel capitolo che Leuthner dedica al tè, nell'ambito della propria rassegna degli alimenti e delle bevande favorevoli e nocive per i pastori delle anime: nel prendere in considerazione gli effetti del tè Leuthner antepone alle prescrizioni mediche una serie di osservazioni generali sulla "furia devastatrice" delle guerre commerciali e del "rivolgimento politico" che il "bollitore di tè sprigiona quasi sull'intero globo", deplorando il fatto che non un "vero bisogno", ma solo la "dipendenza da una moda nociva allo Stato" e un "lusso insaziabile" – non pago "dei prodotti locali" – abbiano "regalato" al consumo del tè "un diritto cosmopolitico".[28] Si tratta di passaggi significativi, in cui Leuthner sembra utilizzare l'espressione *Weltbürgerrecht* per riferirsi, in modo critico, alla rivendicazione di un diritto al consumo del tè come diritto spettante a tutti gli uomini – avendo probabilmente in mente le notizie d'oltreoceano sul Tea Act e sul Tea Boston Party, due momenti cruciali della tensione tra la madrepatria britannica e le colonie sfociata nella guerra d'indipendenza americana.[29] Nella condanna e preoccupazione che Leuthner esprime – relativamente alle nefaste e destabilizzanti implicazioni del consumo del tè sull'ordine politico mondiale – è infatti difficile non cogliere una eco delle notizie degli avvenimenti d'oltreoceano. Sarebbe tuttavia una forzatura stabilire una connessione tra il diritto cosmopolitico al tè – rigettato da Leuthner – e il diritto inalienabile di tutti gli uomini alla vita, alla libertà e alla felicità, enunciato nel celebre preambolo della Dichiarazione d'indipendenza americana, il cui significato generale di affermazione di principi universali non è immediatamente afferrato da larga parte del pubblico colto germanofono.[30] Piuttosto, è più probabile che, rigettando il presunto *Weltbürgerrecht* attribuito all'uso del tè, Leuthner intenda semplicemente esprimere una presa di posizione di ispirazione mercantilista contro il principio della libera circolazione delle merci e contro l'affermazione della libertà di commercio come diritto perfetto, la cui violazione giustificherebbe il ricorso alle armi o la rivoluzione, secondo la linea di pensiero del diritto naturale moderno inaugurata da de Victoria e attribuita anche a Grozio.[31]

27. Leuthner 1781, *Vorrede,* XXII.

28. Leuthner 1782: 68.

29. Proprio a partire dall'approvazione del Tea Act da parte del Parlamento britannico – nel maggio del 1773 – l'America si impone gradualmente come "l'argomento più importante nei quotidiani politici" dell'area germanofona (Dippel 1977: 22).

30. Dippel 1977: 92.

31. De Victoria e Grozio sono accostati da molti studiosi (cf. per esempio Cavallar 2002, Chetail 2016), anche se in realtà nel *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* Grozio ammette come legittime diverse limitazioni della libertà di commercio. La ricostruzione più accurata ed esaustiva della concezione groziana dei diritti degli stranieri si trova in Tießler-Marenda 2002.

2. *WELTBÜRGERRECHT* E *JUS HOSPITALITATIS* NELLA *SCIENCE DU DOUVERNEMENT* DI DE RÉAL

In modo non sorprendente, l'unica occorrenza del lemma *Weltbürgerrecht* con un certo spessore teorico – prima della pubblicazione dello scritto kantiano *Per la pace perpetua* – si trova proprio in un trattato di diritto naturale o, più precisamente, nella traduzione tedesca di un trattato di diritto naturale uscito in francese: il terzo volume de *La Science du Governement* – del giurista francese Gaspard de Réal de Curban (1682-1752)[32] – composta da otto volumi pubblicati quasi tutti postumi, tra il 1761 ed il 1765.[33] L'opera fu accolta freddamente nella Francia dei Lumi, probabilmente perché – pur condividendo con il programma illuministico l'istanza di costruire con la "ragione" una "scienza" della massima "utilità", avente per oggetto la "felicità pubblica" – è un'"opera conservatrice",[34] per la sua ispirazione religiosa e per l'apologia della monarchia assoluta e dell'ordine sociale dell'Ancien Regime. All'epoca la *Science du Gouvernement* ebbe tuttavia una certa eco al di fuori dei confini francesi, come è attestato dalla traduzione tedesca di Schulin – uscita a ridosso dell'edizione francese – e da quella spagnola, pubblicata pochi anni dopo.

Nel volume dedicato al diritto naturale, de Réal illustra i doveri degli uomini verso Dio, verso se stessi e verso il prossimo derivanti unicamente dal principio generale dell'"impero della ragione", indipendentemente dalla consuetudine e dai patti. De Réal sviluppa la propria trattazione del diritto naturale riprendendo le principali tesi del *De jure naturae et gentium* di Pufendorf: l'assunto che Dio costituisca l'autorità super-umana superiore indispensabile per conferire alle massime della ragione "forza di legge";[35] la tesi che l'amore di sé, pur essendo il movente principale dei sentimenti e delle azioni umane, sia necessariamente collegato alla socievolezza e all'amore degli altri uomini;[36] la concezione dell'uguaglianza naturale degli uomini come "*uguaglianza di diritto* (*aequalitatem juris*)",[37] ossia come "grandezza originaria" – persistente anche dopo le necessarie differenziazioni introdotte dalle società civili – in virtù della quale abbiamo verso tutti gli altri esseri umani gli "stessi doveri di diritto naturale che essi sono obbligati a praticare nei nostri confronti".[38]

L'espressione *Welbürgerrecht* compare nella versione tedesca del quinto ed ultimo capitolo,[39] in cui de Réal prende in considerazione l'"ordine e la subordinazione" delle

32. De Réal de Curban 1761; tra. ted. 1764.

33. De Réal de Curban 1761-1765.

34. Mestre 1983: 102. L'opera ha ricevuto sinora scarsa attenzione. Considerazioni interessanti – relative soprattutto al quinto volume, dedicato al diritto delle genti – sono contenute in Mattéi 2006 e Dhondt 2015.

35. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. II, Section II, §9, 115; trad. ted., 133.

36. Cf. Pufendorf 1998 : L. II, C. III, §19-20, 153-157; de Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section IV, §32, 276; trad. ted., 320.

37. Pufendorf 1998: L. III, C. II, §2, 227. Sulla concezione pufendorfiana dell'uguaglianza tra gli uomini – che sottende il dovere assoluto degli uomini di trattarsi e stimarsi reciprocamente come uguali – si rinvia a Fiorillo 2013.

38. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section IV, §28, 272-273; trad. ted., 316.

39. Ivi: Chap. V, 341-388; trad. ted. 1764: 395-425.

diverse tipologie di doveri, soffermandosi sulla gerarchia dei doveri "particolari" correlati ai diversi tipi di legami parziali che uniscono gli esseri umani, in modo più o meno forte, in base alla maggiore o minore prossimità.[40] Si tratta di una questione classica, che de Réal affronta rielaborando due argomenti di matrice ciceroniana:[41] da un lato, l'assunto secondo cui i "nostri doveri seguono l'ordine dei nostri legami", la cui intensità affettiva è inversamente proporzionale all'estensione e direttamente proporzionale alla vicinanza;[42] dall'altro lato, l'affermazione del primato normativo dell'"amor patrio", che "comprende tutte le nostre affezioni", in quanto nella "felicità della nazione" è racchiusa la felicità nostra, dei nostri parenti e di tutte le persone care.[43] In questo contesto argomentativo, de Réal afferma che le "semplici relazioni tra concittadini" – pur essendo le "più deboli" all'interno del corpo politico, dal punto di vista dell'intensità affettiva – sono comunque più forti rispetto alle relazioni derivanti da quell'elemento che il traduttore tedesco Johann Philipp Schulin designa come il "*Weltbürgerrecht* comune a tutti gli uomini sulla terra".[44]

La traduzione di Schulin non è un calco. Nei passaggi relativi dell'originale francese, infatti, non si trova l'espressione *droit cosmopolitique*: Schulin usa l'espressione *Weltbürgerrecht* per rendere quella che de Réal definisce semplicemente come "la qualità di abitante del mondo (*la qualité d'habitans du monde*)", "comune a tutti gli uomini della terra". Si tratta di comprendere dunque qual è la ragione alla radice della scelta di traduzione di Schulin. Con molta probabilità, alla base di tale scelta vi è l'immagine metaforica che de Réal utilizza all'inizio della trattazione dei "doveri comuni di umanità", correlati all'amore e all'"interesse" che gli uomini hanno e devono avere per tutti i loro simili: l'immagine della "Terra" come "una grande repubblica", i cui abitanti – ossia tutti gli esseri umani – sono da considerare "come cittadini di una stessa città".[45] La metafora ha notoriamente una matrice stoica, che de Réal riconosce in modo esplicito, citando lunghi passi dalle opere di Marco Aurelio e Seneca.[46] L'elemento che merita di essere segnalato è la sfumatura nuova che l'immagine stoica assume nella *Science du gouvernement*, in virtù del fatto che a essere messo in primo piano non è il cosmo, ma piuttosto il pianeta terrestre, in quanto spazio obbligato di co-abitazione, la cui condivisione concorre a fondare i doveri che abbiamo nei confronti di tutti gli esseri umani – insieme al motivo teologico della discendenza da un unico padre comune. Questa funzione centrale attribuita alla superficie terrestre – che riflette la sensibilità maturata

40. Ivi: Chap. V, Section I, §2, 342; trad. ted., 396.

41. Cf. Scuccimarra 2006: 66-67; Nussbaum 2020: ed. digitale, 138-149.

42. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. V, Section I, §3, 343; trad. ted., 397.

43. Ivi: Section I, §8, 364; trad. ted., 420-421.

44. Ivi: Chap. V, Section I, §3, 344; trad. tedesca 1764: 398.

45. Ivi: Chap. V, Section IV, §34, 288; trad. tedesca, 334 (n.b.: il traduttore tedesco paragona la terra non a una "grande repubblica", bensì a una "piccola repubblica").

46. Cf. in particolare de Réal de Curban 1764: 2: "I filosofi pagani, che hanno riconosciuto i vantaggi di questa società delle nazioni, ne hanno voluto rinserrare i legami. Nelle loro opere si trova questo principio: che il mondo intero non è che una sola repubblica e che ogni popolo non è che una grande famiglia in questa patria comune […]".

nel corso del sedicesimo e diciassettesimo secolo, in parallelo con le esplorazioni geografiche e la nascita dell'"economia-mondo" – emerge in modo ancora più evidente nei passaggi introduttivi del quinto capitolo, in cui de Réal presenta la trattazione dei doveri nei confronti del prossimo come il frutto della riflessione sull'uomo, in quanto "essere che costituisce una porzione del genere umano, un essere posto sulla terra, affianco ad altri esseri simili a lui con i quali è portato e obbligato, per la sua condizione naturale, a entrare in società".[47] In modo significativo, nei passaggi corrispondenti della traduzione tedesca Schulin si riferisce all'uomo come essere che "è stato posto sul globo terrestre (*auf die Erdkugel gesetzt worden ist*)" insieme ai suoi simili, attribuendo in questo modo un particolare rilievo – assente nell'originale francese – a un fattore che notoriamente svolge un ruolo fondamentale anche nella trattazione kantiana del diritto cosmopolitico: la "superficie sferica" del pianeta terrestre su cui la natura ha collocato gli uomini, sfericità che Kant presenta come l'elemento in virtù del quale la "comunità (*Gemeinschaft*)" e l'interazione reciproca costituiscono una "necessaria conseguenza" dell'"esistenza" degli esseri umani sulla terra.[48]

L'innovazione terminologica compiuta da Schulin è situata dunque in un contesto semantico che riflette la presenza diffusa, soprattutto in ambiente germanofono, di un'idea che alcuni interpreti considerano alla base dell'innovazione concettuale kantiana: l'idea che "l'interdipendenza tra gli uomini sia costituita dalla semplice condivisione del globo terrestre".[49] Schulin usa il termine *Weltbürgerrecht* per esprimere – come farà anche Kant – le implicazioni normative di tale idea, che riguardano anche i movimenti attraverso i confini, ai quali nel terzo tomo della *Science du gouvernement* è dedicata un'intera sezione, intitolata *Droit d'hospitalité* (*Vom Rechte der Gastfreiheit*). L'esame della materia e della forma di tali implicazioni normative nel diritto di natura di de Réal mostra però come il traduttore tedesco Schulin usi un termine nuovo, per designare un concetto che non è affatto nuovo: come si è accennato, infatti, i doveri corrispondenti al vincolo tradotto da Schulin con il termine *Weltbürgerrecht* non sono altro che i "doveri comuni di umanità", che de Réal concepisce – nel solco di Pufendorf – attribuendo ad essi uno statuto normativo debole.

Com'è noto, infatti, nel *De jure naturae et gentium* Pufendorf utilizza la formula *officia humanitatis* – all'interno della trattazione dei doveri assoluti di socialità imposti dalla legge naturale fondamentale – per designare i doveri positivi, imperfetti e non coercibili di carità o benevolenza (comprendenti anche i doveri di ospitalità), che egli distingue dai doveri negativi e perfetti di non arrecare danno e di non violare la stima uguale dovuta agli altri esseri umani.[50] Pur utilizzando l'espressione "doveri comuni di

47. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. V, Section I, §1, 341; trad. tedesca, 395.

48. *RL,* AA VI, 13, 262.

49. Huber 2022.

50. Pufendorf 1998: L. III, Cap. III, §1, 235. Nell'ambito dei doveri comuni di umanità, Pufendorf distingue poi due modi di promuovere il bene altrui: da un lato, "in modo indefinito" (*ibidem*), ossia coltivando il proprio talento a favore di tutto il genere umano; dall'altro, in modo "definito", attraverso i doveri che egli definisce "di comune umanità" (*munia humanitatis vulgaris)*, intendendo l'aiuto che si presta a una persona determinata, in virtù della mera

umanità" in senso più lato e vago,[51] de Réal senz'altro conosce e riprende la distinzione pufendorfiana tra il carattere perfetto dell'obbligazione – che caratterizza il dovere negativo del *neminem laedere* – ed il carattere imperfetto dell'obbligazione che contraddistingue i doveri positivi di benevolenza. Ciò emerge in modo chiaro dalle riflessioni sulla definizione del "danno": dopo avere affermato che quest'ultimo consiste unicamente nel "sottrarre a un uomo qualcosa di ciò che è suo e gli appartiene, per natura, per qualche atto umano o per legge"[52] – che si tratti di un bene materiale o immateriale, come la stima uguale o la reputazione – de Réal precisa infatti che il danno può essere reclamato solo da chi ha il "diritto reale alla cosa danneggiata" e non la semplice "capacità di possedere e avere",[53] riprendendo il medesimo argomento utilizzato da Pufendorf, proprio per dimostrare che non può essere considerato un torto da riparare il mancato adempimento di un'obbligazione imperfetta come quella dei doveri di carità, riguardante prestazioni che devono procedere dallo spontaneo impulso virtuoso di chi le compie.[54]

Chiaramente ispirata a Pufendorf è anche la trattazione che de Réal dedica al diritto e dovere naturale d'ospitalità, con l'intento di giustificare la forma nuova e più circoscritta che essi hanno assunto nelle condizioni politiche ed economiche dell'Europa moderna, in cui le nazioni "civilizzate" hanno costruito un ordine Stato-centrico e la presenza di locande a pagamento – in cui ciascuno "può alloggiare in cambio del proprio denaro" – ha eliminato i bisogni che avevano indotto gli antichi a stabilire, con patti e convenzioni, il dovere di dare vitto e alloggio ai forestieri.[55] Come Pufendorf, de Réal persegue questo obiettivo esponendo e correggendo le tesi di Grozio.[56] Com'è

"natura comune" di essere umani – quando ciò è possibile senza sforzi o perdite, ossia secondo il principio ciceroniano del "*sine detrimento*" (ivi: L. III, Cap. III, §3, 236-237). In particolare, Pufendorf definisce quest'ultima tipologia di doveri con l'espressione "doveri di comune umanità" (*munia humanitatis vulgaris)*, sia perché sarebbe disumano non adempierli – dato che non comportano alcuno sforzo – sia per differenziarli dai doveri di beneficienza vera e propria, che si fondano sulla liberalità, perché richiedono sacrificio. De Réal conosce e riprende questa distinzione (de Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section IV, §39, 298; trad. ted., 345).

51. In molti passaggi de Réal dà l'impressione di utilizzare l'espressione "doveri comuni di umanità" per designare in modo indistinto tutti i doveri di socialità che hanno un raggio universale di validità e di applicazione, in quanto derivano dalla legge di natura, che impone agli uomini il dovere di amarsi reciprocamente, per la sola ragione che sono esseri umani.

52. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section IV, §41, 300; trad. ted., 347.

53. *Ibid*.

54. Pufendorf 1998: L. III, Cap. I, §3, 217. In questo contesto Pufendorf sostiene infatti che non è legittimo sentirsi danneggiati quando non si riceve qualcosa che ci si può attendere solo "sotto la forma di libero dono o beneficio", proprio perché non possiamo includere tra le cose in nostro possesso quelle che abbiamo solo "la capacità di possedere" o che siamo "atti a possedere" ("*inconveniens fuerit* […] *pensationem eorum postulare, quae ab altero non nisi per modum beneficii ultronei poteram expectare. Ac uti illa, ad quae habenda idonea tantus suum, inter mea numerare nequeo; sic & illis interversiis super danno accepto queri non licet*").

55. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section V, §46, 312; trad. ted., 362. Questo argomento è formulato già da Pufendorf (cf. Pufendorf 1998: Libro III, cap. III, §9, 246).

56. Pufendorf 1998: L. III, Cap. III, §5-10, 240-249. Sulla svolta inaugurata da Pufendorf – con l'affermazione del primato della sovranità statale e la riduzione del dovere di ospitalità

noto, nel *De jure belli ac pacis* – sulla base dello *jus necessitatis* e del principio della *utilitas innoxia* – Grozio aveva presentato come residuo necessario della comunanza primitiva dei beni il diritto di natura "perfetto" (e dunque coercibile) di attraversare il territorio di qualsiasi Stato, per tutti gli stranieri inoffensivi che ne avessero una "giusta occasione": l'espulsione dalla propria patria, il commercio con popoli distanti e le esigenze di difesa militare.[57] De Réal riconsidera queste tre tipologie di movimenti transfrontalieri, per rigettare in modo deciso l'esistenza di un "diritto di entrare" e "tanto meno di restare" nel territorio di uno Stato straniero "contro i suoi interessi o semplicemente contro la sua volontà" – presentando come una prerogativa assoluta della sovranità statuale il diritto di giudicare e decidere relativamente all'ingresso, al soggiorno e all'eventuale naturalizzazione di forestieri.[58] Alla base di questa presa di posizione vi sono due mosse teoriche. La prima è il rifiuto del nesso che Grozio aveva stabilito tra possesso originario della terra e diritti di ospitalità: sulla scia di Pufendorf, de Réal fonda infatti i diritti e doveri naturali di ospitalità esclusivamente sulla benevolenza insita nella socievolezza della natura umana,[59] negando espressamente che, in relazione ai beni suscettibili di diventare proprietà privata, sussista un residuo della comunanza primitiva giustificato dal principio della *utilitas innoxia* o dal bisogno ordinario.[60] La seconda mossa teorica è l'affermazione di un parallelismo pieno tra il diritto del "proprietario" di negare agli altri "l'uso del suo bene" – che è "implicazione necessaria del diritto di proprietà" – e il "diritto di aprire e chiudere" l'accesso a un territorio, che è "conseguenza infallibile del dominio" su di esso. Partendo da questo parallelismo e dall'assunto che la reclamazione di un danno presupponga la proprietà reale, de Réal può concludere che lo Stato sovrano che rifiuta l'accesso nel proprio territorio a stranieri in condizioni di "bisogno" – anche qualora questi siano inoffensivi e sussista la condizione ciceroniana del "*sine detrimento*" – non commette un "torto propriamente detto", la cui riparazione possa giustificare l'uso della forza.[61]

Pur non utilizzando in modo esplicito e rigoroso la terminologia di Pufendorf, de Réal condivide dunque la riduzione pufendorfiana dei doveri d'ospitalità a doveri

a dovere imperfetto di umanità – si rinvia a: Cavallar 2002: 201-208; Chetail 2016. Sulla distinzione tra cittadini e stranieri in Pufendorf, si veda anche Ramelet 2024.

57. Grozio, II.XIII.1. In realtà, Grozio differenzia lo statuto normativo dei diritti di soggiorno e permanenza a seconda delle cause alla base dell'emigrazione (cf. Tießler-Marenda 2002)

58. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section V, §49, 318; trad. ted. p. 369.

59. Ivi: Chap. IV, Section V, §45, 312; trad. ted., 361.

60. Ivi: Chap. IV, Section V, §49, 319; trad. ted., 369. De Réal riconosce invece – come farà in seguito Vattel – uno statuto normativo più forte ai doveri dello Stato nei confronti degli stranieri mossi dalla "necessità, sempre superiore alle regole comuni" (*ibid.*). Anche il peso che de Réal riconosce allo jus nececessitatis nella trattazione del diritto di ospitalità risulta però ridimensionato, se si tiene conto del fatto che – nell'impianto teorico della *Science du Gouvernement* – la necessità non giustifica un diritto di natura "perfetto" a usare i beni altrui, bensì solo un "diritto imperfetto fondato sulla legge dell'umanità, che obbliga ad assistere coloro che sono nell'estrema necessità, quando non siamo noi stessi nel bisogno" (de Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. V, Section II, §26, 376-377).

61. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section V, §49, 319; trad. ted., 369.

imperfetti, richiesti esclusivamente dal sentimento di “umanità”, ossia l’amore che siamo tenuti a nutrire per i nostri simili, in virtù del loro semplice essere umani; doveri ai quali corrisponde un altrettanto imperfetto “diritto” dello straniero “alla compassione da parte dello Stato”.[62] Questo indebolimento dello statuto normativo del diritto e dovere di ospitalità risulta poi ancora più radicale, se si considera il ridimensionamento generale che il diritto di natura riceve nell’impianto complessivo della *Science du Gouvernement:* per de Réal, infatti, dopo il peccato originale[63] la legge naturale da sola – ossia in assenza di un’autorità costituita – non è sufficiente a governare né “una famiglia, né una città e un popolo particolare, né tanto meno la società generale delle nazioni”.[64]

Questo presupposto – che alcuni interpreti non hanno esitato a definire “positivistico” – è una delle ragioni che induce de Réal a rigettare la sussunzione pufendorfiana del diritto delle genti nel diritto di natura.[65] Esso permette inoltre di comprendere per quale ragione già nell’incipit del paragrafo dedicato ai “doveri comuni di umanità” de Réal parta dalla metafora della terra come repubblica universale e dall’affermazione dell’uguaglianza di tutti gli uomini, per concludere che “dobbiamo tutti adempiere i doveri particolari dello Stato in cui la provvidenza ci ha collocato”:[66] poiché dopo il peccato originale la legge naturale, presa di per sé, è insufficiente, l’adempimento dei doveri comuni di umanità imposti da essa è possibile per de Réal solo nell’ambito di un particolare corpo politico, attraverso il rispetto delle sue leggi positive e dei doveri particolari che spettano in esso a ciascuno, in base al proprio rango sociale. In questa cornice, le implicazioni normative della co-abitazione del globo terrestre – che Schulin traduce usando l’espressione *Weltbürgerrecht* – si riducono paradossalmente ad un obbligo circoscritto: l’obbligo di adempiere i doveri di mutuo soccorso nei confronti dei propri concittadini e, soprattutto, di rispettare l’autorità sovrana del luogo in cui si è nati, cui per de Réal spetta piena discrezione anche relativamente alla libertà di “trans-migrazione” dei membri del corpo politico.[67]

Da un lato, de Réal riconosce che gli uomini hanno una “libertà naturale […] di poter scegliere, su questa terra che è stata loro data in abitazione tutta intera, la porzione su cui vogliono stabilirsi”: la legge di natura non comanda a nessun uomo di “restare inchiodato a un angolo del mondo” e permette dunque a tutti di spostarsi.[68] Sempre sulla scia di Pufendorf, de Réal aggiunge inoltre che in assenza di leggi civili o di costumi relativi alla libertà di trasmigrazione, si può presumere che – poiché ogni uomo entra

62. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section V, §49, 318; trad. ted. 369.

63. Sviluppando un motivo tradizionale dell’agostinismo politico, de Réal riconduce i al peccato originale la corruzione irreversibile della natura degli uomini - originariamente “fatti per amarsi in modo uguale” (de Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. V, Section I, §1, 341-342; trad. tedesca, 396) – da cui è scaturito non solo un “ordine della carità” (secondo la maggiore o minore prossimità), ma anche la necessità dei rapporti di subordinazione.

64. De Réal de Curban 1764: 6-7.

65. *Ibid.*

66. De Réal de Curban 1761: Chap. IV, Section IV, §34, 288; trad. tedesca 1764: 334.

67. De Réal de Curban 1765: Chap. VII, Section I, §8-11, 538-549.

68. Ivi: Chap. VII, Section I, §11, 547-548.

nella società civile in vista del proprio vantaggio personale – nessuna "persona libera" aderisca a una comunità politica assoggettandosi all'obbligo di "restare per sempre" in essa, senza riservarsi "tacitamente il permesso di uscirne e di considerarsi cittadino del mondo".[69] Dall'altro, de Réal precisa che la libertà di emigrazione non è un'attività prescritta dalla legge di natura, ma solo un'attività permessa da quest'ultima: in quanto tale, essa può essere limitata dalle leggi civili, che sono sempre legittime, a meno che non prescrivano ciò che è vietato dalle leggi di natura o vietino ciò che è comandato da queste. Sulla base di questo presupposto, de Réal sostiene la legittimità della restrizione della libertà di movimento attraverso le leggi civili, contrapponendo in modo esplicito all'idea del globo terraqueo come spazio aperto di necessaria interazione tra tutti gli uomini l'immagine di una superficie terrestre interamente suddivisa in Stati sovrani e dunque ricoperta da "barriere" che non possono essere attraversate, senza il controllo ed il permesso dell'autorità sovrana:

> Per diritto naturale l'uomo ha certo la libertà indefinita di andare ovunque gli piaccia, la terra sembra essergli aperta affinché possa scegliere un'abitazione di suo gradimento; ma per il diritto civile di ogni popolo e dopo la fondazione delle città e degli imperi, questa terra si è chiusa davanti a lui; queste città, questi imperi, queste repubbliche che ne coprono la superficie sono altrettante barriere elevate per fermarlo e la sua libertà è ristretta e circoscritta a certe regioni, certe contrade, se il suo paese ha emanato una legge contro la trasmigrazione. In una parola, l'uomo nasce assoggettato a una legge che gli prescrive dei limiti che gli è vietato trasgredire; e questo divieto ha il suo germe, il suo principio di giustizia negli obblighi naturali e reciproci che contrae attraverso la sua nascita. […] Ciascuno ha il suo posto nella società dove la sorte lo pone. Io ho il mio, che devo conservare; se lo abbandono, se rompo i legami che mi attaccano ad esso, decado da tutti i diritti che mi dà la mia nascita.[70]

In conclusione, non pare esagerato affermare che la prima occorrenza del lemma *Weltbürgerrecht* dotata di un certo spessore teorico si trova, in modo paradossale, nella traduzione tedesca di uno scritto che riprende figure e motivi tradizionali del cosmopolitismo morale stoico, calandoli in una prospettiva che, nonostante il tentativo di "mantenere una posizione compromissoria con i presupposti più elementari del giusnaturalismo",[71] appare orientata verso un giuspositivismo interstatale, in cui lo *jus hospitalitatis* è completamente subordinato alla sovranità dello Stato.

3. L'innovazione concettuale kantiana

Kant non era al corrente di nessuna delle occorrenze del lemma *Weltbürgerrecht* che si sono esaminate, quando decide di utilizzarlo nello scritto *Per la pace perpetua*. L'analisi svolta permette però di determinare meglio la portata e i contorni dell'innovazione concettuale kantiana.

69. Ivi: Chap. VII, Section I, §11, 548.

70. De Réal de Curban 1765: Chap. VII, Section I. §11, 547.

71. Mori 2008: 136. Si tratta di una formula che Mori utilizza in riferimento ad altri autori – come Vattel – ma che può essere applicata anche a de Réal.

Innanzitutto, nei passaggi dello scritto *Per la pace perpetua* in cui Kant introduce il diritto cosmopolitico – affermando che esso riguarda "esseri umani e Stati" in relazione reciproca, nella misura in cui "sono da considerare come cittadini di un universale Stato degli uomini"[72] – è riconoscibile una chiara eco della metafora stoica della Terra come repubblica universale: metafora largamente diffusa a cavallo tra diciassettesimo e diciottesimo secolo – soprattutto nei trattati di diritto naturale moderno, come è attestato dalla *Science du Gouvernement* di de Réal, dove peraltro l'immagine comprende anche un rinvio alla superficie sferica della terra, in quanto spazio obbligato di co-abitazione. Riconoscere la presenza di questo motivo classico del cosmopolitismo morale stoico – recepito attraverso il filtro del diritto naturale moderno – è importante, perché permette di spiegare il riferimento kantiano a uno Stato universale, dissociandolo dall'interpretazione del diritto cosmopolitico kantiano come diritto costituzionale di una repubblica mondiale: ipotesi interpretativa che risulta difficilmente sostenibile, se si considera che Kant introduce la sfera del diritto cosmopolitico proprio nel momento in cui sostituisce l'opzione della *Weltrepublik* con quella della "lega dei popoli",[73] per ragioni che non sono solo pragmatiche, ma anche di natura teorica e sistematica.[74] Al tempo stesso, la continuità con la tradizione del cosmopolitismo morale stoico non va sopravvalutata, come pure ha fatto qualche interprete.[75] Kant utilizza infatti l'espressione *Weltbürgerrecht* non per riferirsi in modo generico alle relazioni e ai vincoli normativi che legano gli abitanti della terra in virtù di un diritto o di una legge di natura fondati nella socievolezza degli esseri umani o sulla volontà divina: egli usa piuttosto il lemma *Weltbürgerrecht* per designare una sfera specifica del diritto pubblico, la cui istituzione è richiesta in modo incondizionato dalla ragion pura pratica, che a tutti i livelli di "inevitabile coesistenza" e di possibile influenza fisica tra persone morali prescrive di passare dalla conflittualità costitutiva dello stato di natura – in quanto "stato di libertà non regolato da nessuna legge esterna" –[76] a uno stato giuridico fondato sul principio del diritto, ossia sul principio della uguale limitazione della libertà esterna per mezzo di leggi universali.[77]

Così concepito – come è stato notato da diversi interpreti – il diritto cosmopolitico kantiano non rappresenta il riconoscimento "rivoluzionario" della soggettività giuridico-internazionale degli individui, in quanto titolari di diritti umani a prescindere dalla loro appartenenza a uno Stato:[78] tale riconoscimento è anteriore al diritto cosmo-

72. *ZeF*, AA VIII, 349.

73. Cf. in proposito Reinhardt 2022: 110-112, 192-194.

74. Cf. Kleingeld 2006, Flikschuh 2010. Sul dibattito interpretativo sull'oscillazione kantiana tra *Weltrepublik* and *Völkerbund*, cf. Mori 2008: 106-107; Caranti 2022: 42-60.

75. È quanto avviene in Nussbaum 1997, che esagera la contiguità tra la tradizione cosmopolitica di matrice ciceroniana ed il cosmopolitismo kantiano.

76. *RL,* AA VI, 42, 307. Cf. anche *ZeF,* AA VIII, 349.

77. *RL,* AA VI, 43, 311.

78. Un'espressione paradigmatica di questo orientamento interpretativo si trova in Habermas 1998: 177.

politico kantiano;[79] dal suo canto quest'ultimo – in quanto fondato sul "concetto di diritto", che è un concetto intrinsecamente relazionale – non comprende tra i suoi destinatari solo gli individui, ma persone morali di diverso tipo, come gli Stati e i popoli o gruppi non-statali. Il diritto cosmopolitico kantiano costituisce tuttavia una presa di posizione innovativa e "disarmonica" nel dibattito moderno sulla dottrina della guerra giusta e sullo *jus hospitalitatis:* presa di posizione i cui tratti distintivi possono essere messi a fuoco in modo nitido, sullo sfondo del quadro delineato. L'esame della trattazione dello *jus hospitalitatis* contenuta nel terzo tomo della *Science du Gouvernement* di De Réal offre infatti un punto di vista privilegiato, per misurare la riconfigurazione del perimetro di quest'ultimo che Kant compie, nel terzo articolo definitivo dello scritto *Per la pace perpetua*.

Come si è visto, sulla scia di Pufendorf, de Réal esclude che in epoca moderna il diritto d'ospitalità comprenda il dovere di offrire alloggio e nutrimento ai forestieri, limitando la validità normativa di tale obbligo all'epoca antica: Kant non è dunque il primo ad escludere dal diritto di ospitalità doveri positivi di aiuto ed assistenza. Nella propria trattazione del diritto di ospitalità, de Réal continua tuttavia a includere – sia pure per indebolirne lo statuto normativo – i diritti trattati da Grozio nel secondo libro del *De jure belli ac pacis,* ossia il dovere di garantire accesso, transito e soggiorno (temporaneo o permanente) a individui, gruppi e popoli mossi da ragioni legittime, che sono identificate nei traffici commerciali, nelle esigenze di auto-difesa militare e nell'espulsione forzata dal proprio territorio. Rispetto a questo quadro, il diritto cosmopolitico kantiano esprime una deliberata ed esplicita universalizzazione – che è al tempo stesso una riduzione e semplificazione – in quanto enuncia le "condizioni dell'*ospitalità* universale",[80] affermando un diritto-dovere che è valido per tutti gli individui e popoli stranieri e nei confronti di ciascuno di essi, a prescindere dalle ragioni dello spostamento: il diritto-dovere dello straniero di non essere trattato e di non trattare in modo ostile, al proprio arrivo sul suolo di un altro.

Da un lato, questa definizione negativa – unita alla precisazione che il diritto di ospitalità equivale a un mero "diritto di visita" – esprime l'evidente intento di prendere le distanze dalla concezione amplia del diritto di ospitalità che, da de Victoria e Grozio, aveva funto da base per legittimare non solo le guerre di conquista e lo sfruttamento coloniale degli Europei nei confronti delle popolazioni indigene del Nuovo continente e delle Indie orientali, ma anche le guerre intra-europee per l'egemonia commerciale. Si tratta di un punto su cui non occorre insistere, perché è stato riconosciuto e messo in primo piano dalla maggior parte degli interpreti.[81]

Dall'altro, il confronto con la trattazione del diritto d'ospitalità offerta da de Réal lascia emergere in modo chiaro la cesura deliberata che la nozione kantiana di diritto cosmopolitico rappresenta anche rispetto alla tradizione di pensiero che, da Pufendorf

79. Su questo punto insiste in particolare Meckstroth 2018.
80. *ZeF,* AA VIII, 357.
81. Cf. Meckstroth 2018: 538; Reinhardt 2022: 130-133.

a Vattel, aveva ridotto i doveri implicati dallo *jus hospitalitatis* al dovere imperfetto che tutti gli esseri umani hanno di amarsi reciprocamente, per il solo fatto di essere simili. Questa tradizione può essere identificata come l'obiettivo polemico dei passaggi in cui Kant precisa che l'ospitalità – nel senso negativo prescritto dal diritto cosmopolitico – non è mera "filantropia", ma "diritto".[82] La determinazione negativa del diritto e dovere di ospitalità – come diritto/dovere dello straniero di non essere trattato e di non trattare in modo ostile – risponde proprio all'intento di restituire ad esso la natura di dovere giuridico e perfetto: come ha notato Reinhardt, infatti, nel sistema kantiano dei doveri "un'omissione pretesa o richiesta è sempre un dovere perfetto"; di conseguenza, i doveri associati da Kant al diritto cosmopolitico – proprio in quanto sono definiti in modo negativo – non possono essere interpretati come doveri imperfetti, ma costituiscono piuttosto doveri giuridici "perfetti", che non ammettono alcuna eccezione e costituiscono un limite intrinseco e incondizionato della sovranità statuale,[83] di cui Kant propone una innovativa concezione giuridico-morale.[84]

Nel tematizzare i vincoli dell'ospitalità, Kant si concentra soprattutto sulle relazioni commerciali tra gli Stati europei e i popoli non-statali extra-europei, in quanto condivide con i suoi contemporanei la preoccupazione per i conflitti aperti e latenti alimentati dal commercio globale:[85] preoccupazione espressa in modo paradigmatico nelle pagine del trattato di medicina di Leuthner, riguardanti gli effetti destabilizzanti dell'appello a un presunto "diritto cosmopolitico" al consumo del tè. Tuttavia, i noti

82. *ZeF,* AA VI, 357: "Qui, come nei precedenti articoli, non si tratta di filantropia, ma di diritto". Cf. anche AA XXIII, 172. Questo scarto rispetto alla "linea Pufendorf-Vattel" è minimizzato e non colto in modo adeguato da Meckstroth, per il quale il diritto cosmopolitico kantiano riprende il medesimo argomento anti-coloniale utilizzato da Vattel, nella trattazione dello *jus commercii*: l'unica differenza risiederebbe nel fatto che Kant non fonda il diritto d'ospitalità nella socialità della natura umana, ma solo nella sua funzione, che Meckstroth identifica nella soluzione del problema hobbesiano del conflitto innescato dal diritto di ciascuno a tutte le cose, nell'unica sfera in cui tale problema non è risolto attraverso il diritto statuale interno e la federazione di popoli: la sfera delle relazioni commerciali tra Stati e popoli non-statali (Meckstroth 2018: 539, 543-545). Questa interpretazione funzionalista del diritto cosmopolitico appare inadeguata, in quanto non tiene nella dovuta considerazione la ragion pura pratica come fondamento del concetto di diritto e di tutti gli imperativi categorici giuridici, compreso quello di realizzare la pace.

83. Reinhardt 2022: 177-181.

84. Cf. Flikschuh 2010.

85. Questa preoccupazione si coglie in modo chiaro non tanto nel testo a stampa del saggio *Per la pace perpetua* – in cui lo "spirito del commercio" è annoverato tra le "garanzie" offerte dalla natura per rendere possibile il dovere di approssimarsi alla pace perpetua (*ZeF*, AA VIII, 368 e 364) – quanto piuttosto nei manoscritti preparatori. Nella bozza del terzo articolo definitivo Kant richiama infatti in modo esplicito l'attenzione sui mali che il "superamento dei limiti dell'ospitalità ha procurato all'intero genere umano e soprattutto all'Europa, la parte del mondo che maggiormente ha promosso tutto questo traffico commerciale tra tutti i popoli della terra": i mali a cui Kant si riferisce sono i mali provocati dalle "guerre che l'Europa ha mosso" non solo contro i popoli extra-europei, ma infine "anche contro se stessa", precisando che "con la crescita del commercio" tali guerre "minacciano di diventare sempre più frequenti e di seguire più rapidamente l'una all'altra" (AA XXIII, 173-174).

passaggi del terzo articolo definitivo che esprimono il dovere di non espellere gli stranieri a rischio di *Untergang*[86] mostrano come Kant non ignori la questione degli spostamenti forzati per motivi religiosi oppure politici, come nel caso dei nobili francesi emigrati dopo la Rivoluzione – al centro non solo delle commedie della de Charrière: questione che la tradizione moderna del diritto naturale e delle genti aveva tematizzato ricorrendo alla categoria dello *ius necessitatis*. Per Kant non esiste un diritto di necessità, né come diritto in senso stretto né come autorizzazione giuridica più ampia: il diritto cosmopolitico – che in relazione ai movimenti transfrontalieri volontari impone il dovere perfetto di non trattare lo straniero in modo ostile – obbliga in modo altrettanto perfetto e senza eccezioni a non respingere i nuovi venuti la cui espulsione possa implicare una rovina imminente. Uno dei tratti più innovativi del diritto cosmopolitico kantiano può essere dunque identificato proprio nel carattere stringente degli obblighi giuridici di omissione che esso impone alle persone fisiche e morali agenti sulla scena internazionale – compresi gli Stati – pur escludendo ogni forma autorità coercitiva sovra-statuale. Come si è mostrato – fermo restando il carattere problematico della natura giuridica di doveri la cui *enforceability* è tutt'altro che chiara –[87] il diritto cosmopolitico kantiano esprime una indubbia cesura rispetto all'orientamento stato-centrico e utilitaristico che, da Pufendorf in poi, si era imposto come prevalente nella discussione moderna sullo *jus hospitalitatis*, in cui il tema dei doveri nei confronti degli stranieri espulsi dalla propria patria (sia singolarmente sia collettivamente) è ampliamente presente:[88] i doveri meramente negativi che Kant associa al diritto cosmopolitico, compreso il dovere di non respingere lo straniero a rischio di *Untergang,* rientrano infatti tra gli "imperativi categorici del diritto", la cui obbligatorietà incondizionata non può essere intaccata da considerazioni empiriche e prudenziali, perché non è fondata su "bisogni" o "interessi" fondamentali della natura umana, ma sulla ragion pura pratica.

86. *ZeF,* AA VI, 358.

87. In proposito, si veda, tra gli altri: Kleingeld 1998; Mori 2008: 144-149; Miller 2022: 179-180.

88. Si veda per esempio la trattazione che è dedicata a questo tema anche nel *Droit des gens* di Vattel che, come si è ricordato sopra (cf. nota 2), è un'opera senz'altro nota a Kant (cf. *Naturrecht Feyerabend*: 226-227): per Vattel – cui pure può essere attribuita una posizione intermedia, nella dialettica tra ospitalità e sovranità che attraversa lo *jus gentium* moderno (Chetail 2016: 914-922) - "una nazione le cui terre siano a stento sufficienti per i bisogni della sua popolazione non è in alcuno modo obbligata a accogliere masse di rifugiati", così come "è legittimata a respingerli, se ha giustificate ragioni di temere che possano corrompere i costumi dei cittadini" o rischiare di arrecare danno, in qualsiasi altro modo, "al benessere comune" (Vattel 1760: I, 334-335).

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ABBREVIAZIONI

AA = Kant, I. 1900 ff. *Gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. v. der Königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 Bde., Berlin, De Gruyter.

Naturrecht Feyrabend = I. Kant, *Lezioni sul diritto naturale (Naturrecht-Feyerabend),* a cura di N. Hinske e G. Sadun Bordon, 2016, Milano, Bompiani.

RL = *Die Metaphysik der Sitten. Erster Teil. Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre* (AA VI, 203-372)

ZeF = = *Zum ewigen Frieden* (AA VIII, 341-386)

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The *Weltbürgerrecht* in the German Philosophical Lexicon: The First Occurrences and Kantian Innovation

Roberta Picardi
Università degli Studi del Molise
ORCID: 0000-0001-6827-8568
roberta.picardi@unimol.it

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PAOLA RUMORE

Kant, Religion, and the Psychology of Reason

ABSTRACT: The paper reproduces the text of the plenary lecture given on February 12, 2024 in Halle at the international conference "Forms of Rationality – Kant and Modernity", organized by the Christian-Wolff-Gesellschaft für die Philosophie der Aufklärung and the Immanuel-Kant-Forum. The paper suggests to read Kant's critical philosophy as a *Bildungsroman* of reason that gradually succeeds in legitimizing its claims in the various domains to which its interest is directed. In particular, the private space of faith is considered in order to show that the rational and a priori structure underlying the various historical religions provides reason with a particular way of finding a satisfactory answer to its own need. Kant's idea of pure rational faith rethinks the attempts made in modernity to reconcile faith and reason on radically new grounds. This is another expression of Kant's understanding idea of Enlightenment.
KEYWORDS: Psychology of Reason; Need of Reason; Pure Rational Faith; Moral and Historical Religion; Enlightenment

1. A PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS FOR TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Kant's philosophy represents the culmination of the Enlightenment culture against school philosophy, i.e. against that form of sclerotized knowledge that conceives philosophical work as a sectional skill reserved for the 'artists of reason' who, blinded by the virtuosity of a technical reason, lose sight of the proper task of philosophical reflection. Kant counters this pejorative conceive of philosophy with the conviction that the task of philosophy is to promote the moral destination of mankind. This is, as Kant's readers know, the conception of philosophy in a *cosmic or cosmopolitan sense*: "From this point of view philosophy is the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason (*teleologia rationis humanae*), and the philosopher is not an artist of reason but the legislator of human reason" (*KrV*, A 838/B 866). Conceived in accordance to its proper concept, philosophy looks first and foremost at the essential ends of humanity, it concerns that which necessarily interests everyone and which no rational being can be indifferent to (*KrV*, A 839/B 867).

Looking at those essential ends enables us to conduct our existence in a way that is worthy of our nature as rational beings, to make us 'worthy' of our humanity. This idea does not concern exclusively and primarily our speculative ends: Philosophy, in its most proper sense, does not aim primarily to extend the boundaries of our knowledge, but subordinates this task, however important it may be, to the realization of our practical destination, which is fulfilled at the level of morality and in the immanent realm

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of history. It is therefore required to make the transition from the speculative realm of knowledge to the practical realm of morality. The path of philosophy understood in its cosmic sense thus requires that the actual realm of knowledge be defined, but in order to enable an equally secure path in the practical realm. Against the recurring attempts to reduce Kant's enterprise to the formulation of a rigorous and extremely architectural epistemology, it therefore seems rather to be the case that Kant, with that part of his philosophy, pays off in an unheard-of way the debt he incurred towards his epoch – the foundation of scientific knowledge, which was and would still remain one of his central concerns – in order to be able to turn with new legitimacy to the urgent interests of practical reason, which look irretrievably towards the field of metaphysics. "I had to lay aside knowledge in order to make room for faith", says the famous Kantian adage (*KrV*, B XXX); a duty, one might add, that arises from the need to appease a reason that – as in the very first famous lines of the *Critique of Pure Reason* – "is burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss, since they are given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself, but which it also cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason" (*KrV*, A VII).

My remarks on Kant's 'Psychology of Reason' take their point of departure precisely from the way in which he introduces the protagonist of his philosophical enterprise and presents it to his readers. For Kant, *Reason*, in the broader sense it has in the titles of the *Critiques*, is the basic structure of every individual; it undoubtedly belongs to every human beyond his historical condition, his identity, gender, epoch, nationality. Kant's reason goes far beyond the logical, deductive and discursive capacity of modern philosophical reason. And it is also something different from the inferential ability, the technique of correct reasoning, to which a conspicuous part of philosophy still seems to reduce it today, thereby robbing philosophy of its original nature as humanistic knowledge, as a kind of knowledge that focuses on the human being in the complexity of existence.

In his own work, Kant follows reason on the winding path that leads to its self-realization. The *Critiques* can be read as a progressive confrontation with the aspirations, capacities and limits of reason. Therefore, I think it is beneficial to look at Kant's philosophy in a way that is perhaps unusual, but which has the undeniable advantage of making this impressive philosophical enterprise accessible in its overall meaning without getting lost in the folds of the elaborate theoretical mechanism that underlies it. That is, I would suggest viewing Kant's philosophy as the *Bildungsroman* of reason – a genre that was just developing in Germany in those years – whose protagonist is a gifted but unrestrained heroine. Kant tells us of her vicissitudes, accompanying her through the many adventures and misadventures she experiences due to her passionate and untamed nature, her aspirations, weaknesses and limitations. Kant himself presents his philosophy as the "history of the aberrations of human reason" – a reason that deceives itself, that "slumbers on the pillow of its supposed knowledge" and then flinches at the discovery of its own inability to offer solutions to problems it has created for itself (AA XX, 319). The Reason whose exploits Kant recounts and to which he points the way to the realization of its aspirations is a reason that has desires, inclinations, needs, interests, torments, and movements of pride; it is a reason that advances step by step, runs aground, sometimes suffers humiliating defeats, and sometimes reacts with arrogance. Kant's reason falls in love with its own convictions without being reciprocated, wanders restlessly in search of fulfillment, settles down, seems to give up, starts again. These are all images and expressions taken from Kant, who draws an almost anthropomorphic profile of reason precisely through this way of describing its attitudes and behavior, a true 'psychology', understood as a description of the structural characters of a subject, which, I believe, can be considered the starting point for the whole system of transcendental philosophy. Reason has an undisciplined character, therefore it must be subjected to critique, which means that it must be forced – as Kant puts it – to take upon itself the most difficult of its tasks, which, in the famous metaphor, is to be both judge and defendant in the trial that must decide the legitimacy of its claims.

This way of claiming a 'psychology' of reason as the basis of Kant's enterprise has, of course, nothing to do with the usual ways in which scholars have repeatedly tried to read Kant's philosophy in psychological terms. I do not want to recall here, not even implicitly, what was understood by 'psychology' in Kant's time, neither in its rational-deductive nor in its empirical form – both of which, as is well known, were rejected by Kant because of their unfounded claim to say something objective, universal and necessary about the object of thought. Even less do I wish to recall the attempts to justify the transcendental feature of Kant's philosophy in psychological terms, to trace it back to the natural processes of the mind, be it in the wake of the tradition from Reinhold to Fries to Bona Meyer, be it in the more recent accusations or defenses of a 'transcendental psychology' à la Strawson, à la Waxmann or à la Kitcher.

Rather, the 'psychology of reason' I refer to concerns the way in which Kant portrays the intrinsic qualities, attitudes, and features of the protagonist of transcendental philosophy, who, pushed by a need and a specific interest, moves in and beyond the world in search of its own fulfillment. The thesis I would like to put forward is that reason's insatiable need, to which Kant returns again and again, is actually a 'psychological' notion and identifies the starting point of Kant's entire philosophical work. Kant speaks of it as "the feeling of reason's own need", a "feeling" that emerges when reason perceives its own inadequacy to know through objective grounds (AA VIII, 136-137). However, it has a transcendental character: it is in fact rooted in reason completely *a priori*, as one of its fundamental structures, and determines *a priori* as its condition the path that reason walks in order to reach its satisfaction. The need is not revealed through an introspective investigation, through the description of an empirical trait of the soul: the drive of reason to satisfy its own needs is the transcendental basic structure of the transcendental subject.

2. REASON AND ITS *FERNWEH*

The 'need' underlies all undertakings and endeavors of reason. It is a transcendental subjective principle that reason has at its disposal in order to determine itself to assent with regard to matters for which it has no objective principles. When reason feels overwhelmed, defeated, "there enters the right of reason's need, as a subjective ground for presupposing and assuming something which reason may not presume to know through objective grounds; and consequently for orienting itself in thinking, solely through reason's own need, in that immeasurable space of the supersensible, which for us is filled with dark or night" (AA VIII, 137). In 1777, almost at the turn of the silent decade, Kant uses a very significant metaphor to describe this dynamic of reason's need, around which the whole life of reason is built.

> The critique of pure reason is a prophylactic against a sickness of reason that has its germ in our nature. It is the opposite of the inclination that chains us to our fatherland (homesickness, *Heimweh*): a longing to leave our circle and to relate to other worlds (*Refl.* 5073, AA XVIII, 79-80).

Reason has, so to speak, an endogenous tendency to move away from this world, from the albeit fertile lowlands (*das früchtbare Bathos*) of experience mentioned in the *Prolegomena* (AA IV, 373). It is a tendency to escape phenomenal reality, the world of nature, and to turn to other worlds. It is the opposite of the *Heimweh*, the feeling of longing that binds us closely to the world of our certainties; it is a sort of *Fernweh*, a longing for elsewhere, for a world different from the natural one that gives voice to another component of human nature, which does not feel satisfied by the certainties it achieves in the secure knowledge of natural science.

This is the outline of the Kantian *Bildungsroman*, the stages of which – stages in which the 'endogenous tendency' of reason manifests itself – are spelled out in the notorious list of questions of critical philosophy: *What can I know? What should I do? What can I hope for?* Wonderfully summarized in the last question: *What is human being?* The order of questions shows that the tendency of reason is not necessarily and exclusively a pathological one, although it can become so if it entangles us in dialectical illusions – and at this point the critique of pure reason serves as a preventive measure, as in the *Reflection* just mentioned. We owe the achievements of reason in the realm of knowledge precisely to this endogenous tendency: In the theoretical use of reason, the need to move beyond experience in the search for first principles (which give rise to the unconditioned totality of ideas) plays a crucial role and makes the formulation of science as a system possible. There is no science without an idea, says Kant, referring to the impossibility of organizing empirical knowledge into an organic totality unless there is a *focus imaginarius* conceived by reason and located beyond phenomena (*KrV*, A 644/B 672).

But alongside this expression of reason's need in the speculative realm, Kant recognizes another one that he considers "far more important", namely the expression of need in the practical use of reason; on the basis of this need we are forced to accept the truths of metaphysics (the existence of God and the immortality of the soul) "not only if we want to judge [as in the speculative realm], but because we have to judge (*weil wir urtheilen müssen*)" (AA VIII, 139). By recognizing the necessity (*müssen*) to judge, Kant emphasizes the inescapable nature of this tendency of reason to go beyond the meticulous description of phenomena – a task that is not sufficient to do justice to its demands. "*A need for an absolutely necessary aim*," Kant would reply to Wizenmann in the *Critique of practical reason*: "I *will* that there be a God, that my existence in this world be even apart from the natural connection also an existence in a pure world of understanding, and finally that my duration be endless; I abide by this, and shall not let this faith be taken from me; for, this is the only [case] where my interest, because I *must not* remit anything of it, unavoidably determines my judgment, without paying attention to subtle reasonings, however little I may be able to answer them or oppose them with more plausible ones" (*KpV*, 143).

Incidentally, the conviction that reason ultimately follows its own aspirations by paying little heed to the results of the intellect appears early on in Kant's work, i.e. long before the formulation of the genetic distinction between the two faculties in the first *Critique*. Already in *Dreams of a Spirit-seer* Kant recognized – at that time *malgré lui* – that precisely in questions of metaphysics there is what he addresses as the only inaccuracy that one *cannot* easily remove and that, in fact, one *never wants* to remove: "The scale of reason is not, however, wholly impartial, and one of its arms, which bears the inscription 'Hope for the Future,' has a mechanical advantage that causes even weak arguments that fall into the pan belonging to it to lift up the speculations that have a greater weight on the other side" (AA II, 349-350). Hope' trumps 'certainty' and thus gives expression to that striving of reason which Kant would shortly afterwards place at the center of his own 'revolution in the way of thinking'.

Morality (the question concerning what I should do) and religion (the question concerning of what I can hope for) are the horizon towards which Kantian reason moves, since it senses the possibility of its own fulfillment only there. Morality is the room of freedom, of a duty that is not that of natural necessity but allows the possibility of disregarding it. Freedom, which reason does not find among the things of nature, but which it can only recognize as its own fundamental trait, is the idea that authorizes reason to think of itself as belonging to a world that is not only that of natural things. The subject comprehends himself as the citizen of two worlds, the world of nature, which is subject to the necessity of physical laws, and the moral world, a world in which it can act according to freedom, that is, determining himself for goals that are not imposed by nature. Reason grasps in itself a command by means of which it is allowed to think of itself as a free being.

3. AN ORGANON FOR RELIGION

Reason, dissatisfied with what it discovers and knows in the world of nature, sets out in search of those essential ends science itself can give no account of. "The mathematician", according to Kant, "would gladly give up his entire science for that science cannot give him any satisfaction in regard to the highest and most important ends of humanity" (*KrV,* A 463/B 491). He would give up his certain knowledge in return for reassurance about the legitimacy to regard himself as a free being whose existence is not confined within the limits of earthly life and is not subject to its necessary laws; that is, to regard himself as a being who will one day come to terms with his morality and be rewarded for his virtuous actions.

Human reason withdraws from the natural world by yielding to its own need, i.e. by following its own practical interest, and 'creates' its own world from that experience of freedom, that enables it to recognize its own fundamental moral nature. If critical philosophy should serve as a medicament, a preventive measure or as a *discipline* for reason when it has to deal with its dialectic illusion, in the practical use of reason it offers reason a set of norms, a *canon*, to which it can adhere in order to approach the moral world.

The Canon of pure reason – "the sum total of the a priori principles of the correct use of certain cognitive faculties in general" (A 796/B 824) – is the right place to find the norms for the use of reason in the practical realm. This means that there are references in the Canon to the correct orientation of the need of reason conceived as its natural inclination. It is no coincidence that the chapter on the Canon uses distinctly psychological terminology from the outset: "It is humiliating for human reason that it accomplishes nothing in its pure use, and even requires a discipline to check its extravagances and avoid the deceptions that come from them" (A 795/B 823); reason has "the unquenchable desire to find a firm footing beyond all bounds of experience"; "has a presentiment of objects of great interest to it. It takes the path of mere speculation in order to come closer to these; but they flee before it" (A 796/B 824); "Reason is driven by a propensity of its nature to go beyond its use in experience, to venture to the outermost bounds of all cognition by means of mere ideas in a pure use, and to find peace only in the completion of its circle in a self-subsisting systematic whole" (A 797/B 825). Notoriously, the a priori principles provided for in the Canon are the moral laws, starting from which reason faces 'another world' in which find place the actions that constitute the history of human beings and in which, beside the necessity of the natural connections of phenomena, there are subjects who act (also) in accordance with another legislation (A 807/B 835). Reason creates this other world for itself since it is moved by the urgency of satisfying its own need. In this way, the canon of reason in its practical use also assumes the function of an *organ* that enables reason to produce new and certain, albeit obviously practical, knowledge.

According to the Canon, the moral world has certain specific properties (A 808/B 836): It is a product of reason conceived as conforming to moral laws; it is conceived as an intelligible world; it is a mere idea, albeit a practical one; it has its own objective (practical) reality (it is understood as the *corpus mysticum* of rational beings as free beings). In this world brought forth by reason, God and eternal life find their own objective, albeit practical, reality, as inescapable correlates of a morality that is autonomous in itself but that cannot be directed towards vain chimeras (*KrV,* A 811/B 839).

The two questions "Is there a God? Is there a future life?" (*KrV,* A 803/B 831), which in the speculative use of reason were reduced to nothing more than "idle conati", become, in the practical use directed by the canon, the *highest ends* to which "that interest of humanity, which is subordinate to no higher interest" (*KrV,* A 798/B 826) is directed. The moral world is thus populated with rational entities (God and immortal souls), which are thus to be understood as responses of reason to its own practical need or interest. Just as the moral world springs from an idea (the highest good), the entities that populate it also have a purely ideal, i.e. subjective reality. They become the object of a *belief*, a subjective principle of assent, that leads us to believe them to be true precisely because of the urgency of reason's need. In Kant's words, "I will inexorably believe in the existence of God and a future life, and I am sure that nothing can make these beliefs unstable, since my moral principles themselves, which I cannot renounce without becoming contemptible in my own eyes, would thereby be subverted" (*KrV*, A 828/B 856).

In this sense, Kant speaks of religion "from the subjective point of view", as an expression of the need (i.e. the subjective principle of determination) of reason. Thus understood, from the speculative standpoint, religion requires only "a problematic assumption (hypothesis)" concerning the highest cause of things, whereas from the moral standpoint, i.e. "with respect to the object toward which our morally legislative reason bids us work, what is presupposed is an assertoric faith, practical and hence free, that promises a result for the final aim of religion" (AA VI, 154). This means that religion and its contents (God and eternal life) spring from reason and are resolved within reason as 'means' for the fulfillment of the need that arises from its practical use; "this faith needs only *the idea of God* which must occur to every morally earnest (and therefore religious) pursuit of the good, without pretending to be able to secure objective reality for it through theoretical cognition" (*ibid*.). We are entitled to understand the need for reason as a principle from which the contents of religion emerge and receive an actual reality as contents of reason. The need compels us to think and act not *as if* God exists, but *insofar as* God exists. However, God exists for reason and within the limits of reason alone, since God is nothing more than an idea. There is no need apart from the "idea of God," which reason procures for itself in response to its own inestimable need, and there is no need to assume its existence outside the idea.

Religion, unlike morality, is not based on certain and objective knowledge; it is enclosed in the absolutely subjective and private room of faith, that opens up at the boundaries of morality. As human beings, we cannot live with dignity independently of our nature as moral agents, that is, without recognizing the imperative of duty. But there is neither an imperative nor a commandment underlying faith, which is an incidental and by no means necessary element for a life worthy of our human nature. But the room of faith and religion is in itself the expression of the same 'endogenous tendency' of a reason that goes beyond the empirical world and yet manages to find for itself an answer to its need.

4. RELIGION AND THE INSTINCTS OF REASON

As Kant had already argued in his essay on *Orientation in thought*, "The concept of God and even the conviction of his existence", as well as that of the immortality of the soul, "is to be found only in reason as its exclusive source, and it cannot first enter our minds either through inspiration or through any external communication, however great the authority from which the latter may come" (AA VIII, 142). This means that in reason lies what Kant calls the *Credo* of pure reason, understood as free affirmation of the only three articles of confession of pure practical reason: "I believe in one God, as the original source of all good in the world, that being its final end; – I believe in the possibility of conforming to this final end, to the highest good in the world, so far as it is in man's power; – I believe in a future eternal life, as the condition for an everlasting approximation of the world to the highest good possible therein"; a *Credo* that permits of no imperative, but leads us to act on the basis of a subjective principle "as though we knew that these objects were real" (AA XX, 298). We act as if we know that such objects are real, although we know that they are not. This means that while the reality of those "quasi-objects" (de Boer), which one might prefer to call 'contents of reason', is practical (in the sense that they serve as inescapable correlates of our existence as moral agents), it is accompanied by the firm realization that nothing outside reason corresponds to such beliefs of ours. Whether there is a God who really exists in some part of the world or outside the world or there is room for an indefinite duration of our existence are questions that not only have no relevance to the moral character of our actions, but above all cannot find a solution in the speculative realm. Reason is not interested in attaining speculative certainty in this sense; rather, an unshakeable belief in its practical validity is sufficient to satisfy its need. This means that those contents cannot be ascribed existence as an absolute position in space and time, which can only happen in the world of phenomena. But existence in the intelligible world is of a different kind and can be recognized by contents the unshakeable faith of reason is directed to. God exists and exists only in the idea, neither chimerically nor arbitrarily, but subjectively claimed by the transcendental need of reason.

The three articles of faith mentioned in the *Credo* thus form the transcendental skeleton of (moral) religion, understood as a rational faith which prevents religious illusions, i.e. a false profession in which a mere idea of something is confused with its existence (AA VI, 168).

This conception of religion as a response to a subjective principle of determination prevents erroneous interpretations as the one expressed in some historical religions (AA VI, 153-154). According to Kant, the history of human reason shows that before the sufficient determination and purification of moral concepts, i.e. before the 'discovery' of the moral source of our idea of God, only rough and vague ideas of the deity emerged (*KrV*, A 663/B 661 n.). Kant, however, is of the opinion that "of all the public religions so far known, the Christian alone" is a *moral* religion (AA VI, 51). For the Christian religion commands man to work on his inner perfection, to make himself worthy of happiness, i.e. worthy of being pleasing to God. It is, in Kant's words, a "religion of good life-conduct" (*ibid.*), of the restoration of the rule of the good principle over the evil one, of obedience to the moral law and not to the perversity of the heart, a religion based on the free nature of the subject as the highest expression of the dignity of human nature. The Christian religion is the one that best expresses this *Credo* of pure faith in reason, in which the self-fulfilling efforts of pure reason are condensed.

Kant, however, seems to take the assertion that Christianity is an exceptional historical phenomenon one step further. Whether this is due to historical conditions, which forced greater caution in the face of heightened censorship practices, or to authentic belief, it does not change the meaning of the maneuver Kant carries out to explain the emergence of the beliefs of historical Christianity. He almost seems to suggest that the images, liturgies and dogmas of this historical religion itself, even if in their fundamental speculative inadequacy, reveal a particular procedure of reason which, in its attempt to represent what by its nature cannot be exhibited in sensible representations, has developed conceptions that nourish the historical tradition better than in other religious contexts. Indeed, in historical religion, images are formulated that express a limitation inherent in reason when it attempts to represent supersensible modes of being. When it comes to making us understand "certain ways of being" (not objects or things) that are supersensible, reason proceeds with a scheme of analogy "which we cannot do without": that is, something supersensible is made understandable by analogy with something sensible. This is actually – as claimed in the *Progresses* – the path of metaphysics. "The Scriptures too, to make the extent of God's love for the human race comprehensible to us, adapt themselves to this manner of representation" (AA VI, 65)– a manner of representation that makes things comprehensible to us that we could not otherwise comprehend. The examples Kant cites are manifold and range from the depiction of the distinction between moral good and evil to that between heaven and hell, of Christ as a moral example, of the evils in the world as punishments for transgressions committed, of the virginal conception of Jesus.

According to Kant, all of these cases are "figurative representation[s] […] yet not any the less philosophically correct in meaning" (AA VI, 60), in the sense that reason cannot help but resort to sensual images to represent something that cannot be shown in intuition, but which corresponds perfectly to the content it needs to think. Human reason tends to connect the course of nature with the laws of morality, and it draws from nature the images required to represent something that is not natural. These are "idea[s] of reason consistent with, as it were, a moral instinct difficult to explain and yet undeniable" (AA VI, 80).

But as soon as this in itself legitimate procedure of schematism by analogy (the *symbolic hypotyposis* of the *Critique of Judgement*) is turned into a schematism for the determination of an object (*schematic hypotyposis*), reason loses sight of the meaning of analogy and ascribes to the second concept the properties of the first, claiming to extend its own concept. In doing so, it falls into the captivity of a religious anthropomorphism that has harmful consequences for morality (AA VI, 65). By confusing, as it were, the conditions of our capacity to conceive something with the properties attributed to that something, reason falls victim to religious illusion, to false worship, to an inversion of the basic order between religion and morality.

5. A PLAIDOYER FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

Given this accordance between moral religion and the historical form of Christianity, we can see how pure reason, starting from the subjective principle of need, produces its own world (the world of grace), whose contents (the highest good, God and the immortal soul) constitute the transcendental structure of (pure) religion, which is the foundation of all historical religion. It seems to me that with due distinctions we can identify a correspondence between the way in which the intellect, by means of the principles of its pure (speculative) use, produces a (natural) world whose fundamental structure obeys the a priori laws of the self (the *natura formaliter spectata* recalled in the *Prolegomena*, the skeleton of every applied physics, AA IV, 318), with the way in which reason, by means of the principles of its pure but practical use, creates a world that serves as the scaffolding of every historical religion and for which it claims the same legitimacy and objective reality (albeit practical) as for the natural one. In the natural world, of course, one starts from an irreducible *datum* for the subject and ends up with knowledge; in the moral world, the only *datum* one can rest on is the immanent *Factum* of reason, which leads to the establishment of a (practical) reality that, in order to exist, does not require to move away from the boundaries of reason and from its urgency to satisfy its own need. "From the practical point of view this idea [*scil.*: the idea of Christ and of every object of faith] has complete reality within itself. For it resides in our morally-legislative reason. […] There is no need, therefore, of any example from experience to make the idea of a human being morally pleasing to God a model to us; the idea is present as model already in our reason" (AA VI, 62).

In Kant's words, we must "create a God" whose actual existence as a transcendent being is not only not demonstrable but is not even required by reason with regard to the fulfillment of its moral purpose. It suffices to believe in the existence of God as an idea of reason, in that conception of God which, in its purity, is the answer to the need of reason and the "touchstone" of all historical religion.

As claimed in the first *Critique*: "Moral theology is therefore only of immanent use, namely for fulfilling our vocation here in the world by fitting into the system of all ends, not for fanatically or even impiously abandoning the guidance of a morally legislative reason in the good course of life in order to connect it immediately to the idea of the highest being, which would provide a transcendental use but which even so, like the use of mere speculation, must pervert and frustrate the ultimate ends of reason" (A 819/B 847). The same content of religion itself is only immanent and exhausts its reality in reason alone.

This conception of faith as an inner and private disposition, based on principles that are only subjective but at the same time rational and common to every human being, is the foundation of moral religion. It is an expression of the courageous 'revolution in the way of thinking' that Kant inaugurates in the realm of faith. It is, in fact, a revolution that irretrievably breaks with the horizon in which the numerous attempts to affirm the rational and moral content of any religious belief, undertaken since the end of the 17th century and throughout the following century, were conceived. With

Kant, it is no longer a question – to paraphrase the title of Locke's work from 1695 – of affirming the *reasonableness* of religion, i.e. to establish the possibility of reason's access to the fundamental doctrines of religion, or the correspondence of the doctrines of faith with the truths of reason. Moreover, it is no longer an attempt to use reason as a criterion of what can or should be accepted of religion, as deists like Toland, Collins, or Reimarus wanted to do. According to Kant, the point is rather to consider religion *within the boundaries* of mere reason, i.e. to turn the terms of the question on their head: no longer to look for a correspondence between reason and faith, but precisely to identify in the basic structure of (human) reason the origin of the content of religion and the principles underlying the assent to its beliefs. This would lead Kant to the claim that faith (as subjective assent) and the contents to which it is directed have their origin in reason itself; we must start from this profoundly rational nature of religious contents in order to recover the true meaning of religion and the (very private) role it can play in the life of every human being.

In this way, Kant affirmed a clear priority of morality over religion, of virtue over piety. This is properly "Enlightenment" (AA VI, 179), for it too affirms the urgency of finding the courage to make use of one's own reason, to free oneself from a self-imposed yoke; it's a resolute call to focus on "the dignity of the humanity which the human being must respect in his own person and personal vocation" (AA VI, 183). By recognizing the inestimable need reason has to form an idea of God and eternal life and to believe firmly in their practical reality, Kant's philosophy once again expresses its boundless admiration for human nature and gives an important teaching about how one should stand by one's religious convictions. Religion is a response to the need for reason; it does not imply a reference to a transcendent reality, but dissolves into the immanent sphere of our rationality. A rationality that goes far beyond being a mere means in the service of scientific knowledge.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA = I. Kant, *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by the Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (und Nachfolgern), Berlin, de Gruyter, 1900ff.

KrV = I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (A=1781, B=1787), ed. by P. Guyer and A. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1998.

Paola Rumore
Università degli Studi di Torino
ORCID: 0000-0003-0079-5280
paola.rumore@unito.it

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