

KANT'S ETHICS AS A PART OF METAPHYSICS: THE ROLE OF SPONTANEITY¹

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Abstract: In his article, *Kant's Ethics as a part of Metaphysics: a possible Newtonian Suggestion? With Some Comments on Kant's "Dream of a Seer"*, Giorgio Tonelli suggests a possible relation between Isaac Newton's conception of attraction and the metaphysical foundation of morals in the light of some considerations on *Träume eines Geistersehers erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (Tonelli 1974). In this paper, I argue that Immanuel Kant's notion of Ethics as a part of metaphysics does not simply derive from Newton and his followers, it is also a philosophical necessity triggered by the development of Kant's system and his thought on spontaneity². I focus the attention especially on Kant's early writings of ethics, in which it is evident the breach with the tradition and the formation of the system. The first part of the paper sketches the placement of ethics in Kant's pre-critical works and its status as science. The second part develops the systematic justification of Kant's insertion of ethics within metaphysics. The third part deals with the historical debate on soul-body's relationship. The fourth and fifth parts account for the history of spontaneity and its reception in Kant's early writings. The last two, finally, deal with Kant's notion of ethics as part of metaphysics from 1770 to critical period.³

Keywords: Ethics; Metaphysics; Spontaneity; Causality; System.

ETHICS IN KANT'S PRE-CRITICAL WRITINGS

It was undoubtedly another Copernican revolution when Kant, for the first time in the history of philosophy, declared ethics to be a part of metaphysics. Before Kant, ethics was at times founded on metaphysics, but it was always considered as an independent science (Tonelli 1974, p. 237). In the 1760's, when Kant was an eclectic anti-Wolffian, he did not include ethics into metaphysics. In fact, ethics was a part of "pure philosophy" beside metaphysics. In the reflection 4163, dated by Erich Adickes between 1769 and 1770, while dealing with the classification of the sciences of pure reason, Kant calls metaphysics the theoretical branch of applied noology and moral philosophy the practical branch (*KGS* 17, p. 440). In a contemporary reflection (4168), moral philosophy is not in metaphysics (*KGS* 17, p. 442). In the *Logik Blomberg* of 1771, the various parts of philosophy are classified according to the human powers of cognition, feeling and desire (*KGS* 24, p. 31). The science that deals with the use of the understanding is logic, the science that deals with corporeal objects is physics, and the science of the universal objects of the understanding is metaphysics. Feeling is the object of aesthetics, while the science that has to do

¹ In memoriam Giorgio Tonelli (1928-1978) for the eighty anniversary of his birth.

² For a similar thesis focused on the concept of freedom especially in the *Metaphysik der Sitten* see VÁZQUEZ LOBEIRAS, 1999.

³ All quotes are from Immanuel Kant, *Kant's gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1900-) cited by volumes and pages.

with our actions and desires is called morals or *philosophia practica* (KGS 24, p. 31). In the *Logik Philippi* of 1772, moral philosophy is placed beside logic, metaphysics, and physics. The peculiarity of this text is that both metaphysics and moral philosophy find their principles in reason. However, Kant clarifies that metaphysics derives its principles exclusively from pure reason, while moral philosophy seems unable to do so (KGS 24, p. 314). In the reflection 4150, ethics coincides with pure practical philosophy, while metaphysics is a section of pure theoretical philosophy (KGS 16, p. 435). In the *Metaphysik L₁* (1775-1780), Kant maintains the same classification proposed in the reflection 4150 (KGS 28m p. 173), and in the contemporary *Vorlesungen über philosophische Enzyklopädie* (1777-1780), practical philosophy is composed of transcendental practical philosophy and rational practical philosophy or metaphysics of morals. The former considers the use of freedom in general, while the latter considers the good use of freedom (TONELLI, 1974, p. 238). Late in the 70's Kant seems not to include ethics in metaphysics, although he is already aware of two kinds of practical philosophy: one that inquires into the conditions of possibility of acting and another one inquiring into its better modalities of execution. Only after the conclusion of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, when the necessity of a *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* became obvious, Kant included ethics as part of metaphysics.

SYSTEMATIC JUSTIFICATION

Why did Kant feel the urgency to include ethics as part of metaphysics only at the conclusion of his work on the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*? The answer is in the *Vorrede* of the second edition of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* of 1787, in which Kant asserts that after speculative reason has been denied all advance in the field of the supersensible, it is permitted to delve only into transcendent rational concepts from a practical standpoint (KGS 3, B XXI). From the standpoint of the critique of pure speculative reason, Kant is convinced of the impossibility of answering questions about the nature of God, the immortality of soul, and human freedom. The three topics were deeply rooted in German philosophy through Christian Wolff's *Vernünftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt un der Seele des Menschen*, the most important metaphysical work of the eighteenth century. To answer metaphysical questions, "a practical use of pure reason (the moral use)" is necessary, "in which reason unavoidably extends itself beyond the boundaries of sensibility, without needing any assistance from speculative reason (KGS 3, B XXV)." In this regard, Tonelli notes that ethics becomes systematically incorporated into metaphysics in order to provide metaphysics with a tenable "Unconditioned" which cannot be established otherwise (TONELLI, 1974, p. 241).

In the "Architectonic" of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Kant gives the final touch to his system by dividing metaphysics into metaphysics of nature and metaphysics of morals, exactly as anticipated ten years before, towards the end of 1773, in a letter to Marcus Herz (KGS 10, p. 145). Architectonic is the art of systems, namely the technique by means of which ordinary cognition

achieves scientific status. Kant asserts that the legislation of human reason has two main objects: nature (natural law) and freedom (moral law). If the philosophy of nature pertains to everything that is and the philosophy of morals only to what should be, the two domains seem to be different topics. They are however ultimately unified in the system of critical philosophy (*KGS* 3, A 840/B 868). More specifically, “metaphysics is divided into the metaphysics of the speculative and the practical use of pure reason, and is therefore either metaphysics of nature or metaphysics of morals (*Metaphysik der Sitten*)” (*KGS* 3, A 841/B 869). Kant is aware of the philosophical breach with tradition that is brought about by the inclusion of ethics in metaphysics, and notes that the “metaphysics of speculative reason is that which has customarily been called metaphysics in the narrower sense; but insofar as the pure doctrine of morals nevertheless belongs to the special stem of human and indeed philosophical cognition from pure reason, we will retain this term for it (*KGS* 3, A 842/B 870).”

In the aftermath of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Kant provides a number of sketches of his system as composed of a propaedeutical part, i.e., the critique of pure reason, a metaphysics of nature, and a metaphysics of morals. The first time Kant mentions the expression “*Metaphysik der Sitten*,” however, is not in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. In fact, it is possible to trace back the origin of the definition in two letters from Johann Georg Hamann to Johann Gottfried Herder. In the letter dated February 16th, 1767, Hamann writes that Kant is working on a metaphysics of morals, and in another letter, dated August 28, 1768, he states that he is waiting impatiently for Kant’s metaphysics of morals (HAMANN, 1956, 2, p. 390)⁴. Thus, Kant might have revealed to Hamann in some lost letters a plan to write a metaphysics of morals already in 1767. Further testimonies of Kant’s engagement in drawing up a metaphysics of morals already during the 60’s are his letters to Johann Heinrich Lambert on December 31, 1765, to Herder on May 1768, and a further letter to Lambert on September 2, 1770.

THE PROBLEM OF THE “MUNDUS SENSIBILIS” AND “MUNDUS INTELLIGIBILIS” IN THE AUFKLÄRUNG

Tonelli offers an original account of the genesis of Kant’s theory of ethics as part of metaphysics by analyzing the influence of Newton on the *Träume*, which can be considered one of Kant’s earliest works on ethics, although they deal with the status of metaphysics as a science. Because of Kant’s goal of establishing definitively the limits our knowledge, the *Träume* are the true prelude to the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. In the chapter “Fragment of occult philosophy,” Kant suggests a parallelism between physical laws and moral laws: if it is true that lifeless matter constitutes a system ruled by mechanical laws, immaterial beings could also be considered to constitute a system of their own, ruled by pneumatic laws (TONELLI, 1974, p. 242). Tonelli traces back the Kantian solution of the parallelism within the tradition of British philosophy. It was David Hume, in fact, who had aspired to be the Newton of the human mind, as goes the famous quote of

⁴ See also Tonelli 1974, p. 241.

section one of the *Inquiry*. Tonelli also mentions John Norris and Andrew Michael Ramsay; first and foremost, however, George Cheyne. Cheyne, in his book *Philosophical Principles of Religion*, maintains that just as in the material world there is gravitation that connects all things, in the intelligible world there is moral feeling or desire (moral gravity) (CHEYNE, 1733-36, pp. 77-78). In the wake of Newton, the work of Cheyne, is important according to Tonelli because although it was not translated in German, it was exposed in a detailed way in Johann Augustus Eberhard's writings that Kant knew well. Tonelli's analysis is very acute but it does not have a strong foundation in Kant's philosophical development.

I suggest that Kant's model of the relation between *mundus sensibilis* and *mundus intelligibilis* derives from a different tradition and that only through this tradition it became possible to conceive ethics as a part of metaphysics. The problem began with Cartesian dualism between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* and the attempts to resolve it. Alison Laywine has individuated three different systems in order to explain the union of soul and body at the beginning of eighteenth century: 1) the system of occasional causes, attributed to Cartesians; 2) the system of pre-established harmony, attributed to Leibnizians; 3) the system of physical influx, attributed to Aristotelians (LAYWINE, 1993, p. 62). Eric Watkins has associated physical influx with René Descartes, John Locke and various Aristotelians according to which all finite substances can act on each other causally (WATKINS, 2005, p. 24). Against Influxionism Watkins opposes Occasionalism, which denies the possibility of actions among finite substances and supporter of God as the only origin of cause-effect relationship between soul and body. Rainer Specht has identified at least four different approaches of occasionalism and three different influx theories in the *Aufklärung*⁵. Besides, the doctrine of metempsychosis was very widespread especially in eclectic philosophers influenced by Spinozism, Stoicism, and Cabalism, such as Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, Johann Christian Edelmann, Christian Mylius, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Georg Sulzer, and Charles Bonnet (TONELLI, 1974, p. 255). One of the most momentous answers to the *commercium mentis cum corpore* was the pre-established harmony theory presented by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, which affirms that relations among finite substances are always in agreement according to universal laws granted by God. In the *De loquela* Wolff was close to Occasionalism but after Leibniz's letter of August 20, 1705 he changed his position and embraced pre-established harmony. In that letter, Leibniz criticized Occasionalism stating that: 1) every created soul is not fully separated from the body; 2) God is not an explanation for the mechanical relations among bodies; 3) All cannot be a miracle, and therefore it is necessary to conceive *anima et corpus esse instar duorum horologiorum*. Wolff proposed the solution placing all disciplines under a mathematical method in the *Methodum serierum infinitarum*, with the goal of establishing a connection between the ethical realm of Grace and the scientific realm of Nature. Knowledge of laws of intelligible world would give scientific perfection to ethics and psychology, a perfection that Descartes had denied. Wolff does not supply any explanation about the connection between

⁵ See Specht 1984 and Specht 1985. See also Radner 1993.

the two realms and he only adduces exactly Leibniz's example of the agreement between two clocks to explain it (WOLFF, 1755, pp. 318-19). Just as two clocks work simultaneously, so is the ethical world simultaneous to the phenomenal world⁶. The pre-established harmony in Wolff, however, differs meaningfully from Leibniz position because conceives it as a particular solution to the mind-body problem and it is not extended to all causal explanations, which still follow influxionism. This notion found rapid dissemination among Wolffians such as Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Georg Friedrich Meier, Johann Peter Reusch, and the eclectic Joachim Georg Darjes. In paragraph 403 of the *Metaphysica*, which Kant used for his lessons on metaphysics and anthropology, Baumgarten writes that the *nexus* between spiritual substances in the immaterial world is composed by pneumatic laws. Every singular spirit is in contact with others in this *mundus pneumaticus, intellectualis, moralis, regnum gratie* (BAUMGARTEN, 1757, p. 1289). In paragraph 375 of his *Metaphysik*, Meier mentions a universal *nexus* of all spirits that are active; it is the *Geisterwelt* or intellectual and moral world because only to spirits can be attributed intelligence and morality (MEIER, 1755-56, pp. 164-65)⁷.

Joachim Lange attacks wolffian doctrines in the *Modesta disquisitio* accusing Wolff and his school of fatalism and Spinozism since they would have supported a physical determinism that denies freedom and the principle of religion (LANGE, 1723). Wolff defends himself stating human freedom is spontaneity with contingency and intelligence. The spontaneous activity of the *vis repraesentativa* is the guarantee of human freedom against determinism and the only real connection between corporeal automatism and spiritual automatism⁸.

THE CONCEPT OF SPONTANEITY FROM LEIBNIZ TO KANT

My thesis is that spontaneity plays the crucial role as the only effective relation *between mundus sensibilis and mundus intelligibilis*. Spontaneity derives from *Ethica nicomachea* Gamma 3, in which Aristotle defines a spontaneous act as “an act of which the origin lies in the agent, who knows the particular circumstance in which he is acting” (1111a20-22). To be spontaneous does not mean merely being free; it means instead the way in which the subject determines itself immediately. Leibniz re-introduces the concept within modern philosophy. Leibniz deals with the practical aspect of spontaneity in *Initia et specimina scientiae novae generalis* and in paragraph 301 of *Essais de théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal*. In the *Initia*, Leibniz asserts that freedom is spontaneity with intelligence while mere spontaneity is only in beasts and in other substances without intelligence (*GP* 7, p. 108).⁹ In paragraph 301, in accordance with Aristotle's definition, he states that *spontaneum est, cuius principium est in agente*

⁶ On Wolff's problem of the mind-body see École 1990, pp. 225-315.

⁷ For a complete overview on the mind-body problem in the Wolffian school see Fabian 1925.

⁸ On Wolff-Lange dispute see Bianco 1986.

⁹ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz=GP*, Berlin: Weidmann, 1875-90, cited by volume, page.

(GP 6, p. 296). In paragraph 291 Leibniz writes that every single substance has spontaneity in itself that determines all actions and perceptions (GP 6, p. 296). The monad is a simple, closed substance in which everything issues from an internal principle. Leibniz describes spontaneous activity of monads in relation with pre-established harmony asserting that all monads are *entelechiai*, for they have in themselves a perfection by means of which all actions issue from an internal principle as incorporeal automaton (GP 6, pp. 609-10). Following Leibniz and therefore also the Aristotelian tradition, Wolff writes in the *Vernünftige Gedanken* that a soul that has in itself the reason of its actions can be called spontaneous (WOLFF, 1719, p. 317). In the *Psychologia empirica* he defines spontaneity as the *principium sese ad agendum determinandi intrinsecum*, adding that *actiones dicuntur spontaneae, quatenus per principium sibi intrinsecum, sine principio determinandi extrinseco, agens easdem determinat* (WOLFF, 1738, p. 702). All the Wolffian scholars use this concept of spontaneity. Baumgarten resumes the Leibnizian notion of substance as a force (*vis*) by means of which all active faculties are possible. Monads are microcosms conceived as *vis repraesentativa pro positu corporis humani* which spontaneously draws from itself all knowledge of the universe (BAUMGARTEN, 1757, pp. 176-77). Spontaneity is also a property of the will because it concerns actions that substances can execute only with their inner *vires*. Every action is spontaneous every time it depends on an inner principle; a spontaneous monad is an *automaton spirituale* (BAUMGARTEN, 1757, pp. 270-74). Meier, who is the translator of Baumgarten's metaphysics in German, translates spontaneity with *Selbsttätigkeit*, a term frequently used by Kant in the critical period (MEIER, 1756, pp. 695-99). Christian August Crusius, who is the polemical reference of Kant in the *Nova dilucidatio*, in the *Anweisung vernünftig zu Leben* defines spontaneity as *geistige Selbsttätigkeit*, i.e., the fundamental faculty of every *Vorstellungen* (representations) and every *Begierden* (desires) (CRUSIUS, 1744, p. 45). In the *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft* spontaneity is *actio prima libera* (CRUSIUS, 1745, p. 148). The last meaning of spontaneity in Crusius is the ability to determine the good and therefore all moral values (CRUSIUS, 1745, p. 343).

KANT'S CONCEPT OF SPONTANEITY IN EARLY ETHICS

Kant deals with spontaneity as an element of the phenomenal world in the *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte*, which reveals Martin Knutzen's strong influence. Kant maintains that every body has an essential *vis motrix* attributable to the possibility of the external movements of a body. In addition, there must exist an original force, *vis activa*, that determines actions and representations (KGS 1, p. 18). The meaningful paragraphs about the physical treatment of spontaneity are paragraph 120 and paragraph 129. A body that has in itself the reason of its own actions is a body that preserves its movement freely and continuously up to the infinite. Bodies that are able to determine themselves are spontaneous. Spontaneity is the life (*lebendige Kräfte*) and the original activity of substances.

The moral treatment of spontaneity is developed by Kant in *Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio*. In the chapter on the principle of determining reason, human spontaneity is related to natural necessity and God's freedom. According to Kant, it is not important to know how necessitated an action is; it is more important to know what is its source or origin. Nobody can doubt that the act of creation is determinate in God; however, his action is free because the action issues from his infinite intelligence and not from a certain blind power of nature (KGS 1, p. 400). The creation of the world by God is determined in a way that its opposite is inconceivable, but this does not mean that it is determined by blind necessity from an outer cause. The action of creation in fact issues from God's spontaneous inner principle. Analogously, Kant writes, human actions issue from freedom. In fact, actions are free when "nothing other than motives of the understating applied to the will, whereas in the case of brute animals or physico-mechanical actions everything is necessitated in conformity with external stimuli and impulses and without there being any spontaneous inclination of the will" (KGS 1, p. 400). Free actions are derived from the subject's spontaneity while actions determined by physico-mechanical causes are derived from blind necessity. In the dialogue between Caius and Titius, Kant defines spontaneity, following the Aristotelian tradition, as an action that issues from an inner principle, but he also adds that when spontaneity is determined in conformity with the representation of what is best, it is more properly called freedom (KGS 1, p. 402). Here Kant diverges from both the Aristotelian and the Leibnizian understanding of freedom as spontaneity guided by intelligence (GP 7, p. 108). Freedom, as spontaneity determined in conformity with the representation of what is best, is an original position of Kant that will assume a crucial role in the second introduction of the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*.

After the development of the theory of spontaneity in natural and moral philosophy, in the *Träume* Kant resolves the problem of a metaphysical conjunction between the two realms by means of spontaneity of the organic bodies. Laywine notes that in the *Träume* there is a breach with the positions of the *Gedanken* and the *Nova dilucidatio* (LAYWINE, 1993, p. 83). It seems to me, however, that there is no such breach, for spontaneity is indeed the guideline of Kant's development from the early works, through the *Träume* up to the critical writings. In order to resolve the problem of the distinction of the *mundus sensibilis* and *mundus intellegibilis* and to avoid determinism, Kant invokes Leibniz's concept of spontaneity as an inner principle, from which issue actions and representations, as Wolff did against Lange accusation. The discussion about determinism, freedom and the relation between the two worlds in the University of Königsberg was particularly heated from 1720, year of publication of Leibniz's *Monadologia* and Wolff's *Deutschen Metaphysik*, to Wolff's death thanks to Christoph Langhansen, Konrad Gottlieb Marquardt and Martin Knutzen. Langhansen, professor of mathematics and theology and dean of the faculty of philosophy in the year of Kant's immatriculation, writes in 1721 the *Dubia circa monades leibnitianas* in which shows the limit of Leibniz's spontaneity of monads and Wolff's

concept of *vis repraesentativa* as solution of the problem of freedom¹⁰. The following year in his dissertation *De harmonia praestabilita inter animam et corpus*, Marquardt, Kant's professor of mathematics, defends the theory of pre-established harmony suggested by Wolff. In 1724, Langhansen in his *Dissertatio de necessitate omnium quae existunt* replies to Marquardt's dissertation accusing Leibniz and Wolff's metaphysics to fatalism. The most influential figure for Kant in the mind-body dispute is Knutzen, who in the 1735 published his dissertation *Commentatio philosophica de commercio mentis et corporis* reissued in 1745 with the title *Systema causarum efficientium*¹¹. Knutzen basic idea is essentially Leibnizian. The thesis is if every simple substance, or monad, is a cause in it-self, its causality involves the motion of another substance that is a cause in it-self, because every effort of motion implies the motion in another space occupied by another substance. It does mean that the spontaneity of a substance presupposes the spontaneity of all the other substances. Spontaneity in this way is not only a faculty attributable to the *mundus intelligibilis* of the mind but also to the *mundus sensibilis* of the body. Leibniz, however, denies this kind of physical influx in favor of an ideal influx. He writes "in simple substances the influx of a monad upon another is only ideal, and it can have effect only through the mediation of God [...] A created monad cannot have any physical influx upon the inner being of another, there for it is only by the ideal influx is possible a relation among monads. [...] In this way among monads passions and actions are mutual [...] and consequently what is active in certain respects is passive from another perspective; active in so far as what it is distinctly known in a monads serves to explain what takes place in another, and passive in so far as the explanation of what takes place in a monad is in what is distinctly known in another. (GP 6, p. 615)".

Besides Knutzen the most probable source about spontaneity and its relation with the mind-body problem is Baumgarten. Kant used *Metaphysica*, the *Initia Philosophiae practicae* and the *Ethica philosophica* in his lectures (STARK, 1993, pp. 325-28). Clemens Schwaiger in the last decade has re-evaluated Baumgarten's influence on Kant's practical philosophy¹². Baumgarten refutes the possibility to apply pre-established harmony only in the mind-body problem, as Wolff do, and he revises Leibnizian model. Mario Casula identifies two demonstrations of the pre-established harmony in Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, direct and indirect. The indirect demonstration, in the paragraphs 459-462, is based on the weakness of influx theory and occasionalism. The direct demonstration supports, instead, in perfect analogy with the paragraphs 51 and 52 of Leibniz's *Monadologie*, that from every monads it is possible to know every single parts of the world, therefore also its mutations. The mutations are passions among monads and they are also actions because monads are substances that have in themselves the reasons of all their changes. The influx of the monads then will be always ideal, that is determined by the spontaneity, and never real (CASULA, 1973, pp. 142-154). Only having in mind Baumgarten's system is

¹⁰ On early reception of the theory of monads in the wolffian scholars see Pasini 1994.

¹¹ On Martin Knutzen the most important work is still Erdmann 1876. On the physical influx and its influence on Kant see also Tonelli 1966; O'Neill 1993; Watkins 1995; Watkins 1998; Watkins 2003; Watkins 2005, pp. 23-93.

¹² See Schwaiger, 1999; Schwaiger 2000. See also Rumore 2007, pp. 161-185.

possible to understand Kant's appreciation of Leibniz's theory of monads in the resolution of the mind-body problem and his opposition to posterior philosophers who have not first considered the question whether a substance, as monads, could exist in the complete absence of any inner state (KGS 2, p. 328). The importance of Baumgarten's theory of ideal influx is evident in the unpublished *Fortschritte in der Metaphysik*. Kant writes that Leibniz's pre-established harmony, though its aim was to explain the association of mind and body, at first it explains the possibility of communion among different substances, whereby they constitute a whole. For since substances depend only by their inner states, they may not depend upon other substances in any respect, there is therefore no real physical influx. So if substances "are nevertheless to stand in communion as world-substances, this must only be an ideal influx – as Baumgarten suggests in the *Metaphysica* – and cannot be a real (physical) one, since the latter assumes the possibility of interaction, as though it were to be intelligible in virtue of their mere existence (KGS 20, pp. 283-4)."

Beyond the documented influences of Aristotle, Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten and Knutzen, the philosophers of moral sense are also a source in Kant's moral writings and his *Nachlass*. Both the *Praktische Philosophie Herder* of 1762-1764 and the *Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbjahre von 1765-1766* testify to the role played by Anthony Ashley Cooper, Francis Hutcheson, and Hume in Kant's ethics (2:300). Dieter Heinrich does not hesitate to define Hutcheson as the Hume of practical philosophy who would have awakened Kant from the dogmatic sleep of practical reason (HENRICH, 1957-58, p. 68)¹³. Kant owned two books by Hutcheson in German translation, the *Abhandlungen über die Natur und Beherrschung der Leidenschaften und Neigungen und über das moralische Gefühl insoderheit* and the *Untersuchung unsrer Begriffe von Schönheit und Tugend in zwo Abhandlungen*. Stefano Bacin suggests a possible reception of Hutcheson in Kant for his concept of moral sentiment, however, in the light of spontaneity, I propose to re-contextualize the relation between the two philosophers (BACIN, 2006, p. 14). Helke Panknin-Schappert has recently demonstrated that both Hutcheson and Kant conceive the internal experience as the origin of knowledge and actions. In fact, only through inner experience it is possible a consciousness of the feeling that judges on good and evil possible. According to Hutcheson, moral sense is an inner feeling that perceives the intelligible part of an action. Moral sense does not depend on an empirical receptivity but is derived from an immediate spontaneity¹⁴. Hutcheson characterizes moral sense and its automatic reaction as an instinct, as an immediate self-determination of the soul. For Hutcheson, just as for the Wolffians, the Occasionalists, and the pre-critical Kant, spontaneity is an occult, obscure, and complex quality, of which it is not possible to have any knowledge (PANKNIN-SCHAPPERT', 2005, pp. 220-224). In the *Träume*, for instance, Kant calls spontaneity an "obscure" concept because the principle of life seems to be an immaterial nature capable to determine itself voluntarily, as spirits, while the essential characteristic of matter seems to be limited by an external force operating against it.

¹³ On the influence of British philosophy on Kant see also Gawlick-Kreimendahl 1987; Kühn 1987; Brandt-Klemme 1989; Kühn 1996.

¹⁴ On British moralists and their influence see Gill 2006, p. 359.

Therefore, all living beings are dependent and constrained and at the same time spontaneously active (*KGS 2*, p. 327). Kant confesses to be very much inclined to assert the existence of immaterial natures in the world and to place his own soul in the class of these beings; however, he does not know how it is possible that a material body is in contact with his own soul. After Leibniz's appropriation of spontaneity, Kant does refer to the kind of parallelism pointed out by Tonelli; he rather refers to a conjunction between the sensible world, ruled by mechanical laws, and the intelligible world, ruled by pneumatic laws. Only through spontaneity is it possible to understand one world by means of the other. Human reason, as the only truly spontaneous faculty, "already in this present life, would therefore have to be regarded as being simultaneously linked to two worlds. The human soul, in so far as it is connected with a body so as to constitute a personal unity, clearly senses only the material world. On the other hand, as a member of the spirit-world, the human soul would both receive and impart the pure influences of immaterial natures" (*KGS 2*, p. 332).

ETHICS AS A PART OF KANT'S METAPHYSICAL SYSTEM

Kant for the first time includes ethics in metaphysics in the *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*. Metaphysics, as philosophy of the "first principles of the use of pure understanding" (*KGS 2*, p. 395), is preceded by a "propaedeutical elenctical" science that shows the differences between intellectual and sensible knowledge. In itself metaphysics is dogmatic "and in accordance with it the general principles of the pure understanding, such as are displayed in ontology or in rational psychology, lead to some paradigm, which can only be conceived by the pure understanding and which is a common measure for all other things in so far as they are realities. This paradigm is *noumenal perfection* (*KGS 2*, p. 396)." *Perfectio noumenon* can be considered both in a theoretical or practical sense. The first sense is that of the *ens summum*, God; the second is that of moral perfection. Since moral philosophy provides the first principles of judgment, it is knowable only by means of pure understanding and its science, i.e. metaphysics (*KGS 2*, p. 396). Tonelli suggests that in the *Dissertatio* pure philosophy is divided into elenctical propaedeutical philosophy and dogmatic philosophy. Dogmatic pure philosophy is also composed of moral philosophy and metaphysics (TONELLI, 1994, p. 326). It is evident from Kant's text, however, that Tonelli's scheme is wrong. In fact, Kant was committed to including ethics into metaphysics already in the *Dissertatio*.

In the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, spontaneity is the core of the "Deduction of pure concept of the understanding" and of the "Third Antinomy"¹⁵. The understanding of ethics as a part of metaphysics is developed by Kant in the "Resolution of the cosmological idea of the totality of the derivation of occurrences in the world from their causes." There are only two ways to think of causality, namely, either according to nature or freedom. Natural causality is based on mechanical

¹⁵ On spontaneity in third antinomy see also Gunkel 1989; Kawamura 1996.

physical laws, while freedom in the cosmological sense is “the faculty of beginning a state from itself, the causality of which does not in turn stand under another cause determining it in time in accordance with the law of nature” (KGS 3, A 533 / B 561). Conceived in this way, freedom is a pure transcendental idea unrelated to the phenomenal world. Kant therefore creates an ethical space for the subject that could escape the empirical conditions of space and time. Once more Kant must face the problem of the relation between the ethical world of freedom and the natural world of necessity. In the “Possibility of causality through freedom unified with the universal law of natural philosophy,” Kant considers causality under two aspects, “as intelligible in its action as a thing in itself, and as sensible in the effects of that action as an appearance in the world of sense” (KGS 3, A 538 / B 566). In metaphysics, according to Kant, every subject has an empirical and an intelligible character. The subject of the sensible world has an empirical character, through which its actions, as appearances, stands in connection with other appearances in accordance with constant natural laws constituting the natural order. The subject also has an intelligible character, through which it is the cause of those actions as appearances, but which does not stand under any conditions of sensibility and is not itself appearance but it is a thing in itself (KGS 3, A 539 / B 567). In Kant’s first book completely dedicated to ethics, the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, the division of metaphysics into metaphysics of nature and metaphysics of morals is explicit; in fact, Kant asserts again that there are laws of nature and laws of freedom. The science of the first is physics, or doctrine of nature, while the other one is ethics, or doctrine of morals. However, when philosophy is limited to determinate objects of the understanding, it is called metaphysics and in this way there are twofold metaphysics, a metaphysics of nature and a metaphysics of morals (KGS 4, pp. 387-88). Intelligible and empirical characters of the subject supply the distinction between the sensible world (*Sinnenwelt*) and the intelligible world (*Verstandeswelt*) united only through spontaneity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the inclusion of ethics in metaphysics is a totally new approach in the history of philosophy, which has a systematic justification only after the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, although a genetic justification already exists after the *Träume*, taking up a definitive shape in the *Dissertation*. This new approach is based on spontaneity. Kant’s notion of spontaneity is derived mainly from Baumgarten even if its origin is traceable back to Aristotle. It first occurs in the *Gedanken* with reference to the natural world and in the *Nova dilucidatio* with reference to the moral world. It is by all means a recurrent topic in the development of Kantian philosophy, and it provides the only connection between the sensible and the intelligible world in the *Träume*. Finally, it is the only metaphysical element that permits to include ethics into metaphysics.

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