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Pratiche, linguaggi e saperi dell'estetico

Kant's Geographies

edited by

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Foreword

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As it is well-known, despite the vast amount of Kantian literature, Kant's *Physical Geography* remains perhaps the least studied branch of his thought. It is only thanks to the volume edited by Stuart Elden and Eduardo Mendieta in 2011 and the publication of Kant's *Vorlesungen über Physische Geographie* by Werner Stark in the volume XXVI of the Akademie-Ausgabe that any significant attention has been given to this area of Kant's thought over the last years. Stark's edition of the *Geographie Vorlesungen* did indeed provide the necessary philological tools to reconstruct what we might call "Kant's Geography". The volume by Elden and Mendieta established an initial framework for the theoretical research.

In celebration of the 300th anniversary of Kant's birth, we decided to dedicate this issue of *Aisthesis* to a closer examination of this framework. The presence of geographical metaphors and, more generally, of an entire geographical

terminology was taken as a perspective from which to pose a twofold question concerning criticism as a whole. Namely, what is the relationship between the transcendental and the empirical? *To what extent* is the latter – the most effective, *concrete* reality – “constituted” by the former?

As a part of the knowledge that Kant calls *Welterkenntnis* (“knowledge of the world”), physical geography constitutes a distinctive setting for addressing such questions. On the one hand it represents the form of access to reality that unfolds its historical, pragmatic and effective dimension. As Kant puts it, the object of geography is the *Schauplatz*, «the stage on which the play of our ability is performed». On the other hand, however, the very name “*Welterkenntnis*” defines such a stage, such a *theatre of human actions as the world*. This definition inevitably involves the question concerning the relationship between such a “knowledge of the world” and the transcendental analysis. Indeed, what is the relationship between geography as *Welterkenntnis*, and philosophy as *Weltweisheit*?

From the ‘empirical’ point of view, the connection between physical geography and the transcendental critique of reason (and its cosmic dimension) is evident, since geography presupposes a plan or idea (the very idea of reason), on the basis of which our experiences must be organised. We can observe the same link from the ‘rational’ point of view, if we consider the ‘cartographic matrix’ of the critical instance. The critique of pure reason, in fact, does not merely project ideas and vanishing points, but proceeds by tables, establishes boundaries, indicates borders, marks territories and domains.

The four sections of this issue of Aisthesis attempt to illustrate the connection between geography and transcendental philosophy within Kant’s thought, starting with the question of geography. Secondly, the issue examines the ‘cartographic matrix’ of the critique, the space of reason and, finally, the analysis of the role and position of the subject in that space.

The first section of the issue – *Introduction to Kant’s Geography* – opens with an Italian translation of the *Introduction* and *Preliminary Mathematical Concepts* from Rink’s edition of *Physical Geography*. The decision to translate this ‘Kantian Geography’ was dictated by the intention to provide the Italian reader with at least one example of Kant’s approach to the problem of geography.

Despite the reprint published by Farinelli in 2004, the Italian translation of the Vollmer edition produced by Eckerling between 1807 and 1811 is not only too difficult to find, but also rather obsolete. Consequently, we decided to translate the Prolegomena into the Rink edition in order to provide a minimum textual basis in Italian for the study of Kant’s geography. In making this choice, we have considered two factors: on a theoretical level, the comparison between the *Geographie Vorlesungen* and the Rink edition shows that the first

sections of the latter answer a genuinely Kantian problem; on a philological level, such a comparison is unavoidable, since we do not possess a text written by Kant. In his article, Antonio Branca, as translator, addresses both issues, providing an account of the *Introduction* and *Preliminary Mathematical Concepts*, as well as a theoretical problematization of Kant's geography in relation to the Critique and the *Opus postumum*.

The second section – *Geography, Cartography* – then addresses the cartographic matrix of Kant's discourse. Franco Farinelli provides fundamental insights into this 'matrix', offering not only a historical contextualisation of Kant's Geography within the geographical revolution of the 18th century, but also a further problematization of the relationship between cartographic representation of the world and criticism. Tommaso Morawski pursues a similar line of investigation, focusing on the cartographic imaginary of the European Enlightenment and the role of the cartographic representation of the Earth in the construction of planetary space. Two fundamental issues emerge in his article. The first question concerns the representation of the globe, while the second concerns the role played by cartographic pictures within the transcendental instance. The former is the subject of Anna Enström's essay, which uses the analysis of the connection between the spherical form of the Earth (as well as pure reason) and the bodily situation of the subject to demonstrate – even against Kant – that the critical concept of the sphere can serve as a potential alternative to colonial models of thought. The second issue emerged from Morawski's analysis constitutes, instead, the core of Francesco Valagussa's effort to reread the transcendental constitution of experience through the cartographic lens, using the interdependence between map, territory and mind to provide a theoretical account of the dynamic through which reason shapes reality, yet is itself in turn re-shaped by it.

The third section of the issue – *Spaces of Reason* – deals with the analysis of this dynamic. Comparing Kant and Bergson, and responding to the latter's criticism of the former, Alessandra Campo examines how the mediality of space determines the simultaneous genesis of matter and intelligence. Giulio Goria explores the status, tasks and functions of reflection as a tool for orientation in thought. In doing so, he demonstrates the importance of the methodological moment for transcendental philosophy, as well as the inextricability of reflection from the practical use of reason. In the last article of this section, Stelios Gadris finally addresses the role of feeling and its reflexive importance in Kant's conception of philosophy, as a way not only of situating ourselves in the world, but also of differentiating space and going beyond our private sphere.

The last section of the issue – *Subject and World* – therefore focuses on the position of the subject within its concrete space of action. Edoardo De Sanctis

clarifies the practical value of Kant's reflection on space in relation to the dynamic between state jurisdiction and subject autonomy. Gualtiero Lorini discusses the universality of Kant's anthropology and its peculiar form of objectivity and normativity, offering valuable insights into Kant's conception of history and the cosmopolitan horizon. In his article, Felix Duque addresses, finally, geopolitical issues and, above all, the geopolitical relevance of Kant's thought in the present time. He thus provides a significant account of both the problem of the political constitution in Kant and its contemporary perversions.

In this sense, the final section links up with the first, returning to the geographical problem in its most concrete and historically urgent form.

Introduction to Kant's Geography

Aisthesis



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*Geografia fisica. Introduzione e Concetti matematici preliminari (AA IX, 156-183)**

IMMANUEL KANT

[156] *Descrizione fisica della Terra*

Introduzione

§1. In tutte le nostre conoscenze, dobbiamo rivolgere la nostra attenzione innanzitutto alle loro fonti e alla loro origine, ma dopo di ciò dobbiamo far attenzione anche al piano della loro disposizione o alla forma – cioè al modo in cui queste conoscenze possono essere ordinate –, perché altrimenti non siamo in grado di richiamarle alla memoria nei casi in cui ne abbiamo eventualmente bisogno. Di conseguenza, dobbiamo suddividerle per così dire in determinati compartimenti, prima ancora, persino, di ottenerle.

§2. Ora, per ciò che riguarda le fonti e l'origine delle nostre conoscenze, nel complesso noi traiamo queste ultime o dalla *pura ragione*, o dall'*esperienza*, che altresì proprio la ragione istruisce.

Le conoscenze razionali pure ci sono date dalla nostra ragione; le conoscenze d'esperienza, invece, le riceviamo attraverso i sensi. Poiché però i nostri sensi non oltrepassano il

mondo, anche le nostre conoscenze d'esperienza si estendono meramente al mondo presente.

Tuttavia, proprio come abbiamo un *duplice* senso, uno *esterno* e uno *interno*, così possiamo considerare il mondo, in quanto complesso di tutte le conoscenze d'esperienza, secondo entrambi. Il mondo in quanto *oggetto del senso esterno* è la **natura**, in quanto *oggetto del senso interno* è invece l'**anima** o l'*uomo*.

[157] L'esperienza della *natura* e quella dell'*uomo* costituiscono insieme la *conoscenza del mondo*. Sulla *conoscenza dell'uomo* ci istruisce l'*antropologia*, mentre dobbiamo la *conoscenza della natura* alla *geografia fisica* o alla *descrizione della Terra*. Certo, non si danno *esperienze* nel senso più stretto ma solo *percezioni* che, prese assieme, costituirebbero l'*esperienza*. Ma qui usiamo quell'espressione soltanto nel suo significato usuale di percezioni.

La descrizione fisica della Terra è dunque la *prima* parte della conoscenza del mondo. Essa appartiene a un'idea che può essere chiamata *propedeutica alla conoscenza del mondo*. Il suo insegnamento sembra essere ancora molto manchevole. Eppure, è proprio di essa che ci troviamo in condizione di fare più utilmente uso in tutte le anche solo possibili circostanze della vita. Di conseguenza, diviene necessario che essa si diffonda come una conoscenza che può essere perfezionata e corretta attraverso l'esperienza.

Noi anticipiamo la nostra esperienza futura, che faremo in seguito nel mondo, attraverso un insegnamento e un compendio generale di questo tipo, che ci dà per così dire un concetto preliminare del tutto. Di chi ha fatto molti viaggi si dice che ha visto il mondo. Ma alla conoscenza del mondo appartiene più del semplice vedere il mondo. Chi vuol trarre profitto dal proprio viaggio deve aver progettato già in anticipo un piano del suo viaggio, e non considerare il mondo meramente come un oggetto del senso esterno.

L'*altra* parte della conoscenza del mondo si occupa della *conoscenza dell'uomo*. La frequentazione degli uomini amplia le nostre conoscenze. Nondimeno, è necessario dare un esercizio preliminare per tutte le esperienze future di questo tipo, e ciò fa l'*antropologia*. Da essa impariamo a conoscere ciò che nell'uomo è *pragmatico*, e non speculativo. L'uomo viene allora considerato non in senso *fisiologico*, in modo da distinguere le fonti dei fenomeni, ma *cosmologico*¹.

Manca ancora molto un'istruzione sul modo in cui bisogna portare a applicazione le conoscenze già acquisite e [158] fare di esse un uso proficuo, conforme al proprio intelletto e alle circostanze in cui ci si trova, o rendere *pratiche* le nostre conoscenze. E questa è la *conoscenza del mondo*.

Il mondo è il sostrato e il teatro in cui va in scena il gioco della nostra abilità. Esso è il terreno su cui le nostre conoscenze vengono acquisite e applicate. Ma affinché *possa* essere tradotto in esercizio ciò che l'*intelletto* dice che *deve* accadere, è necessario conoscere la costituzione del soggetto, senza di che quella traduzione diventa impossibile.

Inoltre, dobbiamo conoscere anche gli oggetti della nostra esperienza *nella loro totalità*, in modo che le nostre conoscenze non costituiscano un *aggregato*, ma un *sistema*; nel sistema, infatti, il *tutto* è prima delle parti, mentre nell'aggregato, viceversa, vengono prima le *parti*.

Le cose stanno così in tutte le scienze che producono in noi una connessione, come ad esempio nell'*enciclopedia*, dove il tutto appare sin dall'inizio tenuto in relazione. L'idea è *architettonica*; essa crea le scienze. Chi vuole costruire una casa, per esempio, si fa dapprima un'idea del tutto, dalla quale vengono derivate in seguito tutte le parti. Così anche la nostra presente preparazione è un'*idea della conoscenza del mondo*. Qui noi ci formiamo infatti parimenti un *concetto architettonico*, il quale è un concetto in cui il molteplice viene derivato dal tutto.

Il tutto è qui il mondo, il teatro in cui faremo tutte le nostre esperienze. La frequentazione degli uomini e i viaggi ampliano l'estensione di tutte le nostre conoscenze. Questa frequentazione ci insegna a conoscere l'uomo, ma, se questo scopo finale dev'essere raggiunto, richiede anche molto tempo. Se siamo però già preparati per istruzione, allora disponiamo già di un tutto, in un complesso di conoscenze che ci insegnano a conoscere l'uomo. Allora siamo in grado di assegnare all'esperienza fatta la sua classe e il suo posto in esso. Grazie ai viaggi ognuno amplia la propria conoscenza del mondo esterno, cosa che però è di scarsa utilità se non si è prima ricavato un esercizio preliminare attraverso l'insegnamento. Quando pertanto si dice di qualcuno *che conosce il mondo*, con questo si intende che egli conosce l'uomo e la natura.

[159] §3. Le nostre conoscenze iniziano dai sensi. Questi ci danno la materia a cui la ragione conferisce solo una forma conveniente. Il fondamento di ogni conoscenza sta dunque nei sensi e nell'esperienza, che è, l'ultima, o la nostra propria o una estranea.

Idealmente, dovremmo occuparci soltanto della nostra propria esperienza, ma poiché questa non arriva a conoscere tutto, dato che l'uomo, per ciò che riguarda il tempo, vive sola una piccola parte di esso, e dunque vi può fare da sé poca esperienza, mentre rispetto allo spazio, se anche viaggia, non è in grado di osservare e percepire da se stesso molte cose, siamo perciò costretti a fare necessariamente uso anche di esperienze estranee. Queste, tuttavia, devono essere affidabili, e in quanto tali le esperienze registrate per iscritto devono essere preferite a quelle espresse oralmente.

Così, attraverso le notizie, ampliamo le nostre conoscenze come se noi stessi avessimo vissuto per tutto il mondo passato. Ampliamo la nostra conoscenza del tempo presente attraverso le notizie che ci giungono da paesi stranieri e lontani, come se ci vivessimo noi stessi.

Tuttavia, bisogna notare questo: *ogni* esperienza estranea viene condivisa con noi o come *racconto*, o come *descrizione*. La prima è una *storia*, la seconda una

geografia. La descrizione di un singolo luogo della Terra si chiama *topografia*. – Vengono quindi la *corografia*, cioè la descrizione di una regione e delle sue caratteristiche. – L'*orografia*, descrizione di questi o quei monti. – L'*idrografia*, descrizione delle acque.

Annotazione. A essere in questione è qui la conoscenza del mondo e quindi anche la descrizione di tutta la Terra. Il nome *geografia* viene pertanto usato qui esclusivamente nel suo significato abituale.

§4. Per quanto riguarda il piano della disposizione, dobbiamo assegnare a ognuna delle nostre conoscenze il posto che le è proprio. Alle nostre conoscenze d'esperienza possiamo assegnare però un posto o sotto *concetti*, oppure secondo *il tempo e lo spazio* in cui possono effettivamente essere trovate.

La suddivisione delle conoscenze secondo concetti è *logica*, quella secondo lo spazio e il tempo è invece la suddivisione *fisica*. Attraverso la prima otteniamo un *sistema della natura* (*systema naturae*), come ad esempio quello [160] di *Linneo*, attraverso la seconda, invece, una *descrizione geografica della natura*.

Se per esempio dico: la specie bovina va contata sotto la famiglia dei quadrupedi o anche nel genere degli animali con le unghie fesse, questa è una suddivisione che opero nella mia mente, quindi una suddivisione logica. Il *systema naturae* è, per così dire, una registrazione del tutto, in cui colloco tutte le cose ognuna nella propria classe di appartenenza, si trovino anche esse in regioni della Terra diverse e molto distanti tra loro.

Al contrario, secondo la suddivisione fisica le cose vengono considerate proprio secondo il posto che occupano sulla Terra. Il sistema assegna il posto nella suddivisione delle classi. La descrizione geografica della natura, invece, documenta i posti in cui le cose si trovano effettivamente sulla Terra. Così, per esempio, la lucertola e il coccodrillo sono in fondo lo stesso animale. Il coccodrillo è solo una lucertola mostruosamente grande. Ma i luoghi in cui risiedono sulla Terra l'una e l'altro sono diversi. Il coccodrillo vive nel Nilo, la lucertola sulla terraferma, anche presso di noi. In generale, noi consideriamo qui il teatro della natura, la Terra stessa e le regioni in cui le cose vengono trovate effettivamente. Nel sistema della natura, invece, esse vengono indagate non secondo il luogo di nascita, ma secondo la somiglianza delle conformazioni.

Tuttavia, i sistemi della natura redatti finora possono essere chiamati ben a ragione aggregati della natura, perché un sistema presuppone già l'idea del *tutto* da cui viene derivata la molteplicità delle cose. In senso proprio, non abbiamo ancora alcun *systema naturae*. Nei cosiddetti sistemi delle specie disponibili, le cose sono meramente messe assieme e riordinate l'una accanto all'altra.

Possiamo chiamare entrambe, storia e geografia, in egual misura descrizioni, con la differenza però che la prima è una descrizione secondo *il tempo*, la seconda una descrizione secondo *lo spazio*.

Storia e geografia, dunque, ampliano le nostre conoscenze rispetto al tempo e allo spazio. La *storia* riguarda gli avvenimenti che, rispetto al tempo, si sono succeduti *l'uno dopo l'altro*. La geografia riguarda i fenomeni che, rispetto allo spazio, *accadono nel medesimo tempo*. In base ai diversi oggetti di cui si occupa, essa assume nomi diversi. In conseguenza di ciò, si chiama ora geografia fisica, matematica o politica, [161] ora geografia morale, teologica, letteraria o mercantile².

La storia [*Geschichte*] di ciò che accade in tempi diversi, e che è ciò che costituisce la storia in senso proprio [*und welches die eigentliche Historie ist*], non è altro che una geografia continua, ragion per cui è una delle più gravi mancanze storiche non sapere in che luogo qualcosa sia accaduto o che costituzione con ciò esso abbia avuto.

La storia [*Historie*] si differenzia dunque dalla geografia solo rispetto allo spazio e al tempo. La prima è, come abbiamo detto, una notizia su avvenimenti che si susseguono l'un l'altro, e si riferisce al tempo. L'altra, invece, è una notizia su avvenimenti che si svolgono l'uno accanto all'altro nello spazio. La storia è un racconto, la geografia, invece, una descrizione. Pertanto, possiamo certo avere anche una *descrizione della natura*, ma non una *storia della natura*.

Nel modo in cui viene usata da tanti, quest'ultima denominazione è, infatti, completamente errata. Ma poiché di solito, se solo abbiamo il nome, [162] crediamo di avere con esso anche la cosa, nessuno pensi ora di fornire davvero una tale storia della natura.

La storia della natura contiene la molteplicità della geografia per come è stata infatti in tempi diversi, ma non come è adesso in uno stesso tempo, perché questa sarebbe esattamente una descrizione della natura. Soltanto se si riferissero gli eventi dell'intera natura per come si sono articolati attraverso tutti i tempi, solo così e solo allora si fornirebbe una storia della natura nel senso corretto del termine. Se esaminassimo, per esempio, come le diverse razze di cani si sono generate da un unico ceppo e quali cambiamenti hanno subito attraverso tutti i tempi in base alla diversità delle regioni, al clima, alla riproduzione ecc., questa sarebbe una storia naturale dei cani – e una tale storia potrebbe essere fornita per ogni singola parte della natura, per esempio per le piante, e così via³. L'unico problema è che tale storia si sarebbe principalmente costretti a indovinarla per via di esperimenti, mentre idealmente si dovrebbe essere in condizione di dare notizie esatte su tutto. La storia della natura, infatti, non è per niente più giovane del mondo stesso, mentre noi non possiamo garantire la sicurezza di nessuna delle nostre notizie prima dell'invenzione della scrittura. E quale immenso lasso di tempo, probabilmente incomparabilmente più grande di quello che viene solitamente documentato nella storia, si trova al di là di essa!

La vera filosofia consiste tuttavia nell'andar dietro alla diversità e molteplicità di una cosa attraverso tutti i tempi. Se si potessero rendere domestici i cavalli

selvaggi della steppa, si avrebbero così cavalli molto resistenti. Si nota che l'asino e il cavallo discendono da un ceppo comune e che il cavallo selvaggio è il ceppo ancestrale perché ha le orecchie lunghe. Così, inoltre, anche la pecora è simile alla capra, e la differenza sta qui unicamente nel modo di allevamento. E lo stesso vale anche per la vite, etc.

Se si potesse ripercorrere pertanto lo stato della natura in modo da notare quali mutamenti ha subito nel corso di tutti i tempi: allora questo procedimento darebbe un'autentica storia della natura.

Il nome geografia indica dunque una descrizione della natura, e precisamente di tutta la Terra. La geografia e la storia colmano l'intera [163] estensione delle nostre conoscenze; la geografia quella dello spazio, la storia, invece, quella del tempo.

Di solito ammettiamo una geografia antica e una moderna, perché la geografia è esistita in ogni tempo. Ma qual era prima, la storia o la geografia? L'ultima sta a fondamento della prima, perché gli avvenimenti devono pur riferirsi a qualcosa. La storia è in incessante progresso; ma anche le cose cambiano, e in certe epoche danno luogo a una geografia completamente diversa. Sostrato è dunque la geografia. Ora, abbiamo una storia antica, quindi dobbiamo avere naturalmente anche una geografia antica.

La geografia dell'epoca presente è quella che conosciamo meglio. Oltre che ad altri scopi più immediati, essa serve anche a chiarire la geografia antica mediante la storia. Solo che la nostra abituale geografia scolastica è molto carente, benché nulla sia in grado di far luce sul sano intelletto umano più della stessa geografia. Poiché infatti l'intelletto comune si riferisce all'esperienza, non gli è possibile estendersi in un modo anche solo lontanamente considerevole senza conoscenza della geografia. Per molti, le notizie sui giornali sono indifferenti. Questo perché non sanno ricondurre le notizie al loro luogo. Non hanno una visione delle terre, del mare e dell'intera superficie terrestre. Eppure, quando là si fa riferimento, per esempio, al viaggio di navi nel Mar Glaciale Artico, si tratta di una questione del massimo interesse, perché la scoperta, in cui certo oggi difficilmente si può sperare, o anche solo la possibilità del passaggio attraverso il Mar Glaciale Artico dovrebbe portare in tutta Europa i più importanti cambiamenti. C'è difficilmente una nazione in cui l'intelletto si è esteso così universalmente e fino alle classi sociali più umili come nel caso degli inglesi. Causa di ciò sono i giornali, la cui lettura presuppone un concetto esteso dell'intera superficie terrestre, perché altrimenti tutte le notizie contenute in essi ci sono indifferenti, dato che non sappiamo farne alcuna applicazione. I peruviani sono talmente ingenui da infilarsi in bocca tutto ciò che viene loro offerto perché non sono in grado di intendere come poterne fare un uso più appropriato [*eine zweckmäßigere Anwendung*]. Quelle persone che non capiscono come utilizzare le notizie dei giornali perché non sanno dove collocarle, si trovano se non nella stessa, almeno in una situazione molto simile a quella di questi poveri peruviani.

[164] §5. La *geografia fisica* è dunque un *compendio* [Abriss] *generale della natura*, e poiché non costituisce solo il fondamento della storia, ma anche di tutte le restanti possibili geografie, le parti principali di ognuna di queste ultime devono parimenti essere trattate qui in breve. A questa sede appartiene pertanto:

1. *La geografia matematica*, in cui si tratta la forma, la grandezza e il movimento della Terra, così come il suo rapporto con il sistema solare in cui si trova.

2. *La geografia morale*, in cui il discorso verte sui diversi costumi e caratteri degli uomini in base alle diverse regioni. Per esempio, in Cina e soprattutto in Giappone il parricidio viene punito come il più terribile dei crimini non solo torturando a morte nel modo più crudele il malfattore stesso, ma uccidendo anche tutta la sua famiglia e rinchiudendo in prigione tutti i vicini che vivevano con lui nella stessa strada. Si crede, infatti, che un tale crimine non possa in alcun modo essere avvenuto all'improvviso, ma solo gradualmente, per cui i vicini avrebbero potuto prevederlo e segnalarlo all'autorità. In Lapponia, invece, viene ritenuto uno dei più alti doveri d'amore quando il figlio uccide con un tendine di renna il padre ferito durante la caccia, motivo per cui il padre stesso lo affida sempre al figlio prediletto.

3. *La geografia politica*. Se il primo principio fondamentale di una società civile è una legge universale, nonché un potere irresistibile in caso di sua violazione, ma la legge si riferisce parimenti alla natura del territorio e dei suoi abitanti, allora la geografia politica appartiene anch'essa a questa sede, in quanto si fonda interamente sulla geografia fisica. Sarebbe delle più alta utilità per l'intero Impero, se tutti i fiumi di Russia sfociassero a sud, solo che essi scorrono invece quasi tutti verso il Mar Glaciale Artico. In Persia ci sono stati per lungo tempo due reggenti che avevano la loro sede l'uno a Isfahan, l'altro, invece, a Kandahar. Nessuno dei due fu in grado di sopraffare l'altro, perché glielo impediva il deserto del Kerman che stava tra loro, che è più grande di molti mari.

4. *La geografia mercantile*. Se un paese della Terra ha in sovrabbondanza qualcosa di cui un altro deve completamente fare a meno, [165] uno stato di uniformità viene mantenuto in tutto il mondo per mezzo del commercio. Sarà dunque necessario indicare qui perché e da dove un paese ha abbondanza di qualcosa di cui un altro manca. Più di qualsiasi altra cosa, è l'attività commerciale che ha affinato gli uomini e fondato la loro conoscenza reciproca⁴.

5. *La geografia teologica*. Poiché i principi teologici sono sottoposti per la maggior parte a cambiamenti davvero essenziali a seconda della diversità del territorio, anche su ciò dovranno essere fornite qui le informazioni più necessarie. Si confronti, ad esempio, la religione cristiana in Oriente e quella in Occidente, e qua come là le sue ancora più sottili sfumature. Ma la cosa è ancora più evidente nel caso di religioni che differiscono per essenza nei loro principi fondamentali. Cfr. H.E.G. Paulus, *Memorabilien*, Pt. I, Leipzig 1791, p. 129, e Von Breitenbauch, nel secondo dei suoi libri su citati.

Oltre a ciò, dovranno essere notate qui le discrepanze della natura nella differenza tra gioventù e vecchiaia, come anche le peculiarità di ogni paese. Gli animali, per esempio, ma non quelli autoctoni, a meno che non presentino una costituzione diversa in altri paesi. Così, tra gli altri,, in Italia gli usignoli non cantano tanto forte come nelle regioni del nord. Nelle isole deserte, i cani non abbiano affatto. E il discorso dovrà vertere anche sulle piante, le rocce, la vegetazione, le montagne, ecc.

L'utilità di questo studio è molto estesa. Esso serve a dare un ordinamento conforme al fine alle nostre conoscenze, serve al nostro proprio piacere e offre un ricco materiale alle nostre conversazioni in società.

§6. Prima di passare effettivamente alla trattazione della geografia fisica stessa, dobbiamo innanzitutto farci ancora un concetto preliminare della geografia matematica sulla base delle annotazioni preliminari già premesse, perché avremo troppo spesso bisogno di esso in quella trattazione. Pertanto, facciamo qui menzione della forma, della grandezza e del movimento della Terra, nonché della sua relazione con il restante edificio cosmico.

[166] *Concetti matematici preliminari*

§7. Dunque, per quanto riguarda innanzitutto la forma della Terra, questa è quasi sferica o, come *Newton* ha determinato con più esattezza a partire dalle sue leggi centrali e dell'attrazione, uno sferoide, affermazione che è stata in seguito confermata attraverso ripetute osservazioni e misurazioni⁵.

Con ciò ci si rappresenta però la figura della Terra come se fosse completamente circondata dall'acqua, dunque secondo una forma idrostatica. Le montagne non fanno qui alcuna differenza, perché non possono mai essere osservate nell'ombra della Terra, e la più alta di esse costituisce a mala pena la 1900^a parte del diametro terrestre⁶. Le prove della forma rotonda della Terra sono le seguenti:

1. Il Sole non sorge e tramonta contemporaneamente in ogni luogo, come dovrebbe accadere se la Terra, come si è creduto per lungo tempo, fosse un piano. Tuttavia, da ciò seguirebbe soltanto che la Terra è tonda da oriente a occidente. Ma

2. anche l'altezza dei poli e l'altezza meridiana non sono le stesse in tutti i luoghi. Se ci spostiamo di quindici miglia più a sud, la Stella Polare è di un grado più bassa, e di un grado più alta se ci spostiamo altrettanto a nord, finché non appare finalmente allo zenit sopra il Polo stesso. Da ciò deduciamo dunque con pieno diritto la forma arrotondata della Terra anche da nord a sud.

3. In occasione delle eclissi lunari, l'ombra della Terra è sempre tonda, e ciò a prescindere dalle sue posizioni.

4. Persino in alto mare, con la vista non ostacolata, scorgiamo dapprima solo le cime più alte degli oggetti e solo a poco a poco le loro parti inferiori.

[167] 5. La Terra è stata circumnavigata in tutte le direzioni, cosa che non sarebbe stata possibile se non avesse avuto una forma sferica⁷.

La forma sferoidale della Terra appena menzionata dipende dal fatto che tutta la materia che si trova prossima ai poli si raccoglie verso l'equatore e si accumula intorno a esso secondo le leggi della gravità e della forza centrifuga, cosa che accadrebbe anche se la Terra fosse completamente circondata dall'acqua, e ciò perché non c'è alcun movimento intorno al polo, mentre esso è più forte all'equatore, motivo per cui, inoltre, la media che passa attraverso i poli (l'asse terrestre) è inferiore all'equatore. *Newton* ha dimostrato che ogni corpo liberamente mobile deve assumere questa forma.

Ora, se la figura della Terra è sferoidale, ci sono anche antipodi che hanno come noi il cielo sopra di loro e la Terra sotto i piedi. L'opinione comune secondo cui quelli che abitano sotto di noi e che ci rivolgono i piedi dovrebbero cadere nel vuoto è triviale, perché, secondo le leggi della gravità che si origina dall'attrazione della Terra, tutto ciò che si trova sulla Terra deve muoversi verso il suo centro, cosicché neppure la più piccola particella è in grado di allontanarsi da essa. Se un corpo potesse cadere attraverso la Terra dall'altra parte, opposta, di essa, le starebbe non sotto, ma di nuovo sopra. Perché un corpo che sale tanto quanto è caduto non sta sotto, ma sopra. Quel corpo cade solo fino al centro; da lì in poi deve di nuovo salire. Ma la forza che lo ha spinto verso il centro continuerebbe a spingerlo anche oltre, se il suo peso non lo spingesse all'inverso indietro. Si può confrontare con ciò la dottrina del pendolo.

Ora, poiché le terre emerse finora conosciute si trovano, insieme alle montagne, quasi esclusivamente in un unico emisfero della Terra, quello a nord, mentre l'acqua si trova principalmente nell'emisfero opposto, si è ipotizzato che anche a sud debba esserci molta più terra di quanta ne sia stata scoperta finora, e ciò per la ragione che altrimenti non saremmo in grado di spiegare in che modo la Terra possa mantenere il suo equilibrio. Dovremmo [168] supporre che la gente si rappresenti la Terra come una nave in cui, per ragioni di equilibrio, un lato non dev'esser caricato più dell'altro. Ma ciò è necessario solo per un corpo galleggiante. Se volessimo assumere che la Terra dirige il proprio corso verso un punto esterno a essa, allora sarebbe certo necessario assumere un tale equilibrio, solo che sulla Terra tutto ha la propria gravità rivolta verso il centro. Qui tutte le parti e i corpi si attraggono l'un l'altro, e anzi maggiore è la massa, più forte è la sua attrazione. Ora, poiché la Terra ha una massa di gran lunga superiore a tutti i corpi presenti su di essa, essa deve anche attrarre con la massima forza tutti gli altri corpi, e da ciò deriva la gravità di tutti i corpi in direzione della Terra.

La rotazione della Terra, che è ancora necessaria in aggiunta all'attrazione, è una forza a causa della quale tutti i corpi verrebbero scagliati lontano dalla Terra, se l'effetto incomparabilmente più forte della gravità non lo impedisse. I corpi hanno la loro più piena gravità ai poli, perché lì la forza centrifuga è più debole.

All'inverso, essa più forte all'equatore, ed è per questo che lì la differenza di gravità è più evidente. Se volessimo assumere che la Terra sia non uno sferoide, ma una vera e propria sfera, e che non vi fosse acqua sulla sua superficie, ma che ci fosse da qualche parte una montagna, a prescindere dal luogo in cui si trovi, questa montagna dovrebbe spostarsi progressivamente sempre più vicina all'equatore, fino a trovarsi infine completamente al di sotto di esso. Oppure, se sulla Terra ci fossero, nelle stesse circostanze, due montagne di questo tipo, entrambe si equilibrerebbero. La forza centrifuga è pertanto in grado di portare la materia sempre più vicino all'equatore. Nonostante il movimento sia molto lieve, non è affatto privo di effetto, perché ha luogo incessantemente. Allo stesso modo in cui, infatti, in generale non dobbiamo considerare del tutto insignificante nemmeno la più piccola forza, perché, per quanto debole essa possa essere, attraverso la sua ripetuta e molteplice espressione deve infine raggiungere e produrre comunque una certa grandezza. Il più piccolo insetto, con il suo salto, respinge la Terra; soltanto che, come la massa dell'insetto è proporzionale alla massa di tutta la Terra, così anche la spinta dell'insetto è proporzionale al movimento della Terra che nasce da questa spinta. Pertanto, non dobbiamo essere colpiti dal fatto che si creda che i poli della Terra possano essere distorti, ad esempio con lo spostamento di più materia da un lato della Terra all'altro.

Così, anche i continenti della Terra nei due [169] emisferi possono non stare in proporzione reciproca rispetto all'equilibrio. La causa è questa: che la Terra non è una sfera perfetta ma appiattita, ossia uno sferoide, come diventa qualsiasi corpo fluido non appena si muove in modo regolare.

La Terra è quindi in rilievo o dalle quattro e mezzo fino alle sei miglia tedesche più alta all'equatore che ai poli. All'equatore abbiamo dunque una montagna di circa sei miglia d'altitudine. In rapporto a questa montagna, tutte le rimanenti montagne e terre non costituiscono nemmeno un millesimo di parte, poiché la base delle montagne più evidenti raggiunge solo il mezzo miglio, mentre quel rilievo si estende all'intero equatore. Se dunque tutte le terre emerse della Terra non sono in grado di smuovere quel monte dalla sua posizione, nemmeno l'asse terrestre può spostarsi, ma resta costantemente lo stesso. Questa forma e questo appiattimento della Terra sono allora, secondo tutto ciò, un effetto del tutto naturale della forza centrifuga e dell'attrazione nella loro azione reciproca.

§8. La grandezza della Terra raggiunge le 5.400 miglia di circonferenza, di cui dunque 1.720 sono da contare sul suo diametro. Ma poiché un miglio è assunto come la quindicesima parte di un grado, e ogni cerchio, sia esso grande o piccolo, contiene 360 gradi, ognuno dei quali può essere diviso in 15 parti, sarò in grado di attribuire in assoluto una misura di 5.400 miglia a ogni sfera, anche alla più piccola, perché, se moltiplico i 360 gradi del cerchio più piccolo per la quindicesima parte di un grado, cioè per 15, ottengo la somma di 5.400. Di conseguenza, non so

quasi niente, se so solo che la Terra ha una circonferenza di 5.400 miglia, ognuna delle quali è la quindicesima parte di un grado. La misura delle miglia cui qui si fa riferimento deve essere pertanto determinata con più esattezza.

In Sassonia esiste un duplice miglio, e cioè un miglio di polizia, che contiene 30.000 piedi manuali, e un miglio geografico di 2.000 verghe renane o 24.000 piedi manuali. Un passo geometrico, ovvero la millesima parte di un quarto di miglio tedesco, equivale a 5 piedi o, secondo gli ultimi calcoli, a 6 piedi renani. In altre parole: la sessantesima parte di un grado della Terra è un minuto della Terra. La millesima parte di un tale minuto, tuttavia, è un passo geometrico. Se un miglio geografico equivale dunque a 24.000 [170] piedi manuali, ma 15 di queste miglia corrispondono a un grado, la grandezza di un minuto della Terra ammonta a un quarto di miglio ed è lunga 6.000 piedi manuali. Di conseguenza, la millesima parte di questo minuto ha 6 piedi, e questo è il passo geometrico. Secondo le misurazioni antiche, un miglio geografico aveva solo 20.000 piedi manuali, di conseguenza, a sua volta il quarto di miglio o minuto della Terra solo 5.000, e il passo geometrico solo 5 piedi.

Un *Klafter* o *tesa* corrisponde a quello che i marinai chiamano *braccio* e che i minatori chiamano *Lachter*. Esso equivale a 6 piedi o a 5 cubiti di Dresda.

Annotazione. Per quanto riguarda la nuova misura francese, va notato che ogni *quadrante* è diviso in 100 gradi. Ogni grado contiene 100 minuti e ogni minuto 100 secondi. Il grado usuale sta al nuovo grado francese come 60 a 54, o come 10 a 9, mentre il vecchio minuto del cerchio sta al nuovo come 60 a 32,4, e il vecchio secondo al nuovo come 1 a 0,324. Cfr. [F.] von Zach, *Allgem[eine] geograph[ische] Ephemeriden*, vol. I, p. 91, eccellente rivista nella quale si possono trovare molte cose oltremodo splendide sugli oggetti della geografia matematica e fisica, così come sulle più vecchie e più nuove misurazioni della Terra e dei gradi. Oltre a quanto detto in precedenza sul miglio geografico, cfr. necessariamente ancora [J.S.T.] Gehler, *Physikalisches Wörterbuch*, Pt. III, pp. 186 ss., così come le tavole delle miglia in [A.C.] Gaspari, Op. cit., pp. 80 ss.

§9. La Terra si muove da occidente a oriente, da cui segue che il sole e le stelle sorgono nella direzione opposta al movimento della Terra, e cioè da oriente a occidente.

Il moto del firmamento è solo apparente, perché, poiché non percepiamo il movimento della Terra su cui ci troviamo, abbiamo un movimento apparente del cielo, ma non sappiamo se a muoversi sia il cielo o la Terra. La situazione è la stessa di quando una nave è all'ancora in mare aperto e calmo, ma un'altra nave, su cui per esempio potrei trovarmi, viene sospinta dalla corrente, di modo che non so quale delle due navi si muova, se la prima o la seconda. Allo stesso modo, infatti, non sappiamo se cambi il firmamento o se cambiamo noi la nostra posizione. La prova che la Terra non sta ferma, ma che è proprio la Terra a muoversi ha dovuto essere condotta con straordinaria sottigliezza.

[171] Se la Terra non avesse alcun moto, non si potrebbe determinare su di essa alcun cerchio. Ora, poiché essa ha, al contrario, un duplice moto, uno cioè intorno al suo asse, o giornaliero, e l'altro intorno al sole, o annuale, da ciò si originano i seguenti punti e le seguenti linee:

I. Dal moto della Terra attorno al suo asse derivano:

1. Due punti che non hanno alcun moto ma rimangono fissi, e attorno ai quali si muove tutta la Terra. Questi punti si chiamano *poli*, polo sud e polo nord. La linea che penso tracciata attraverso i poli, invece, può essere chiamata asse. Sulla superficie sferica sulla quale solitamente non distinguiamo nulla abbiamo, dunque, già due punti e una linea. Ma poiché l'asse si trova all'interno della sfera, per il momento non ci interessa oltre.

2. Attraverso quei due punti, i poli, si può tracciare un cerchio che taglia la Terra a metà, e questo è il *meridiano*. Ora, si può tracciare un numero infinito di meridiani, perché a partire dai due punti siamo in grado di tracciare molto cerchi.

Ma come disegno, ora, il meridiano di ogni luogo? – Questa domanda è alla base di un nuovo tipo di punti, che vengono determinati da ciascun osservatore e non sono fissi.

Nel mezzo della Terra, infatti, come in ogni sfera o in ogni cerchio, devo assumere un centro. A partire da questo, posso tracciare una linea che, attraverso la mia posizione, passa sulla mia testa e da questa di nuovo attraverso il centro. Ho con ciò lo *zenit* e il *nadir*, che ognuno determina per sé e attraverso sé. Tra due punti può essere tracciata soltanto una linea. Nella Terra c'è un punto e sopra di me un altro. I due delimitano una e una stessa linea. Ognuno ha dunque il proprio zenit, perché è in grado di tracciare una linea dal centro al di sopra di sé. Pertanto, ognuno può avere anche il proprio meridiano. Molti luoghi, tuttavia, hanno un unico meridiano, come ad esempio Königsberg e il Capo di Buona Speranza.

Ogni meridiano divide la Terra in due parti, la parte est e la parte ovest. Quei luoghi che cadono sotto lo stesso meridiano non si distinguono, tuttavia, in base all'est o all'ovest, ma in base al sud o al nord, dato che qui un luogo può trovarsi più vicino solo al sud [172] o al nord di un altro. Eppure, in ogni meridiano si devono di nuovo distinguere due parti, nella misura in cui esso è, infatti, il meridiano del nostro luogo e subito a seguire il meridiano anche del nostro antipodo. Quando da noi il sole fa mezzogiorno, si trova nel nostro meridiano. A mezzanotte, invece, si trova nel meridiano del nostro antipodo.

Ci sono, dunque, tanti meridiani quante diverse posizioni si lasciano pensare intorno alla Terra da est a ovest.

3. La rotazione della Terra attorno al proprio asse determina ancora un'altra linea, e questa è l'*equatore*, che è equidistante da entrambi i poli, ma in cui il movimento della Terra è massimo. Più ci si avvicina ai poli, infatti, più stretti diventano i cerchi e dunque inferiore il movimento. La linea che dista in maniera uguale da entrambi i poli divide anche la Terra in due parti uguali, e cioè negli

emisferi meridionale e settentrionale. Mentre il meridiano poteva essere molteplice, vi è un'unica circonferenza che dista in maniera uguale da entrambi i poli, e che è dunque da questo determinata. Le due metà della Terra che risultano da questa linea vengono chiamate emisferi. Certo, come abbiamo già detto, anche ogni meridiano divide la Terra in due emisferi, solo che questi non sono in alcun modo determinati dalla natura. I luoghi sotto un unico meridiano vengono distinti in base al sud e al nord ma non in base all'est e all'ovest. Quelli che cadono sotto l'equatore, invece, sono diversi in base all'est e all'ovest, ma non in base al sud e al nord. Come il meridiano serve dunque a differenziare l'est dall'ovest, così l'equatore serve a differenziare il nord dal sud.

Ora, ogni cerchio ha 360 gradi, dunque anche l'equatore. Quest'ultimo fornisce la determinazione di quanti gradi un luogo dista dall'est all'ovest. Ma poiché, ora, sorge la domanda da dove si dovrebbe con ciò iniziare propriamente a contare i gradi, dato che l'equatore è una circonferenza che non ha alcun punto d'inizio fisso e su cui si può dunque scegliere a piacere, si è adesso assunto davvero a piacimento un primo punto sull'equatore, dal quale si iniziano a contare i gradi dell'equatore. Questo primo punto viene assunto per mezzo del disegno di un meridiano che passa per l'isola *El Hierro*, a partire dal quale [173] l'equatore viene suddiviso in determinati gradi da ovest a est, perché il movimento della Terra è proprio questo⁸.

Abbiamo pertanto due circonferenze che si intersecano l'un l'altra ad angolo retto. Se ora voglio venire a conoscenza della differenza di posizione di due luoghi per quanto riguarda la loro posizione da ovest a est, diciamo per esempio di Königsberg e Mosca, traccio il meridiano di entrambe le città, ed entrambi i meridiani intersecano l'equatore. Si conta di conseguenza la differenza di gradi sull'equatore. L'arco tra i due meridiani e il numero dei gradi rende quindi visibile la differenza nella posizione dei due luoghi da ovest a est.

Tutti i gradi del meridiano sono gradi di latitudine, tutti i gradi dell'equatore sono gradi di longitudine. Ma cosa significa allora la latitudine e la longitudine di un luogo? – La latitudine è la distanza di un luogo dall'equatore e viene misurata sul meridiano; la longitudine, invece, è la distanza di un luogo dal meridiano e viene misurata sull'equatore, e precisamente da ovest a est. Quest'ultima viene chiamata anche longitudine del mare ed è difficile da ricavare a causa dell'uniformità della configurazione del cielo. La latitudine, di contro, si lascia trovare facilmente, perché con il cambiamento di latitudine cambia sempre anche la configurazione del cielo, e perché è uguale, inoltre, all'altezza dei poli. Tuttavia, così come si danno due emisferi, si dà anche una doppia latitudine, una nord e una sud. La massima latitudine possibile arriva a 90 gradi, ed è il polo. I luoghi che cadono sotto l'equatore non hanno invece alcuna latitudine.

Per quanto riguarda la longitudine, bisogna notare ancora che, poiché essa si inizia a contare da ovest, ogni luogo dovrebbe avere soltanto una longitudine est. *Philadelphia*, per esempio, dovrebbe avere 320 gradi di longitudine est,

nonostante questa città disti solo 40 gradi dal [174] primo meridiano, qualora contassimo al contrario i gradi da est. Se di contro contiamo la longitudine est, dobbiamo iniziare dal primo grado e da questo contare i restanti gradi intorno a tutta la Terra. La longitudine, dunque, dovrebbe essere determinata una volta per tutte, e sempre soltanto o verso est, o verso ovest. Tuttavia, ci si è spesso discostati da ciò, perché sembra troppo prolisso contare sempre lungo l'intero numero dei gradi. Per questo oggi diciamo sia che Philadelphia ha 40 gradi di longitudine ovest, sia che ha 320 gradi di longitudine est.

Oltre all'equatore, esistono ancora altre circonferenze o cerchi che corrono paralleli a esso, il cui numero potrebbe essere notevolmente aumentato. Questi si chiamano circoli diurni (*circuli diurni*). Per mezzo di tali paralleli viene determinata la differenza di posizione dei Paesi, indicata col nome del clima.

I luoghi che si trovano su uno stesso parallelo hanno la stessa latitudine, così come i luoghi che cadono sotto lo stesso meridiano hanno a loro volta la stessa longitudine, e ciò perché i primi sono equidistanti dall'equatore, mentre i secondi sono equidistanti dal primo meridiano.

I luoghi che si trovano su un unico parallelo hanno lo stesso clima (come si intende da sé, geografico, non fisico), mentre invece quelli che cadono sotto lo stesso meridiano hanno climi diversi, poiché il meridiano corre attraverso tutti i paralleli. Le regioni che si trovano in emisferi diversi ma sono equidistanti dall'equatore hanno lo stesso clima. – I luoghi che si trovano sotto un unico meridiano hanno il mezzogiorno a una stessa ora. I luoghi, invece, che si trovano nello stesso parallelo non hanno certo il mezzogiorno in contemporanea, ma hanno una durata del giorno uniforme, cosa che non vale all'inverso nel caso opposto di luoghi che hanno un unico meridiano. Al di sotto dell'equatore, dove l'altezza polare e la differenza ascensionale è = 0, la durata del giorno è sempre la stessa, per l'esattezza di 12 ore. Tale uguale durata del giorno e della notte si verifica, però, solo due volte l'anno per le regioni che si trovano ai lati dell'equatore, verso i poli, e cioè il 20 marzo e il 23 settembre, quando il sole si trova esattamente all'equatore. Se poi da lì sale più in alto, sopra l'emisfero settentrionale, allora in questo i giorni si allungano e diventano più brevi nell'emisfero meridionale, così come accade l'inverso quando nell'eclittica si avvicina di più al polo sud.

Il giorno più lungo per l'emisfero settentrionale è il 21 giugno, per quello meridionale il 21 dicembre, così come quest'ultimo è il più corto nel primo e l'altro il più corto nel secondo. A Königsberg, per esempio, il giorno più lungo è di 17 ore e 4 minuti, il più corto di 6 ore e 56 minuti. Ai poli, il giorno dura metà dell'anno, al polo sud dal 23 settembre al 20 marzo, al polo nord dal 20 marzo al 23 settembre, e allo stesso modo c'è lì anche una notte semestrale, resa tuttavia più sopportabile dalle aurore boreali etc.

Gli antichi suddividevano la Terra in climi in modo che, dove il giorno si allungava di un'intera ora, iniziava un nuovo clima.

Così abbiamo esaminato finora e imparato a conoscere più nel dettaglio soltanto il movimento della Terra attorno al proprio asse.

II. Un secondo movimento della Terra è quello del suo corso annuale o della sua rotazione intorno al Sole. Il cerchio da notare qui è l'orbita della Terra o l'orbita *apparente* del Sole. Ma la Terra si muove con ciò in un cerchio il cui centro è il Sole. Se l'asse della Terra formasse un angolo retto con l'orbita terrestre, o se fosse sempre perpendicolare a questa, anche il Sole si troverebbe continuamente all'equatore e causerebbe un equinozio costante, sopprimendo però in tutta la Terra anche l'alternarsi delle stagioni. L'asse terrestre, tuttavia, non è effettivamente perpendicolare a quell'orbita, ma si discosta da una tale posizione di 23 gradi e mezzo⁹.

Ora, se, in base a quanto detto sopra, la Terra ha un orientamento obliquo rispetto al Sole, ne consegue anche che un emisfero deve [176] essere più distante dal Sole rispetto all'altro, e che da ciò si origina persino l'alternarsi delle stagioni. Il movimento ha con questo la particolarità che, nel suo movimento intorno al Sole, la Terra ha sempre un orientamento dell'asse uniforme. La posizione dell'asse rispetto all'orbita è la stessa. L'asse, cioè, resta per tutto l'anno parallelo, e l'inclinazione dell'asse sul piano della sua orbita rimane sempre uguale. Se così non fosse, il Sole sarebbe visibile solo da metà della Terra. Il 21 dicembre, la Terra si trova a nord, e dunque, a causa dell'orientamento inclinato, il lato settentrionale della Terra è più lontano dal Sole, di conseguenza è inverno. Allora il Sole non illumina la Terra neppure fino al polo nord, ma la maggior parte dell'emisfero settentrionale è priva della sua luce e, dove c'è ancora, il giorno diventa in questo periodo proporzionalmente più corto.

Quando invece il 21 marzo la Terra si trova a ovest, il Sole si trova all'equatore, e tutti hanno così un giorno come una notte di uguale lunghezza, dato che il Sole illumina in egual misura entrambi i poli. Intorno al 21 giugno, il sole illumina la maggior parte dell'emisfero settentrionale, e la regione del polo sud è nell'ombra, dunque lì il giorno è più lungo della notte, esattamente all'opposto di quanto osservato in precedenza riguardo al 21 dicembre. Il 21 settembre, infine, il Sole è di nuovo all'equatore, e di conseguenza, per la seconda volta nell'anno, il giorno e la notte sono uguali.

La differenza delle stagioni dipende pertanto dalla posizione inclinata della Terra nella sua orbita. Se la Terra fosse ancora più inclinata, nella parte settentrionale o in inverno non ci sarebbe il giorno, e nella parte meridionale o in estate non vi sarebbe notte.

Ora, da questo movimento della Terra intorno al Sole si generano i seguenti cerchi:

1. I *tropici (tropici)*, che vengono disegnati per mezzo dei punti in cui il Sole raggiunge la sua distanza massima dall'equatore, e da cui si avvicina in seguito di nuovo gradualmente all'equatore. In ogni emisfero si trova uno di questi tropici, per la precisione a una distanza di 23° 30' dall'equatore. Questi costituiscono l'inclinazione dell'eclittica in mancanza della quale essa cadrebbe all'equatore e

l'alternarsi delle stagioni verrebbe soppresso. La deviazione dell'eclittica è pertanto di $23^{\circ} 30'$. Il Sole si trova a un certo momento allo zenit di [177] ogni luogo situato tra i tropici, ma non tocca mai lo zenit di un luogo che stia al di fuori dei tropici. Là esso brilla fin nel fondo di un pozzo profondo, qui ne illumina invece soltanto un lato.

2. I *circoli polari* vengono tracciati a una distanza di $23^{\circ} 30'$ dai poli, e su ogni emisfero se ne trova uno. Tutti i Paesi che si trovano all'interno dei circoli polari almeno una volta all'anno non hanno né alba, né tramonto del Sole.

3. *Da ultimo, noi dobbiamo* far menzione anche di un altro cerchio che non è prodotto né dal movimento della Terra attorno al proprio asse, né dal suo movimento intorno al Sole, ma dall'ottica. Questo è l'orizzonte, il quale è un cerchio che sta alla stessa distanza dallo zenit e dal nadir.

§10. Le zone o fasce della Terra sono le seguenti:

1. *La zona calda*, che sta tra i due tropici. Poiché l'equatore divide la Terra in due emisferi, possiamo dire che ci sono due zone calde, cioè una in ogni emisfero. Ci saranno dunque una zona calda settentrionale e una meridionale.

2. *Le due zone temperate*. Queste si trovano tra i tropici e i circoli polari e si chiamano così perché la maggior parte degli uomini e delle specie animali sono in grado di vivere verso il centro di esse. Tuttavia, in prossimità dei tropici fa più caldo in esse che all'equatore stesso, perché il Sole rimane qui più a lungo prossimo allo zenit, e il giorno è più lungo che all'equatore, dove il giorno e la notte sono costantemente uguali, e dunque la notte è abbastanza lunga da causare un opportuno raffreddamento della Terra.

3. *Le due zone fredde* si trovano tra i circoli polari e i poli in entrambi gli emisferi.

Le zone stanno in relazione con la durata del giorno delle regioni. La zona calda, infatti, comprende in sé tutte quelle regioni (luoghi) in cui il giorno e la notte hanno una durata abbastanza simile. Tutti i luoghi in questa zona hanno il Sole allo zenit due volte l'anno. Le zone temperate, di contro, interessano tutti quei luoghi in cui anche il giorno più lungo non raggiunge comunque le 24 ore. I Paesi situati in questa zona non hanno mai il sole al loro zenit, ma hanno [178] per tutto l'anno il giorno e la notte che, in 24 ore, si alternano una volta. Nelle zone fredde, infine, stanno quei luoghi in cui il giorno più lungo dura metà dell'anno. Il giorno più lungo è dunque sempre tanto più lungo, quando più ci si avvicina ai poli. Gli eventuali abitanti delle regioni ai poli avrebbero come orizzonte l'equatore, e di conseguenza il Sole rimarrebbe per un'intera metà dell'anno costantemente al loro orizzonte.

§11. Finora abbiamo parlato delle circonferenze e dei mutamenti provocati dal movimento della Terra intorno al Sole sulla prima. Ma ci sono diversi corpi celesti che, da un certo punto di vista, esercitano innegabilmente un influsso molto stretto sulla Terra, anche se questo non si lascia dimostrare in modo altrettanto dettagliato per tutti, ma di uno più, dell'altro meno. – Il complesso di questi corpi celesti che

stanno l'un altro in un rapporto comune più stretto si chiama sistema solare. Un tale sistema è costituito, a sua volta, da un corpo auto-luminoso e da più corpi opachi che ricevono da esso la loro luce. Questi ultimi si chiamano pianeti, i primi soli o, in riferimento ad altri sistemi solari diversi dal nostro, stelle fisse.

Immutabilmente fisso, ruotando intorno al proprio asse solo una volta ogni 25 giorni e 12 ore circa, il Sole sta al centro del nostro sistema e diffonde la sua luce, come sulla nostra Terra, così anche su tutti i corpi celesti che ruotano intorno a esso in determinati cerchi più o meno grandi e che perciò sono chiamati pianeti (stelle erranti)¹⁰.

Il Sole ha una grandezza che supera quasi di un milione e mezzo di volte la nostra Terra e il suo diametro raggiunge le 193.871,35 miglia. Se sia un corpo più solido o più rado della Terra, se sia in sé una massa di luce o da dove gli vengano la luce e il calore che diffonde intorno a sé: su tutto ciò ci sono molte possibili opinioni, così come sui punti tanto scuri quanto eminentemente luminosi che si trovano sulla sua superficie, di cui i primi sono chiamati macchie solari, gli altri brillamenti solari.

[179] Al sistema del nostro Sole appartengono, per quanto ne sappiamo, sette pianeti, tra i quali *Mercurio* ha la sua orbita a una distanza media dal Sole di otto milioni di miglia, *Venere* di quindici milioni, la *Terra* di ventiquattro, *Marte* di trentuno, *Giove* di centodieci, *Saturno* di centonovanta, e *Urano* di quattrocento milioni di miglia.

Mercurio ha un diametro di 608 miglia, ovvero quasi un terzo del diametro della Terra. (Cfr. [J.E.] Bode, *Astronom[isches] Jahrb[uch] f[ür] d[as] Jahr 1803*, Berlin 1800, Aufsatz XII). Il suo tempo di rotazione intorno al Sole, dunque, su di esso, un anno, è di 87 giorni e 23 ore e mezzo. La luce solare impiega per raggiungerlo solo 3' 8".

Il diametro di *Venere* raggiunge le 1.615 miglia, il suo tempo di rotazione intorno al Sole, invece, i 224 giorni e 17 ore. I raggi del Sole lo raggiungono dopo 5 minuti e 52 secondi. Subito dopo di essa, la *Terra* compie un giro intorno al Sole in 365 giorni, 5 giorni e 48 minuti, mentre la sua luce la raggiunge dopo 8' 7". Aldilà della Terra e più vicino a essa sta

Marte, che misura solo 920 miglia di diametro e la cui rotazione intorno al Sole si compie in 686 giorni, 23 ore e 30 minuti e mezzo, durante i quali esso riceve la luce del Sole soltanto dopo un lasso di tempo di 12' e 22".

Giove ha un diametro di 18.920 miglia. Un anno su di esso corrisponde a 11 dei nostri anni, 315 giorni, 14 ore, 27' e 11". La luce solare ha bisogno di un tempo di 42' 13", prima di raggiungere questo pianeta.

Saturno misura 17.160 miglia di diametro, e il suo anno ammonta a 29 dei nostri anni comuni, 167 giorni, 1 ora, 51 minuti e 11 secondi. Sono necessari un'ora, diciassette minuti e 25 secondi affinché i raggi solari lo raggiungano. L'ultimo pianeta del nostro sistema solare, noto solo dall'anno 1781, è:

Urano. Con un diametro di 8.665 miglia astronomiche, un unico anno su di esso equivale, secondo il nostro conto degli anni, a 84 anni comuni, 8 giorni, 18 ore e 14 minuti, mentre la luce lo raggiunge soltanto dopo 2 ore e 36 minuti.

[180] Come la nostra Terra, tutti questi pianeti hanno una forma sferoidale, solo che alcuni di essi sono ora più, ora meno appiattiti o schiacciati ai poli, cosa che tuttavia non sembra dipendere sempre, come si dovrebbe ipotizzare, dalla loro, per ciò che ci è noto, più lenta o più veloce rotazione, come può essere osservato ad esempio su *Marte*, la lunghezza del cui asse sta al diametro del suo equatore quasi come 15 a 16, e che ha dunque un appiattimento più forte della Terra nonostante il suo volume sia molto più piccolo e la sua rotazione assiale molto più lenta.

La nostra mancata conoscenza di un ottavo o di ancora più pianeti del nostro sistema solare non è del resto una prova decisiva del fatto che non ve ne siano effettivamente altri. Piuttosto, l'enorme distanza di Urano dalla stella fissa più vicina (che potrebbe distare dal nostro Sole almeno 200.000 raggi dell'orbita terrestre o quattro bilioni di miglia) ci fa supporre che al di là di esso ci siano ancora molti altri pianeti. Così come diviene probabile, per ragioni di buon peso, perfino che possa esserci un pianeta non ancora scoperto anche all'interno dei limiti noti del nostro sistema solare, specialmente tra *Marte* e *Giove* ¹¹.

Molti di questi pianeti hanno i loro satelliti o lune, che oltre alla loro rotazione assiale, ruotano anche non solo intorno ai loro pianeti, ma allo stesso tempo, con questi, anche intorno al Sole. Tali pianeti sono, ora:

- 1) *La Terra con una luna.*
- 2) *Giove con quattro lune.*
- 3) *Saturno con sette lune, e*
- 4) *Urano con sei lune.*

Per quanto riguarda Venere, non si può per lo meno ancora considerare certo che abbia davvero un tale accompagnatore, né si può nemmeno affermare con sufficienti ragioni che *Mercurio* e *Marte* ne dovrebbero necessariamente essere privi. Inoltre, oltre alle sue lune, *Saturno* ha anche un anello non ancora scoperto su nessun altro pianeta, che gli gira attorno a una distanza di più di seimila miglia e mezzo, e che sembra esser parimenti un corpo opaco e fisso, che serve a intensificare la luce solare su quel pianeta. Bisogna ancora attendere la conferma se anche Urano abbia due di quegli anelli, certo non l'uno all'interno dell'altro, ma concentrici, come ha congetturato *Herschel*.

Tra tutti questi accompagnatori dei pianeti, l'unico che ci interessa qui è quello della nostra Terra, la *Luna*, la quale, come i pianeti intorno al Sole, ruota in orbita ellittica intorno alla Terra, e si trova quindi ora più vicina a quest'ultima (perigeo) a una distanza di 48.020 miglia, ora distante invece anche 54.680 miglia (apogeo). Questa differenza nella posizione dei pianeti rispetto al Sole si

chiama perielio e afelio, i quali, per quanto riguarda la Terra, sono il primo di 23.852 raggi terrestri, il secondo di 24.667.

Per la sua rotazione da oriente a occidente intorno alla Terra, la Luna ha bisogno di un lasso di tempo di 27 giorni e 8 ore, nonostante da un novilunio all'altro passino 29 giorni e 13 ore, a causa del fatto che nel frattempo la Terra prosegue la sua orbita intorno al Sole. Il tempo della sua rotazione assiale è però uguale a quello della sua rotazione intorno alla Terra, dal che segue immediatamente quella che sembra essere una legge universale di tutti i satelliti: che essa ci rivolge sempre solo lo stesso lato.

Il diametro della Luna è di sole 468 miglia. Come la nostra Terra, anch'essa è un corpo opaco e fisso che riceve parimenti la propria luce dal Sole. Se si trova tra quest'ultima e la Terra, ci nasconde la luce del Sole, ed è *luna nuova*. Spostandosi, nella sua orbita intorno alla Terra, gradualmente verso est, il suo lato occidentale rivolto verso di noi viene illuminato, e dopo che ha percorso così 90 gradi della sua orbita, abbiamo *il primo quarto*. Quanto più si avvicina al 180^{mo} grado della sua orbita, tanto più viene illuminata, fino a trovarsi in quel grado, direttamente opposto al Sole, e a formare la nostra *luna piena*. Man mano che prosegue il suo corso, l'illuminazione occidentale diminuisce gradualmente, tanto che a 270° della sua orbita è illuminata soltanto nella sua metà rivolta a est e si trova, come si dice, *nell'ultimo quarto*. Quanto più, in seguito, si avvicina al Sole, [182] tanto più questa luce diminuisce, finché essa si mette di nuovo tra il Sole e la Terra.

La superficie della Luna è molto simile a quella della nostra Terra, tranne per il fatto che su di essa non sono presenti mari o grandi fiumi, anche se, di contro, ci sono montagne molto più grandi, che tradiscono tutte la presenza di molti vulcani. Non è ancora stato deciso se la Luna abbia un'atmosfera come la nostra, se non ne abbia affatto, o se abbia un'atmosfera propria; quest'ultima cosa, però, è la più probabile. Inoltre, come risulta da quanto appena detto, su di essa non ha luogo alcun alternarsi delle stagioni come il nostro, né una tale differenza tra durata del giorno e della notte.

Gli *eclissamenti* a cui la Luna è soggetta si verificano quando la Terra si frappone più o meno tra essa e il Sole e le sottrae con ciò la luce di quest'ultimo, proprio come la Luna provoca all'inverso sulla Terra, nel caso analogo, una cosiddetta *eclissi solare*. Inoltre, come dimostrano le maree, la Luna ha un innegabile influsso sulla Terra. Fino a che punto questo si diffonda in tutta la sua estensione è stato finora oggetto più di congettura e superstizione che di comprensione certa. È possibile, tuttavia, che, indicandone le cause, l'ultima elevi un giorno alcune affermazioni delle prime a evidenza¹². Ciò basti per quanto riguarda la Luna!

Oltre a questi pianeti principali e secondari, esiste ancora una moltitudine indefinitamente grande di altri corpi celesti che si muovono attraverso il nostro sistema solare in orbite ellittiche lunghe e strette e che sono chiamati comete. Finora sono

state calcolate le orbite di circa 93 di esse. Molto probabilmente, sono costituite da un materiale più sottile di quello dei pianeti. Esse intralciano le orbite dei pianeti da est verso ovest e viceversa in tutte le possibili direzioni, si immergono nell'atmosfera solare e si precipitano quindi di lì di nuovo lontano, oltre l'orbita di Urano. Secondo ogni osservazione ed esperienza, tuttavia, la Terra non ha mai motivo di temere l'incontro con una di queste comete.

[183] *Annotazione*. Poiché qui si poteva insegnare solo lo stretto necessario sulla geografia matematica, per coloro che vogliono informarsi ulteriormente sull'argomento, può trovare qui il proprio posto il seguente elenco di scritti rilevanti.

F. Mallet, *Allgem[eine] oder mathematische Beschreibung der Erdkugel*, trad. dallo svedese di L.T. Röhl, Greifswald 1774.

[A.G.] Walch, *Ausführliche mathematische Geographie*, Göttingen 1794².

[A.G.] Kästner, *Weitere Ausführung der mathematischen Geographie*, Daselbst 1795.

J.H. Voigt, *Lehrbuch einer populären Sternkunde*, Weimar 1799.

J.E. Bode, *Anleitung zur Kenntniß des gestirnten Himmels*, Berlin 1800⁷.

[P.-S.] La Place, *Exposition du système du monde*, 2 voll., Paris 1796, trad. di Hauff, Frankfurt a.M. 1798.

A questa sede appartengono anche gli eccellenti:

[F.X.] Von Zach, *Allgemeine geographische Ephemeriden*, Weimar 1798, 1799, continuato dopo il 1800 da [A.C.] Gaspari e [F.J.] Bertuch.

[F.X.] Von Zach, *Monatliche Correspondenz*, Gotha 1800-1801.

Trattazione della geografia fisica

§12. Passiamo adesso alla trattazione della geografia fisica stessa, e suddividiamola:

I. *Nella parte generale*, in cui esaminiamo *la Terra* secondo le sue parti costitutive e ciò che appartiene a esse, *l'acqua, l'aria e la terra*.

II. *Nella parte speciale*, in cui il discorso verte sui particolari prodotti e sulle creature della Terra.

Notes

* Come indicato anche nel titolo, traduciamo qui i *Prolegomeni* dell'edizione della *Geografia fisica* curata da Friedrich Theodor Rink e riedita nel vol. IX dei *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, De Gruyter, Berlin und Leipzig 1923, pp. 151-436. Dei §§1-6 esisteva già una tr. italiana (poco nota): I. Kant, *Geografia fisica. Descrizione fisica della Terra*. Introduzione, tr. it. di L. Scillitani con la collaborazione di S. Nienhaus, "Nuovo Meridionalismo Studi", 9, 2019, pp. 21-19, che si è tenuta presente insieme alla tr. inglese di O. Reinhardt (in I. Kant, *Natural Science*, ed. by E. Watkins, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York 2012, pp. 434-682) e alla tr. francese: E. Kant, *Géographie*, ed. par M. Cohen-Halimi, M. Marcuzzi, V.

- Seroussi, Aubier, Paris 1999. Discostandosi non poco dalla tr. it. appena ricordata, l'intento formale perseguito nella presente è stato quello di restituire il testo kantiano nel modo più fedele possibile, uniformandosi alla terminologia critica italiana ormai canonizzata. [N.d.T.]
- 1 Cfr. la Prefazione di Kant alla sua *Antropologia dal punto di vista pragmatico*. Seconda edizione, Königsberg 1800.
 - 2 [J.E.E.] Fabri, nel suo [*Abriss der natürlichen Erdkunde, insonderheit Geistik*, Nuremberg 1800, p. 3], nomina anche una geografia dei prodotti. Nella stessa sede, egli riporta anche le suddivisioni abituali della geografia, definite come d'abitudine. Ma è proprio a queste definizioni che si deve attribuire l'ordinamento, per il conoscitore tutt'altro che sufficiente, di tutte le nostre opere geografiche, soprattutto di geografia politica. Al riguardo, di più in un'altra sede. La geografia politica si divide inoltre ancora in *antica, medievale e moderna*. In merito a quest'ultima cosa, si vedano:

[K.] Mannert, *Geographie der Griechen und Römer*, Nürnberg, nuova edizione 1799.

[J.B.B.] D'Anville, [*Handbuch der alte[n] und mittlere[n] Erdbeschreibung [oder von den europäischen Staaten die nach dem Untergang des römischen Reichs entstanden sind]*, Nürnberg 1782. Nuova edizione della prima 1800.

[E.] Mentelle, *Vergleichende Erdbeschreibung*, trad. dal francese, Winterthur 1785.

È noto il gran numero dei nuovi scritti sulla geografia politica, soprattutto di Büsching, Bruns, Ebeling, Hartmann, Gatterer, Gaspari, Canzler e Fabri. Cfr. anche [A.F.W.] Crome, *Europens Produkte. [Zum Gebrauch der neuen Produkten-Karte von Europa]*, Dessau 1782; 2^a ed., Pt. I, Leipzig 1784, con le mappe dei prodotti.

[G.A.] Von Breitenbach, *Vorstellung der vornehmsten Völkerschaften der Welt nach ihrer Abstammung, Ausbreitung und Sprachen*, con una mappa, Leipzig 1794.

Id., *Religionszustand der verschiedenen Länder der Welt in den ältern und neuern Zeiten*, con mappe, Leipzig 1794.

Per la letteratura sulla geografia matematica cfr. *infra* [AA IX 183; tr. it. *supra*, p. 30].

Manchiamo ancora quasi del tutto di lavori di geografia dai rimanenti punti di vista indicati sopra.
 - 3 Cfr. ad esempio il bel C.F. Ludwig, *Grundriß der Naturgeschichte der Menschenspecies*, Leipzig 1796.
 - 4 Fabri dà il compendio una tale geografia mercantile o del commercio nella sua *Geistik*, cit., p. 4.
 - 5 Cfr. [A.C.] Gaspari, Op. cit., pp. 73 ss.
 - 6 «In proporzione», dice [J.E.] Bode, «questo è malapena lo spessore di un foglio di carta posato su un mappamondo di un piede di diametro»: *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über das Weltgebäude*, Belin 1801, p. 5. Il diametro terrestre raggiunge infatti le 1.720 miglia geografiche, ognuna delle quali, secondo la circonferenza media, di 3.811 8/15 tese. La montagna più alta della nostra Terra, viceversa, il Chimborazo, ha un'altezza di 3.567 piedi parigini più piccola di un tale miglio.
 - 7 Un registro abbastanza preciso di questo viaggi intorno al mondo, come si è soliti chiamarli, lo dà Fabri, Op. cit., pp. 10 sg. Alle pp. 7 sg., egli elenca anche le opinioni antiche in merito alla forma della Terra. Ulteriori ragioni per la forma sferica della Terra le fornisce quasi ogni geografia fisica.
 - 8 Sarebbe auspicabile che prima o poi si arrivasse a un accordo sulla determinazione del primo meridiano. Dato che l'arbitrio non è affatto limitato dalla natura, altri hanno infatti stabilito un altro primo meridiano. Oltre a quello citato, ci sono dunque ancora: 1) un meridiano di *Greenwich*, che sta a 17° 41' a est di quello di El Hierro; 2) il meridiano di *Flores*, a una distanza di 13° 26' 30" a ovest di El Hierro.
 - 9 Non si è ancora pensato di combinare insieme la deviazione dell'eclittica con la deviazione del polo magnetico. I risultati di un tale studio potrebbero diventare forse di grande importanza anche per la stessa fisica. Cfr. [J.J.L.] De la Lande, *Astronom[isches] Handbuch; oder die Sternkunst in einer kurzen Lehrbegriff*, trad. dal fr., Leipzig 1775, §§794 ss. Ma anche [J.S.T.] Gehler, *Physikal[isch] Wörterbuch*, Leipzig 1798, Pt. IV, pp. 622 ss. Magnetismo ed elettricità sono forse diversi solo in quanto prodotti della longitudine e della latitudine. Le ragioni di

- quest'opinione in un altro luogo. Recentemente, ho trovato anche in [F.W.J.] Schelling, *Ideen [zu einer Philosophie der Natur, Leipzig 1797]* qualcosa che concorda con quest'opinione.
- 10 In senso proprio, il Sole non sta effettivamente al centro del suo sistema, ma soltanto nelle sue vicinanze. Né neghiamo con quanto su detto che il Sole e il suo intero sistema si spostino all'interno dell'edificio cosmico.
- 11 A Palermo, *Piazzi* sostenne di aver scoperto il 1° gennaio 1801 una cometa a forma di stella di ottavo ordine di grandezza e senza nebulosa evidente. Dopo le osservazioni di *Piazzi*, tuttavia, *Bode* ritiene ora di essere giustificato a considerare questa presunta cometa come quel pianeta che si presume si trovi tra Marte e Giove. I famosi astronomi *von Zach*, *Oriani* e persino *Piazzi* concordano con lui. Cfr. *Berl[iner] Haude- und Spenersche Zeitung*, 1801, n. 57.
- 12 È ancora incerto come stiano le cose riguardo alle maree nell'atmosfera e da cosa esse siano provocate; ne fa menzione, tuttavia il Signor *Von Humboldt*, come da lui osservato in America, e prima di lui *Francis Balfour*. Cfr. W. Jones, *Dissertations and miscellaneous pieces, relating to the history etc. of Asia* di, vol. IV, Londra 1798, pp. 201 ss.

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«...noch bevor wir sie selbst erlangen». Remarks on Kant's Geographies of the Empirical

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Abstract. The objective of this article is to provide some insights into Kant's conception of the empirical with a view to a better understanding of Kant's presupposition of a plan "in advance" of it. The article is structured in three steps. The initial step involves a comparison between Kant's and Hegel's conceptions of reason, which serves to highlight the different status of Kant's a priori and "observative" reason from a theoretical point of view. The second step focuses on the *Introduction and Preliminary Mathematical Concepts* of his *Physical Geography*, in order to develop the problem indicated by the quotation in the title, namely that we must presuppose a plan of our empirical cognitions "even before we attain them". The third step, finally, attempts to prove that the dynamic underlying Kant's *Physical Geography* corresponds to the theory of the appearance of appearance formulated by Kant in the *Opus postumum*.

Keywords. Kant, Physical Geography, Space, Empirical, Opus postumum

1. *One or several reasons*

When reading the opening pages of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* on Reason, and then on Ob-

servative Reason from a Kantian perspective, it is quite difficult not to wonder which reason Hegel is discussing. Within his system, Hegel provides a clear answer to this question. His “reason” is self-consciousness that is finally «certain of itself as the reality [*als der Realität*]» (Hegel [1807]: 132; eng. 137), or, in other words, the thought that is finally aware that, in every experience, it is always the thought itself that *makes* it. In fact, Hegel is citing Kant. According to what can be considered *the principle of criticism itself*: «reason has insight [*einsieht*] only into what it itself produces according to its own design [*nach ihrem Entwurfe*]» (Kant [1787]: XIII; eng. 109)¹.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned question arises here. Particularly in its observative figure, the reason that sails – akin to the *conquistadores* –, that «strides forward toward a universal appropriation of its own assured property, and plants the signs of its sovereignty on both the high and the deep» (Hegel [1807]: 137 f.; eng. 142): this reason appears to be, indeed, at once, both the *pure* reason of the first *Critique*, sailing from the «land of truth» through the «broad and stormy ocean» of metaphysics (Kant [1781]: 235; 1787: 294 f.; eng. 354), and the “concrete” reason which concerns itself with the empirical. I.e. with man and the world *as they are*. The former is the transcendental and a priori reason, which constitutes only the pure objectivity of thought. The latter is the reason “on its journey” (see 1798: 120; eng. 232; 1802: 157 f.; eng. 446 f.), attempting to make order out of the «so disturbingly unbounded diversity of empirical laws and heterogeneity of natural forms» (1914: 209; eng. 14).

It is important to note that, according to Hegel, there is no distinction between these “two” reasons. If he can (and indeed must) address the observative reason immediately following the exposition of the simple category (see Hegel [1807]: 134; eng. 139), it is because, in his view, both are essentially *the same reason*: a unique movement in which the universal thought makes itself other to itself, makes a multiplicity of its unity – the whole and indefinite multiplicity of reality –, and, permeating and encompassing this multiplication, returns to itself (as Spirit and, finally, as Science).

To provide another example of particular significance for the comparison with Kant, it is always this reason why Hegel can and must discuss together the understanding and the relation between laws and forces (Ibid.: 82-102; eng. 79-101): because, from a dialectical point of view, there is no understanding outside the laws ascribed to nature, nor indeed any law outside the effective relations between the given forces.

The primary objective of Hegel’s philosophy is to “fluidify” and to “put in circulation” (within “the body of reality”) the transcendental. As to say that his objective is to resolve the truth into «the movement of itself in its own self» (Ibid.: 35; eng. 29), and therefore to completely translate the understanding (in Kant’s sense, as *Verstand*) into the *process* of the understanding (in general, as *Vernehmen*). – A stark contrast to Kant’s approach.

If the relationship between force and understanding is a significant example, it is because, from a critical perspective, the same immediate translation of the “laws” of the understanding into the balance of the forces presumed by Hegel necessitates at least another “passage”, through which the fundamental principles of the understanding are *applied* to a given intuition.

Although this is not immediately evident, Kant draws a fundamental distinction between the Analogies of experience (*Grund-Sätze*: Kant [1781]: 182, 189, 211; eng. 299, 304, 316)² and the mechanical laws (*Lehr-Sätze*) of the *Metaphysical Foundations* (see 1786: 541, 543 f.; eng. 249, 251 f.). The former are the conditions of possibility of the existence *in general* (as it were, “merely as such”), while the latter are the laws of configuration of a *particular* existence in space-time – or *of space-time* in a particular existence (see *Ibid.*: 469 f.; eng. 185; on the topic, see also Branca [2024]: 237-251). The former are transcendental, the latter metaphysical (see Kant [1790]: 181; eng. 68), and therefore they are distinct also from the physical laws that we formulate to mathematically define that configuration.

While Hegel’s reason is “diachronic” (or, more correctly: “dialectical”), Kant’s reason is “synchronous” (see Vitiello [1983]: 130 f.), “symphonic” (see Scaravelli [1980]: 17 f., 135), for even Kant’s *Vernunft überhaupt* is nothing more than the overall interweaving of the different faculties that, *in their cooperation*, constitute our experience. It is thus evident that these faculties cannot be subsumed, so to speak, “the lower within the upper”, and then into one, into «a first principle» (Fichte [1798/99]: 5; eng. 80; in Hegel, the unity of the movement of truth in itself), since each of them presides as *Vermögen* over different functions that cannot be “suppressed” (in Hegel’s sense of *Aufheben*) into those with which they co-operate³.

As Kant himself stresses in a confrontation with Christian Wolff, from a critical point of view, even the distinction between a “universal” and a “particular” reason (or existence) is not merely logical. In Kant’s own words, such a distinction is not based on a higher or lower «rank in regard to universality», that is on a «mere degree of subordination». Logically, the *Lehrsätze* are as universal as the *Grundsätze*. Rather, that distinction is based on «the complete heterogeneity and difference of origin» (Kant [1787]: 871 f.; eng. 697) of the functions at work in and on it (Pecere [2007]: 161 f.). The *Lehrsätze* are therefore a “specification” of the *Grundsätze* only and exclusively in a *transcendental* sense. That is, only for they are a sensible translation (*Versinnlichung*) of the latter in occasion of the «*figurative synthesis (synthesis speciosa)*» (Kant [1787]: 151; eng. 256) operated by *imagination*.

From a critical standpoint, reason can be “specified” only in the sense of “shaping” it. Of “*giving it a figure*”: firstly, through the pure mathematical delimitation of space-time, whereby it makes itself *an* object; secondly, in the reflect-

ing distinction between the various configurations (*species*) of things, whereby it is “recognised” in *this or that* being.

According to Kant, there is thus a difference *in principle* between the pure and a priori reason, which concerns itself with the constitution of the mere possibility of experience, and the «reasoned curiosity» that explores the empirical (Hegel’s observative reason). A difference that Kant highlighted already in the first *Announcement* of his lectures on physical geography, where he denied to the future *Welterkenntnis* the «completeness and philosophical precision» that he would later claim for transcendental philosophy in the *Critique*, describing rather the “empirical reason” as «a traveller who everywhere looks for the noteworthy, the strange, and the beautiful, compares the observations he has collected, and revises his *plan* accordingly [*und seinen Plan überdenkt*]» (1757: 3; eng. 388).

While the pure and a priori knowledge is to be complete, “round” and systematic, as the a priori reason is a whole that can be measured from within (1787: 89 f., 790; eng. 201, 654 f.), when reason “goes around the world”, it must adopt a *heuristic* form. It must accept, in effect, the infinite task of describing things and events as they occur and adjust its comprehension, its understanding (in the sense of *Vernehmen*) in response to the cases it encounters⁴.

It is evident from the third *Critique* that all this is only possible thanks to the reflecting use of the power of judgment (see Malpas, Zöllner [2012]: 154 f.). As Kant explicitly states in the *First Introduction*, the ability to orient oneself within the empirical, «to observe nature and to hold its forms together» (1914: 205; eng. 10; on the orientation in Kant, see Desideri [2003]: 17-66), depends on the transcendental assumption of the principle of *Zweckmäßigkeit*, that is to say, of a formal «purposiveness of nature in behalf [*zum Behuf*] of our faculty for cognizing it» (Ibid.: 202; eng. 8). This affords us to “map out” a «Gesetzmäßigkeit» within the chaos (of cases) of experience, a «lawfulness in itself contingent (in accordance with all concepts of the understanding)», and yet sufficient «in order to seek for particular experiences the general rules in accordance with which we have to arrange them» (Ibid.: 204; eng. 10). The question that I would like to pose in this contribution is: *how?* How does reflection operate in this seeking and *arrangement* of the empirical? How does the process of comprehension of the «noteworthy, the strange, and the beautiful» (1757: 3; eng. 388) articulate itself? Moreover: how can comprehension “adjust” itself on these cases?

Although not immediately evident, the examination of these questions raises one of the most profound problems in Kant’s philosophical system. As previously cited in dialogue with Hegel, the principle of criticism itself asserts that «reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own design [*Entwurf*]» (1787: XIII; eng. 109). It has not previously been observed, however, that this principle entails a *subsumptive* logic (see Vitiello [2013]: 78-80). In other words, a logic that requires a *preliminary* concept, form or *plan* to which the giv-

en must be subsumed. With regard to a priori concepts (categories and ideas) and mathematical constructions (pure concepts), reason itself ensures the “preliminary presence” of such forms. The former are, in fact, its own structures, while the latter are a *pure* product of its own activity on the formal intuitions of space and time (see Kant [1800]: 93; eng. 591). In contrast, the question arises with regard to empirical forms. If, from a purely *logical* point of view, this issue appears to overlap with that of the genesis of empirical concepts (for a clear position of the problem see Cassirer [1923]: 249-252; for a comprehensive elaboration of it, La Rocca (2003: 79-119), by focusing on Kant’s empirical studies, particularly his *Physical Geography*, it is possible to gain a more “concrete” and direct translation of this question. It is possible to shape it specifying the “general” problem of how reflection arranges the empirical, in reference to the above-cited quotation from the *Announcement* of 1757. The question then becomes: where did we draw *the plan* we must (in a subsumptive logic: *always*) *already have* in order to make experiences, and through these, to *überdenken*, to revise or *think over* it?

2. Steps

In order to attempt an answer to the “general” questions posed in §1, what follows will be divided into two steps.

The first step will delve more deeply into the “specific” question posed in §1, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the general problem from within Kant’s *Physical Geography*. In this regard, our focus will be on the *Introduction* and *Preliminary Mathematical Concepts* of Rink’s edition, wherein we will develop the paradox indicated by the quotation used as the title of this contribution, namely, the paradox that from a critical perspective, «we should divide our knowledges» – or, more radically: *order* our empirical experiences – «*even before we attain them*» (Kant [1802]: 156; eng. 445). In this “before” we will identify the problem hidden in the *temporality* of all mapping and organisation (always *spatial*: in German, to make order is *Aufräumen*) of experience. For how might it be possible to have *before* an order that can only be attained *after*? What are the conditions of such an *anticipation*? And is there, in fact, a “before” and a “after” – a “plan”, and the “empirical” “outside” the plan?

In order to identify a “plane” from which attempt an answer to these questions, the second step will jump (perhaps sharply, but not without reason) to some sheets of *Konvolut X* of the *Opus postumum*, in which Kant is grappling with the formulation of his theory of the appearance of appearance (*Erscheinung von der Erscheinung*). The thesis that will be defended is that every empirical comprehension depends on this same dynamic, which was unfairly limited by Kant himself to physics, as it grounds rather the entire reflecting movement.

3. *To know the world*

Let us commence anew with a further exposition of the issue that arose at the conclusion of §1.

Prior to examining the *Physical Geography*, it is noteworthy to ascertain in the *Preface to Anthropology* whether the presupposition of a plan is a requirement for the entire *Welterkenntnis*. In this text, Kant makes, indeed, a significant observation regarding the systematicity and completeness of the latter. He states that although anthropology offers only «occasions and invitations to make each particular [moral quality of man] into a theme of its own», the possibility «to place it in the appropriate category» is ensured not only by the fact that anthropology is, in his words, «systematically designed [*systematisch entworfene*]», but also by the fact that «through this means [in German we find: *wodurch*], the works end up divided by themselves [*sich von selbst*] [...], and to be gradually united [once more, by themselves] into a whole through the unity of the plan [*durch die Einheit des Plans*]» (1798: 121 f.; eng. 233).

In this passage, two elements are of a particular importance. The first element to be noted is the recurrence of the same *Entwurf* and *Plan* that were previously observed in the *Announcement* and *Critique*. The second are, instead, the expression “through this means” and “by themselves”. *Sich von selbst*: that is, *spontaneously*. *Wodurch*: thereby. But “spontaneously”, “thereby” – *how?* We cannot really assert that the observations of anthropology end up organised by themselves *spontaneously*. Indeed, they are collected according to a «general knowledge [...] ordered and directed by philosophy» (Ibid.: 120; eng. 232). It thus follows that such a “spontaneity” must be, in a sense, “inner” to this general knowledge. In comparison to §2 of the *Physical Geography*, the articulation of anthropology must be more akin to the “immediacy” of the derivation of the parts from the idea of the whole (1802: 158; eng. 446) than to a self-organisation of the particular knowledges by themselves. Once more, however: where did we draw such an idea? From where the “unity of the plan” «in the absence of which all acquired knowledge can yield nothing more than fragmentary groping around» (1798: 120; eng. 232)?

If the problem raised in §1 is of such significance within Kant’s philosophy, it is because it pertains to *all* empirical knowledge. For every empirical knowledge must “go around the world” (Kaulbach [1966]), not only geography (for an analysis of the difficulty of a strict distinction between geography and anthropology, see Loudon [2011]).

From this point of view, Hegel’s comparison of Kant’s reason to the *conquistadores* is an accurate one. The metaphor of the traveller plays a pivotal role in Kant’s conception of the empirical as such, and more crucially it represents the fundamental schema through which Kant “*give a figure*” to rea-

son. As Farinelli repeatedly stressed (1996; 2004: XXI-XXV; 2012: 380-382), the critical philosophy is wholly permeated by a cartographic set-up, through which Kant articulates his entire reconstruction of reason: from the pure and a priori plane, down to its most empirical applications (on the geographical character of the critical project, see also Malpas, Thiel [2011]; Loudon [2014]: 453 f., and Morawski [2024]).

This is the reason why Kant can be considered a «geographer of reason» (Casirer [1918]: 40, but see also Hohenegger [2012]), and even his doctrine of faculties can be defined as a «transcendental geography» (Lyotard [1987]: 21). If these definitions are indeed true, however, his *physical geography* (in a broad sense: as discipline) deserves greater attention – not only because of the well known difficulties related to the lack of a text from Kant’s own hand⁵. Kant’s physical geography merits greater attention particularly in a theoretical sense, since, in examining it, one must always be accompanied by at least the doubt whether what one is dealing with could be the very “matrix” of Kant’s thought.

It could be of the greatest interest to undertake a theoretical examination at the same time both of the philological state of “Kant’s” geographical texts and of the theoretical issue constituted by such a matrix. It may be surprising to see (now, *im Voraus*, tempting to say) that the fact of being transmitted *fragmentarily* and *by others* is essential to the same matrix. Or even more: that on this at once historical and theoretical corruption (of the “texts” that deal with the empirical more than any other) hides the very issue of the relationship between the transcendental and the historical. I.e. the very *dissemination* (the evident reference is here to Derrida [1972], the not so evident one to Benjamin [1925]: 226) of the former into the latter.

Nevertheless, pursuing this line of enquiry would lead us too far from the central focus of our investigation. In regard to our present objective, it is sufficient to note, indeed, that, although none can «read a certain text that can properly be called “Kant’s Physical Geography”» (Stark [2011]: 69), it is beyond doubt that:

1. From a philological point of view, – to continue quoting Stark – «fortunately we have sufficient manuscript material to satisfy our requirements both in terms of Kant’s lectures and of the two historical editions», for «all we need is a mere comparison of texts to discover what the facts of these editions are» (Ibid.: 83).

2. From a theoretical point of view, such a comparison easily demonstrates that the structures and issues developed both in Vollmer’s and Rink’s editions are, if not directly “of Kant’s own hand”, at least fundamentally *Kantian* in nature.

To finally move to the analysis of the *Introduction* and *Mathematical concepts* in Rink’s edition (Kant [1802]: 156-183; eng. 445-467), a comparison with the *Prolegomena* in the Kaehler and Messina manuscripts (respectively, 1775b: 299-321 and 1776?: 621-629) is more than sufficient to prove, net of Rink’s additions, that the first two Chapters of his edition respond to a genuinely Kantian

problem. That is, the question of how to define geography in a systematic manner, differentiating it from other forms of human knowledge according to their source and origins, and then according to «the plan of their arrangement, or [to] the form – that is, to the way how they can be ordered» (1802: 156; eng. 445; see also 1775b: 299, in reference to the above-quoted 1787: 871 f.; eng. 697). The problem with which we are concerned already emerges at this juncture. Indeed, as *both* the texts assert (but see also the Pillau manuscript 1783?: 1), we should provide such a classification of our knowledges «even before we attain them» (1802: 156; eng. 445; 1775: 299).

In *all* editions and manuscripts, the geographical knowledge is part of «a *propaedeutic* for knowledge of the world» (1802: 157; eng. 445), or a «*Vorübung*», a «preparatory exercise» (Ibid.: 158; eng. 447; 1776?: 621) that aims to provide a «preliminary concept [*Vorbegriff*] of everything» (*ibidem*; 1802: 158; eng. 447) to be used to orient oneself within the whole of human experiences, that is to say, within the world (see 1802: 158; eng. 447; a sum of these expressions, this time of *Kant's own hand*, recurs in 1775a: 443; eng. 97).

In order to articulate such a system of human cognitions, §§2-4 of Rink's edition begin with the distinction between rational and empirical knowledges, before moving on to the articulation of the latter in accordance with the duplicity of the sensibility, as outer and inner sense. In so doing, Kant can describe the world in a perhaps not so clear but still *dynamic* manner (see *contra* Malpas, Zöllner [2012]: 158-160), as the presupposition and, at once, the result of the *interplay* between the environment and human practices. In Kant's own words: as «the stage [*der Schauplatz*] on which the play of our ability is performed» (Kant [1802]: 158; eng. 446, see also [1775b]: 301, and [1776?]: 622).

Given the whole of such a *Schauplatz* – whose “wholeness” is ensured by its encompassing both the sources of sensibility (see 1802: 162 f.; eng. 450) –, Kant is then able to differentiate, according to the same distinction between the inner and outer sense, a “plane” on which *the whole* of the world is observed “internally”, that is to say, the anthropology as pragmatic and yet *cosmological* cognition of man (see Ibid.: 157; eng. 446 and 1798: 120; eng. 231 f.), from a “plane” on which *the same whole* is described “externally” as the place (*Platz*) in which the human abilities literally take place.

The latter is the physical geography, which is defined therefore on account of its articulating the spatial dimension of the world (see 1802: 160; eng. 449; 1792: 1119). Here, however, it is necessary to note two things. The first point is that, in insisting on the *dynamic* nature of Kant's definition of the *Welterkenntnis*, both anthropology and physical geography remain two distinct yet necessarily related «parts» or *perspectives* on a single, “organic” world. As Kant himself states in the essay on the human races, to consider both “cosmologically” means to consider them «with respect to what we can observe of *their relation within*

the whole in which they stand, and in which everyone [of them] takes his place» (1775a: 443; eng. 97). – The second point to note pertains, instead, to the distinctive character gained to physical geography. As Kant stresses in §3 confronting history and geography (for an analysis of this confrontation, see Marcuzzi [2011]: 117-123), it is only possible to articulate the spatial dimension of the world by *describing* it (see Kant [1802]: 159; eng. 447; 1775b: 302, and 1776?: 623). In other words, the only means of articulating the spatial dimension of the world is “to take place” within it, and then to *re-construct* the place itself into «a general outline [*einen allgemeinen Abriß*]» (1802: 157; eng. 446, 1775b: 300, 1776?: 621) which serves as a plan, as a “map”: *a.* for measuring the space itself in its extension (but we could even say: for *drawing*, for “*opening up*” the world); and *b.* to be used in order to «allocate to every experience its class and its place within the whole» (1802: 158; eng. 447).

Now, it is tempting to compare such an “outline” with the «ideal background», made up of subjective «beliefs», «hypothesis and theory», from which, according to Ritter (1852): 25 f., the geographer must begin «in order to reach a natural system». From this point of view, Kant’s *Abriß* would be nothing more than the “preliminary assumption”, the hermeneutical “preconception” of the world that we have constructed for ourselves in order to act within it. The results of the *Physical Geography* would be comparable to an Aristotelian *pros hemas* of experience, reflecting an endless endeavour to achieve a correspondence between our knowledge with what is *te physei* (endless since, as Ritter stresses, we do not proceed “from observation to concept”, but, always anew, «from observation to observation»: Ibid.: 27)⁶. And to some extent, this is the case.

The reflecting nature of any empirical comprehension implies, even for Kant, that an ultimate knowledge of the world will never be attained. Kant’s physical geography is as *pragmatic* as his anthropology, in that it is based on the fact that we will always continue “to make experiences”. Nevertheless, this does not imply that Kant’s *Abriß* can be reduced to Ritter’s ideal and theoretical background of beliefs. And this for, on the contrary, what Kant outlines in his *Physical Geography* with regard to the whole of the *Welterkenntnis*, bears closer resemblance to the very articulation or “opening” of what we may call, in accordance with Farinelli (2009: 11, 25, 108 f.), the “Table” of experience. That is to say, to that structure or “matrix of order”, which corresponds to the original assumption of an isomorphic yet differentiated space.

As Marcuzzi stressed in his seminal contribution, the significance of the *Preliminary Mathematical Concepts* (and particularly of §9: Kant [1802]: 170-177; eng. 457-462; identical to 1775b: 314-320) lies precisely in the fact that: «Here, the object “Earth” is *constructed* as a *pure geometrical object* upon which we engender points and lines, cut out spheres and circles, put bluntly, that we can construct *in pure intuition*» (Marcuzzi [2011]: 215). And even more, since, in

(actively) *constructing* the pure isomorphic *figure* of the Earth, Kant describes the same *process* of the *disclosure* of space. As previously mentioned, the *Auf-räumen*, or the *operation* of “making order” (within the empirical) through the pure (yet also tempting to say: *transcendental*) “making space”.

Indeed, – by making a simple addition to Marcuzzi’s account – the *mathematical* construction of the *physical* object “Earth” begins from its *movement*. In consequence of the articulation of the relations of this object with the *movable* observer (the subjects) on its surface (“from within”) and with the *fix* point, the Sun, around which the Earth turns (“from outside”), such a construction draws then the poles line, the equator, and the meridian (in its infinite possible variations), and finally the tropics and the polar circles. In so doing, this process provides a primary “description” of the Earth, which corresponds to the delineation of the *geographic grid* on its surface. In turn, this grid enables the differentiation of places, the measurement of distances, and the identification of various zones. – It is important to note, however, that this is not the full picture. Indeed, due to its relation to the Sun, the Earth, as a *physical* object, is exposed to different degrees of *light* and *heat*. This entails a primary range of fundamental alterations, such as the change of the seasons, the different length of the days (see Kant [1802] 174 f.; eng. 460 f.), which “materially” begin to further determine the Earth’s “zones” as different environments (ivi §10: 177 f.; eng. 463).

In a description that undergoes a progressive downgrade of objective value, it is solely thanks to (and within) such a “preliminary opening” of the «theatre of nature» (Ibid.: 160; eng. 448; 1775b: 303; 1776?: 625) that the following sections of the *Geography* are able to “describe”, next, «the differences of quality between the elements [...] in relation to their situation», and finally «the places where all manner of remarkable things can be seen» (Marcuzzi [2011]: 125).

In relation to the increasingly contingent nature of the objects to be ordered (which can be merely “allocated” due precisely to their contingency), the *Preliminary Mathematical Concepts* provide – in a strictly cartographic logic – the “basis”, or “table”, on which the “map” is to be drawn. That is to say, on which the elements must be arranged, and the particular phenomena can find their own place.

After all, this is the reason why Kant can claim that «before we move on to the discussion of physical geography proper, we must necessarily first have a preliminary concept of mathematical geography» (Kant [1802]: 165; eng. 453; see 1775: 311): for only such a “concept” (which, as mathematical, is at once, a concept and the *construction* of this concept, i.e. an *intuition*)⁷ allows us to assume the Earth as a whole. The mathematical construction of the physical object “Earth” may therefore be regarded as the *spatial pre-conception* of the «general outline [always *Abriß*] of nature» (1802: 164; eng. 451). In a broad sense, it can

be considered as the “a priori” of any description of the world. This is to say that it represents the *pre-disposition* through which alone the space becomes available for the proper empirical plan of its own ordering. “Pre-” of any presupposition, this construction is what makes possible to «project already in advance [*schon im Voraus*] a plan» for our experience, and thus to «not regard the world merely as an object of the outer sense». However, this brings us back to our initial questions. How is it possible, indeed, such an “advance”?

In Kant’s own words, «what this instruction and general outline [the physical geography] does, is to *anticipate* our future experience in the world» (Ibid.: 157; eng. 446; same in 1775: 300, and 1776?: 621). The plan, the propaedeutic and the preliminary concepts or exercises merely represent *a form of anticipation of the empirical*, rooted in the pre-construction of space. The question thus arises as to this latter can make possible the former. Once more, it must be asked how the mere “making space” allow us to project *in advance* an order, or a *plan* of what we can only encounter *after* – in the most proper sense *a posteriori* – within the world. Furthermore, given that we have been “forced” to assume an extremely broad sense of the a priori: what is the relationship between this (still *empirical*) preconstruction of space and the transcendental constitution of it?

4. *The empirical – zum Behuf*

In order to finally try to address the questions we have raised, I propose to “jump” to certain fragments of the *Konvolut X* of the *Opus postumum*, in which, as it were, Kant is engaged in the formulation of his theory of the *Erscheinung von der Erscheinung*. The motivations for such a “jump” may not be immediately apparent. Nevertheless, it could prove useful, as – in short – I am convinced that the dynamic Kant is attempting to formulate here is the same that underlies the entire physical geography, particularly its *Mathematical Concepts*.

The main “implicated” fragments are the pages 2 of the (halb-)sheets VI and VIII of the *Konvolut X* (1938: 333 f., 343-345; only the latter has been partially transl. by Förster and Rosen: eng. 112 f.)⁸. These can be dated with reasonable accuracy to the period between the end of 1799 and April 1800, and occur immediately after the aether proofs (the so-called *Übergänge* 1-14; see Förster [1993]: XXVII). Now, without give a complete account of Kant’s *Übergang-projekt* (which would be however impossible within the limits of an article)⁹, this final clarification is crucial, as the concept of “appearance of appearance” depends directly on such a proof. As is widely acknowledged, the issue that the projected *Transition from the metaphysical foundations of natural science to physics* was designed to address is the problem of the dynamical determination of matter. Kant initially believed that this could be achieved on a purely physical plane

through the identification of a topic (in the previously discussed geographical terms, a *map*) of the moving forces of matter. However, as he proceeded in his work, he realised that this solution depended in turn on the transcendental plane, and thus required a foundation in it. The aether proof represents the “turning point” of Kant’s attempts, in which the “fundamental alteration of matter” from which to provide such a topic is proved as necessarily corresponding to the simple existence (for an example, see Kant [1936]: 215-217; eng. 67 f.; for a wider reconstruction, see Branca [2024]: 347-365). However, the assertion of this correspondence gives rise to two distinct but complementary problems within Kant’s framework. The first, transcendental issue – which Kant addresses through the doctrine of self-position (see Förster [2000]: 75-116) – pertains to the integration of this new dynamic within the a priori process of constitution of experience (i.e. within the *Critique*). The second, “physical” one (insofar as it corresponds to the question: “how is physics possible?”) is instead that of the same topic of moving forces. For, even if the existence in space is demonstrated to be always dynamical, physical, and even if this dynamic nature is proved to be grounded in the very self-position of the transcendental subject, as it affects itself in making itself into an object (the empirical “I”) – it remains unanswered the question concerning the status that we ascribe to the moving forces, and in general to the concepts of physics. I.e. the question of how they must be integrate within the same transcendental constitution of experience (see Pecere [2007]: 674-684).

The concept of “appearance of appearance” is designed to address this question. For, as all “implicated” fragments assert, once we have recognised that *in general* (not only on the a priori plane) «we can extract nothing other from our sense-representations than that which we have inserted in them for the empirical representation of ourselves with the consciousness of its exhibition [*mit dem Bewußtsein seiner Darstellung*]», even the empirical concepts turn out to be produced «by the understanding» (Kant [1938]: 343; eng. 112; see also *Ibid.*: 334).

As Kant highlights in the sheet I of the same *Konvolut X*, «although *invented* [*obgleich gedichtet*]», (*Ibid.*: 282; eng. 100), these concepts (of the moving forces, organic bodies, as well as of aether) are indeed *presupposed* to our experiences – «since we would not otherwise understand them as such» (*Ibid.*: 291; eng. 101). Within the transcendental self-affection of the subject – that is to say, throughout the *Darstellung* of representations and as corresponding to the *Bewußtsein* of such an exhibition (see 1787: 66-69, 152-156; eng. 188-190, 257-259) – these concepts become the “phenomenal manner” in which the subject organises, *coordinates* the empirical givens in order to comprehend them. If the latter are to be considered appearances in the strictest sense, «in turn, such a coordination (*Zusammenstellung*, *coordinatio*) is itself only appearance, consequently nothing more than an *appearance of the appearance*, i.e. the representation of the formal how the subject affects itself according to a principle and is itself as spontaneous

object» (1938: 333 f.). As Kant states in sheet V, empirical concepts are thus the forms in which «the subject is mediately affected», or «metaphysically how the subject makes itself into an object» (Ibid.: 326; eng. 109).

How does all this help us to solve, however, the problem posed at the end of our §3?

The answer to this question can be found in the same aforementioned fragments. For, while the latter stresses that these forms “mediating the affection” are presupposed «*in order to realise space through empirical representation [den Raum durch empirische Vorstellung zu realisieren]*» (*ibidem*), the half-sheet VIII points out that «this exhibition [...] produces a cognition of the outer sense-object, as *appearance*, by composition of the manifold of the moving forces of matter in appearance, *for the sake of the possibility of experience [zum Behuf der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung]*» (Ibid.: 343; eng. 112). Within the overall process of transcendental constitution of experience, physics is possible – the *Konvolut X* concludes – only because it corresponds to a “pre-formation”, or a form of subjective «*anticipation quoad materiale*» (Ibid.: 345) of the empirical. This enables us (we, the empirical subjects) to «indicate a priori the object of this latter, namely *matter*, and *its specific, in advance* of the experience [*vor der Erfahrung*], in accordance with the concept of it as the movable in space» (Ibid.: 362). The physical concepts rely on such an anticipation. They represent the manners in which we tentatively shape, invent, and “physically” *project* the pure form of space (and, in space, the a priori form of time) *in behalf, zum Behuf* of the same empirical experience.

In light of these considerations, it is inevitable to draw the ultimate conclusions of the *Opus*, which state that, *as such*, «experience cannot be received as a representation which comes to us, but must *be made*» (Ibid.: 322; eng. 108), as well as that, in this “making”, «both *observation* and experiment are only *methods* to extract from the sensible representation what we have tentatively inserted» (Ibid.: 318; eng. 105).

In fact, when the principle of criticism itself is assumed in its most radical form, it becomes evident that nothing remains outside reason, for even the empirical forms must be invented *in advance* by reason in order to anticipate, as their appearance, the same appearances. At the most, it is therefore possible to distinguish between different levels of articulation and “constitutiveness” (a priori, pure, and then also empirical) within the overall reason. As Kant himself concludes: «We make everything ourselves» (Ibid.: 82; eng. 189). And he goes even further, stating that: «It is all transcendental. Pure idealism» (1936: 90). Once more, however, these conclusions raise further questions. What does all this mean, indeed, for what we have seen about the physical geography?

Despite the fact that the majority of literature (including Kant himself) has reduced the concept of appearance of appearance to a mere physical plane, namely

to the topic of the moving forces and at the most to the presupposition of the teleological form of organic bodies (see, for example, Mathieu [1991]: 143-166 and Pecere [2007]: 775-794), the general conclusions of *Konvolute* VII and I allow to claim that the dynamic of anticipation *quoad materiale* described thanks to the concept of appearance of appearance can – and indeed *must* – be extended to the entire process of reflecting comprehension of the empirical, and particularly to the *Vorbegriffe* that the “observative reason” projects and presupposes to its “journey”.

The plan that we must «project already in advance [*schon im Voraus*]» (1802: 157; eng. 446) in order to arrange our experiences within the world precisely functions in the same manner as the topic of the moving forces: as a “material” anticipation of the empirical which precedes its occurrence “in behalf” of it. From a geographical and anthropological perspective, this anticipation corresponds to the effective realisation of human space in a broad sense, whereby we pre-dispose (make and then arrange) the space in order to move into it.

Therefore, we can answer to the question of how it is possible for the geographical plan to be “in advance” of the empirical, that this is because such an “advance” corresponds to the manner in which the subject “projects” its space in taking place into it. In this sense, the mathematical preconstruction of space makes it possible to order the empirical, since the empirical forms are invented in the same act through which the subject “opens up” the world. As Farinelli (2009: 11) asserts, the “Table” also possesses a material nature and is in “material” interplay with the arrangement of the map that is drawn on it. The empirical entirely constituted by the forms we invent to anticipate it.

If this is indeed the case, however, two new problems arise. Let us now return to the “general” question posed at the conclusion of §1. This question concerned the manner in which reflection operates in the seeking and arrangement of the empirical. It is now evident that this operation constitutes a form of anticipation that reason itself makes in behalf of the appearance of an “empirical”, the possibility of which “is contingent upon this anticipation”. Nevertheless, it remains not clear what precisely is meant by such a “temporality”. If the pure and a priori form of time appears to be merely linear, a pure succession that proceeds from 1 to 2, and then to 3, and so on, the fact that the empirical given must be always anticipated and only after its (*tempted*, hypothetical) anticipation it can be found in the world means that the possibility of what is before depends on the after, since the after is before of itself, as its own presupposition.

As Lyotard stressed, reflection is a form of *Nachträglichkeit*: a process that he describes as «a generativity with, if possible, no set-up [*dispositif*] other than the absence of set-up» (Lyotard [1988]: 60; eng. 54), and in the functioning of which there is no «“first” and “second”», neither “before” nor “after”, for any «first blow [...] was not recorded and only comes back as second blow» (Ibid.: 61; eng. 56).

In Kant's terms, the (illegitimate) assumption of an empirical outside our anticipations is solely due to an «amphiboly of reflecting judgment» (Kant [1938]: 326; eng. 110), because of which «what belongs to the subject (which is affected) is attributed to the represented object» (Ibid.: 320; eng. 107). In fact, there is only the continuous projection of the empirical made by the operation of the a priori. To put it another way, there is solely what Kant defines as «the schematism of the concepts of reflection in a system» (Ibid.: 490; eng. 139), through which the empirical is anticipated – and nothing other than this schematism.

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to recall Kant's own words: «It is all transcendental. Pure idealism» (1936: 90). If this is indeed the case, however, it becomes evident that not only is our own examination of reflection far from sufficient, but even Kant's. This leads to a second question, namely how the new presumed «*schematism of the power of judgment*» (1938: 494; eng. 142) should be understood. Indeed, in what way does this schematism cooperate to the overall transcendental constitution of experience? The aforementioned fragments of the *Opus* provided an initial account of its functioning. However, this account remains only “hypothetical”. The actual issue moves itself to the plane of the *Critique of the power of judgment*. Given that precisely such a “schematism” appears to be everything but developed by it, can we still rely on the third *Critique*? What remains of the *Critique of the power of judgment*, as it were, *after the Opus postumum*?

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Notes

- 1 In accordance with the established custom, I will cite Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* providing the page numbers of the original editions. In the event of a coincidence between the text of the first and second editions, I will quote the latter. With regard to the English translations, I wish to note that they have all been verified and, when necessary, modified.
- 2 I cite the first edition of the *Critique* for the difference is more evident there, particularly in the formulation of the Second Analogy, which claims that «Everything that happens (begins to be) presupposes something which it follows in accordance with a rule», without further determination of this rule. Without further specification, for instance, whether the effect follows its cause in a linear or cyclical form, in a mechanical or a teleological way (see Garoni [1986]: 76 f.).
- 3 For a broader comparison between Kant's and Hegel's conceptions of reason, consult at least Lugarini (1981), Longuenesse (1981), and, more recently, Ferrarin (2016).
- 4 For an analysis of the general problem of the understanding (as *Vernehmen*) in Kant, see the linguistic interpretations by Högrefe (1974) and La Rocca (1999), as well as the *lato* and *stricto sensu* "cognitive" ones by Longuenesse (1993), and Hanna (2001). These interpretations are of significant value for reconstructing the *hermeneutical* dimension of the concrete understanding in Kant, although especially the latter tend to suppress the distinction between the a priori *Ver-stand* (the "simple" stabilisation of objectivity) and the reflecting process of *Vernehmen*, of which *the power of judgment* is in charge, due to their same hermeneutical assumptions. For further insight into the limitations of any "hermeneutical" interpretation of Kant, see Branca (2023; 2024: 67-97).
- 5 On the philological issues depending on the corruption of Rink' and Vollmer's edition, as well as of the manuscripts, see Elden (2009) and Stark (2011); for a reconstruction of the events behind Rink's edition, instead, see Farinelli (2004: I-XIII).
- 6 For an analysis of Ritter's geographical method, see *Ibid.*: 23-29, and Farinelli (1992: 120-133, 266 f.). For what I know, there is still a lack of a comprehensive study comparing Kant's geography and Ritter's *Erdkunde*.
- 7 In so doing, I provide an explanation of the (only apparent) paradox pointed out by Marcuzzi (2011: 130), according to which geographical knowledge is «for one part of a conceptual order, but also, as we have seen, of the order of spatialisation in the sense of a nonconceptual disposition of the object of geography in space». As highlighted in the text, this depends on the fact that, in dealing with (and indeed in *making*) space, the "matrix" of every physical-geographical knowledge remains mathematical.
- 8 I completely avoid here to give notice about the history and composition of Kant's *Opus postumum*. On the topic, see Mathieu (1991: 62-90), and Förster (1993: XVI-XXXVIII).
- 9 Not to the different perspectives, the most comprehensive attempts of reconstruction remain Mathieu (1991), Förster (2000), and Pecere (2007: 667-794).

Geography, cartography



Un geografo di nome Kant

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Abstract. The article aims to provide some insights into the cartographic scheme that underlies Kant's critical philosophy. To achieve this, it begins with a brief contextualisation of Kant within the geographical revolution of the XVIII century and then moves on to analyse the inner articulation of his *Physical Geography*. The result is the exhibition of Kant's presupposition of a plan, or idea (*focus imaginarius*), to the same construction of his philosophy. It is this idea that, through projection, makes cartographically possible the critique.

Keywords. Kant, Physical Geography, Cartography, Critique of Pure Reason, Architectonics

Al tempo di Kant la terra, il cielo e il mare smisero di essere per sempre quello che essi erano stati al tempo degli antichi. Già alla fine del Quattrocento la Terra non era più la sfera più piccola del cosmo, circondata secondo Aristotele dalle sfere dell'acqua, dell'aria e del fuoco. Nel Medioevo si credeva che il rapporto tra la terra e il mare, vale a dire la proporzione tra il volume dei due elementi fosse da uno a dieci, e che perciò la Terra fosse una piccola isola emersa dalle acque dell'Oceano in virtù di un provvidenziale (e locale) intervento divino. Soltanto nel Cinquecento, dopo le grandi navigazioni oceaniche,

in Europa si iniziò a pensare che l'uomo potesse vivere ovunque sulla faccia della Terra, e che questa fosse un unico globo terracqueo, vale a dire che l'acqua e la terra non fossero due distinti corpi sferici ma costituissero un'unica palla, il cui centro era il centro del mondo. Di conseguenza l'ecumene, cioè la Terra popolata e abitabile, fino ad allora ritenuta un piccolissimo brano solido sperso nell'immensità delle acque marine iniziò ad essere concepita come estesa su tutta la superficie del globo, e le distese liquide si tramutarono in laghi interni (cfr. Randles [1986]). All'inizio del Seicento Galileo cancellò quel che più tardi anche Bertolt Brecht chiamò il cielo aristotelico. Bisognerà attendere l'inizio del Settecento perché Ferdinando Marsigli cancelli l'insondabile abisso marittimo. Marsigli fu il primo a misurare la profondità del mare, al tempo in cui pochi pensavano che non fosse un abisso senza fine. La sua *Histoire Physique de la Mer* (Marsigli [1725]), pubblicata ad Amsterdam quando Kant ancora apprendeva a camminare, fu la prima a descrivere il mare del mondo come qualcosa di omogeneo e ininterrotto.

Kant appartiene insomma alla prima generazione per cui il globo terrestre smette di essere quel che era per il mondo antico, e diviene qualcosa di continuo, omogeneo e isotropico: diviene in tal modo un'estensione spaziale nel senso letterale, cioè euclideo, del termine. Per Heinrich von Kleist una delle conseguenze di tale mutazione fu che in tal modo restava un'unica possibilità, quella di girare intorno al mondo «per vedere se per caso non fosse un po' più aperto dalla parte di dietro» (Kleist [1810]: 342). Si trattava di mettere ordine in uno smisurato universo di forme, di mettere a sistema un incessante flusso di informazioni, di risultati dell'esperienza di sempre più numerosi marinai e viaggiatori. A voler ridurre tutto Kant ad un unico pensiero, si potrebbe dire che per Kant l'esperienza dipende dall'applicazione di uno schema. La questione è: a quale schema egli si riferisce?

Ormai mezzo secolo fa Michel Foucault ha illustrato con sottile ironia ciò che accade quando una classificazione viene privata della propria "tavola operatoria", che abilita il pensiero ad operare sulle entità del nostro mondo, mettendole in ordine e dividendole in classi, raggruppandole secondo i nomi che designano somiglianze e differenze: «la tavola sulla quale dall'inizio del tempo il linguaggio interseca lo spazio». Come esempio, Foucault cita un famoso esempio di Borges a proposito di un'enciclopedia cinese dove gli animali sono divisi in 13 categorie, da quelli che appartengono all'imperatore a quelli che da lontano sembrano mosche oppure sono disegnati con un sottile pennello di peli di cammello, insomma un eteroclitico atlante reso impossibile dalla mancanza del «muto terreno sul quale è possibile giustapporre le entità» (Foucault [1967]: XVIII sg.). Nella *Geografia* di Kant come è stata trascritta da Vollmer¹, questo terreno o tavola è la Terra stessa, e il criterio dell'ordine è il grado e la maniera con cui sono esperite le sue parti:

la Terra è classificata secondo quello che ne sappiamo, sebbene tale metodo non conduca ad una classificazione geofisica, come 1. terre delle quali conosciamo completamente

l'interno e la circonferenza, EUROPA; 2. terre delle quali conosciamo la circonferenza e la maggior parte dell'interno, ASIA; 3. terre di cui la sola circonferenza è conosciuta, e il cui interno è del tutto ignoto, AFRICA; 4. terre di cui la circonferenza è conosciuta soltanto in parte, e ancor meno l'interno, AMERICA e NUOVA OLANDA; 5. terre che sono state viste ma non più trovate; 6. terre conosciute bene dagli antichi ma ancora ignote; 7. terre la cui esistenza può essere soltanto ipotizzata². (Kant [1801]: III: 149)

È probabile che Borges, che ha scritto di aver consultato l'*Erdkunde* di Karl Ritter, conoscesse tale classificazione, che al giorno d'oggi può produrre soltanto sconcerto, lo stesso che suscitava in Foucault. Esso è originato adesso non dalla mancanza di un terreno comune, come per Foucault, ma dal fatto che essa non è conforme agli schemi cui ci siamo abituati dopo Kant, e proprio grazie a Kant. La classificazione in questione riguarda tutti gli oggetti dotati di esistenza storica o naturale, che apparenta secondo il principio o della somiglianza, vale a dire della metafora, o della genealogia, cioè metonimia ovvero sineddoche (Tort [1989]: 12, 17, che contengono alcune riflessioni di Kant degli anni 1775-1777 sulle differenti razze umane) – un principio evocato e spiegato all'inizio e alla fine dell'edizione Vollmer³.

Proprio l'opposizione tra una sorta di classificazione logica di stampo linneano, che produce sistemi naturali basati sulla somiglianza o similarità, e una classificazione fisica kantiana fondata sulla prossimità delle cose è stata di recente al centro dell'attenzione dei geografi desiderosi di esplorare un criterio che come quello di Kant evita la logica del "rettangolo intemporale" (vale a dire la tavola) al cui interno non vi è spazio per la geografia di Kant (cfr. Gregory [1994]: 25 sg.).

Di fatto, le cose non sono così semplici, come la stessa *Geografia* di Kant certifica, e in particolare il fatto che la sua classificazione delle località terrestri non ha carattere geofisico. Come Kant scrive nel 1757, all'inizio del suo programma accademico:

La geografia fisica considera soltanto le condizioni naturali della Terra e ciò che essa contiene: mari, continenti, montagne, fiumi, l'atmosfera, l'umanità, animali, piante, minerali. Tutto ciò comunque non è considerato con la completezza e l'esattezza filosofica tipiche della fisica e della storia naturale, ma piuttosto con la ragionevole curiosità di un viaggiatore ovunque alla ricerca di ogni cosa degna di nota, peculiare o meravigliosa per comparare successivamente le proprie osservazioni secondo un certo piano. (Kant [1757]: 3)

Il piano come si comprende precede le osservazioni, allo stesso modo in cui, come già si è ricordato, gli schemi precedono l'esperienza. Tale ordine di priorità governa la summenzionata classificazione delle terre sopra il livello del mare. Prendiamo l'ultimo caso, che riguarda le terre la cui esistenza resta materia di semplice supposizione. Esse si dividono in due categorie: quelle la cui esistenza può essere ipotizzata per ragioni storiche e quelle la cui esistenza può esser ipotizzata per ragioni fisiche. Tra le ultime vi è la mitica Agisymba, la Terra del Sud

immaginata dagli antichi e menzionata da Tolomeo (Berggreen, Jones [2000]: 145-147). Essa è situata al confine inferiore dell'ecumene, e i moderni credevano essa interrompesse l'Oceano Indiano; così quest'ultimo divenne, nella concezione occidentale, un immenso mare chiuso, una sorta di berretto antartico il cui termine ultimo apparve l'Australia quando venne scoperta. Kant fu il primo a esprimere il proprio scetticismo circa le ragioni addotte per l'esistenza di tale sbarramento (cfr. Kant [1801]: III: 592-594). Anche se di fatto Kant non lo specifica, quest'ultimo poteva essere teorizzato soltanto sulla base della supposta analogia tra l'emisfero meridionale e quello settentrionale, dove la Terra è estesa fino al settantesimo grado di latitudine. Qual era l'origine di tale analogia, l'origine della matrice ideativa? Prendiamo il caso di una terra autentica, la Groenlandia. Kant ipotizzava la sua natura insulare, prima ancora che essa potesse essere di fatto verificata. Tale ipotesi si basava sulla supposta simmetria tra le due parti del globo poste ad oriente e ad occidente dell'asse verticale costituito dal Vecchio e Nuovo Continente. Per lo stesso motivo (per ragioni cioè di analogia e simmetria) Kant pensava che anche l'America si protendesse ancora più verso occidente di quel che le mappe allora mostravano. Oppure si pensi all'insistenza con cui Kant postulava la corrispondenza reciproca delle coste affrontate come quella siciliana e quella africana, o della protuberanza occidentale del continente africano con il golfo del Messico, inferendo ed anticipando in tal modo ipotesi genetiche relative ai movimenti della crosta terrestre formulate soltanto un secolo dopo da Wegener con la propria teoria della "deriva dei continenti" (cfr. Kant [1801]: III: 5, 12; II: 208 sg.). E tutto ciò soltanto grazie al *Plan*, vale a dire la mappa, l'organo supremo della rappresentazione in termini geografici della realtà. Al contrario di quanto avviene a proposito della enciclopedia cinese di cui parla Borges, nella *Geografia* di Kant la mappa ovvero lo schema (il "rettangolo intemporale" di Foucault) precede l'esperienza.

In altri termini: se si pone uno schema all'origine di tutta l'architettura kantiana (cfr. Pierobon [1990]: 65), esso è indubbiamente di natura cartografica. Si tratta di una questione delicata e complessa, cui si può qui soltanto accennare. In ogni caso, il fatto che nell'introduzione alla sua *Geografia* Kant abbia fornito una delle più perspicue definizioni di quel che per "architettonica" bisogna intendere riesce al riguardo estremamente significativo:

La cognizione del mondo dovrebbe essere organizzata come un sistema: in caso contrario non potremmo essere sicuri o di averlo afferrato fino in fondo, o di essere in grado di ricordarlo, poiché il nostro sguardo non può dominare quel che conosciamo. Nel sistema il tutto precede le parti, nell'aggregato hanno la precedenza le parti. Il sistema è l'idea architettonica, senza la quale la scienza non può costruirsi la casa da sola, per così dire. Chiunque voglia costruire una casa per se stesso deve prima avere un'idea del complesso, dalla quale tutte le sue parti possono essere dedotte. La descrizione del mondo e della Terra come un sistema deve partire dalla descrizione del globo, dall'idea del complesso, e riferirsi sempre ad essa. (Kant [1801]: I: 23).

Ancora più chiara e fedele rispetto alla sezione sull'“architettonica” nella *Critica della Ragion Pura* è la trascrizione di Rink della lezione kantiana: «L'idea è architettonica ed essa crea la scienza». Dopo l'esempio della casa Rink aggiunge che «un concetto architettonico è un concetto nel quale la molteplicità deriva dalla totalità» (Kant [1802]: 158; al riguardo, si veda Hohenegger [2004]: 71-158), cioè dalla “globalità”. Kant stesso spiega l'oggettività (validità) della conoscenza come funzione della soggettività trascendentale. Egli reinterpreta la “venerabile coppia aristotelica di forma e materia” e identifica tale reinterpretazione con una copernicana rivoluzione filosofica (cfr. Landucci [1993]: 26). In ogni caso la filosofia trascendentale di Kant è nient'altro che l'architettonica del passaggio dall'*a-priori* all'*a-posteriori* (cfr. Pierobon [1990]: 33 sg.). Diversamente da quel che valeva per Aristotele, le forme per Kant sono sempre pure perché esse sono funzioni o strutture applicate ad un soggetto che trascende la materialità e perciò autonomo rispetto all'esperienza. Di conseguenza “formale” per Kant significa “a priori”, qualcosa che pertiene non al mondo sensibile ma a quello intellegibile, chiaramente distinto dal primo. Tale equivalenza di significato marca ciò che è nuovo e radicale nel pensiero di Kant, anche se essa di fatto è già presente nella *Geografia* di Tolomeo che risale al secondo secolo dopo Cristo. In essa la sfera viene matematicamente tradotta in un piano e viene spiegata l'arte della proiezione, ovvero la tecnica per trasformare la totalità del globo in una serie di rappresentazioni cartografiche. La *Critica della Ragion Pura* è nella sua essenza nient'altro che l'illustrazione del protocollo consapevole, sistematico e radicale, per la realizzazione di tale assunto. È ragionevole supporre che proprio confrontandosi con il modo tolemaico di appiattare le curve del mondo sulle tavole (vale a dire con la proiezione tolemaica) Kant si trovasse di fronte al problema della “sicura via della conoscenza” ovvero della “cognizione del mondo” e si trovasse obbligato al passaggio dalla geografia empirica alla «geografia della ragione» ovvero, ancora con una sua espressione, alla «geografia dello spazio buio del nostro intelletto» (cit. in Cassirer [1977]: 173 sg.).

La metafisica antica si è mossa secondo il precetto tolemaico, cercando di porre l'essere, compreso come il punto di proiezione, come la fonte di complesse e precise determinazioni. A dispetto del loro carattere antitetico, «sia l'empirismo che il razionalismo hanno creduto nell'esistenza di tale essere, e alla sua corrispondenza con l'effettiva realtà delle cose che la mente deve assorbire e riprodurre come una copia» (ivi: 174). Secondo l'Analitica kantiana dell'intelletto puro l'essere metafisico non è un dato originario ma un problema o un postulato. Esso pone questioni sulla natura del punto di proiezione e, in particolare, sulla transizione dalla sua “oggettività” alla forma soggettiva della rappresentazione, movimento che nel contesto del pensiero kantiano sembra rappresentare il carattere metamorfico del meccanismo proiettivo. Esso è chiamato il «disegno» secondo il quale «la ragione comprende soltanto ciò che essa stessa produce», come si legge nella Prefazione

alla seconda edizione della *Critica* (Kant [1787]: 109), una critica che nel suo complesso è nient'altro che l'illustrazione di una specie di mappa mentale del disegno proiettivo e della sua analisi che inizia non dagli oggetti che sono prodotti ma dalla ricognizione della sua funzione come produttore di un particolare modo di conoscenza (cfr. Farinelli [1995]; Farinelli [1996]).

Alla fine dell'Analitica e allo scopo di introdurre la differenza tra fenomeno e noumeno Kant confessa la natura cartografica del proprio pensiero e scrive: «Noi abbiamo ora non soltanto viaggiato attraverso la terra dell'intelletto puro e ispezionato attentamente ogni parte di essa, ma l'abbiamo anche rilevata, e determinato il posto in essa di ogni cosa». E aggiunge: «sarà utile comunque gettare un ultimo sguardo alla mappa della terra che adesso dobbiamo lasciare» (Kant [1781/1787]: 339). Nell'appendice alla sua *Dialettica trascendentale* egli descrive come il proprio modello lavora e spiega il necessario uso regolativo delle idee trascendentali. Tale uso consiste

nel dirigere la comprensione verso un certo scopo rispetto al quale le linee di direzione di tutte le sue regole convergono in un punto, il quale sebbene sia soltanto un'idea (*focus imaginarius*) – vale a dire un punto dal quale i concetti della comprensione di fatto non procedono dal momento che esso giace completamente all'esterno di ogni possibile esperienza – tuttavia ancora serve ad ottenere per questi concetti la più grande unità e allo stesso tempo la più grande estensione.

E Kant aggiunge: «Ora naturalmente è da esso che sorge l'inganno, come se queste linee di direzione fossero sparate fuori da un oggetto esterno al campo della possibile cognizione empirica (proprio come se gli oggetti fossero visti attraverso la superficie di uno specchio)». Con "inganno" qui Kant si riferisce all'antica metafisica, contro la quale mette in guardia ma che allo stesso tempo giudica necessaria «se oltre agli oggetti che abbiamo di fronte vogliamo vedere quelli che sono lontani sullo sfondo, vale a dire nel nostro caso se la comprensione vuole oltrepassare l'esperienza data e quindi vuole prendere la misura della sua più grande ed estrema estensione» (ivi: 591). Se può sembrare eccessivo identificare il *focus* con il tolemaico punto di proiezione e le "linee di direzione" con gli assi che discendono da esso (cfr. Farinelli [1995]: 146; Farinelli [2004]) basta soltanto considerare quel che è scritto subito dopo:

L'ipotesico uso della ragione è perciò diretto alla unità sistematica delle cognizioni della comprensione, che comunque è la pietra di paragone della verità per le sue regole. Al contrario [*Umgekehrt*, cioè non da sotto a sopra ma da sopra a sotto] l'unità sistematica (come pura idea) è soltanto un'unità proiettata [*projektierte*], da considerarsi non come data in sé ma soltanto come un problema. (Kant [1781/1787]: 592 sg.).

È significativo notare che il termine moderno di proiezione proviene dall'alchimia e riguarda precisamente gli effetti prodotti dalla pietra filosofale, vale a

dire la trasformazione del metallo in oro (cfr. Eco [1990]: 76). Il che implica una trasformazione ontologica che riguarda non soltanto la forma (come i geografi ingenui continuano a credere) ma piuttosto la natura delle cose, e del mondo. In altri termini: la proiezione si riferisce al processo per cui i vili metalli sono trasformati in metallo prezioso, e la riflessione kantiana consiste nella problematica presa d'atto della sistematica unità di tale processo. Come dire che per Kant la proiezione tolemaica è la Ragion Pura, e la sua *Critica* è la descrizione cartografica della proiezione. Il famoso motto sul silenzio che Kant prende a prestito da Bacone e premette alla sua opera significa proprio la sua volontà di tacere sulla propria natura di geografo, e sulla natura cartografica del proprio pensiero. Di fatto, come già notava Strabone (*Geografia*, I, 1, 1), i primi geografi erano filosofi. Perciò l'esempio di Kant non costituisce una novità, così come non è una novità la globalizzazione. Quest'ultima indica l'intenzione di considerare la Terra nella sua autentica forma, vale a dire come un globo, e questo è esattamente il problema dal quale la riflessione odierna muove. Quel che è nuovo è che mentre Kant si affida completamente alla mediazione dello schema cartografico, e di conseguenza fa leva sulla riduzione del globo ad una serie di mappe, e della conoscenza a una geografia della mente, tale strategia oggi non è più possibile, nel senso che non conduce più da nessuna parte.

Secondo Hegel la nottola di Minerva, vale a dire la filosofia, si leva in volo al crepuscolo. Ma si chiedono oggi gli antropologi: se la Terra è una sfera, dov'è il crepuscolo? Ammesso che esso abbia un posto, non può valere per tutta l'umanità (cfr. Clifford [1997]: 20 sg.). Proprio perché non vi è risposta è urgente tornare a Kant, specialmente alle sue dense lezioni di geografia, la forma originaria del suo pensiero e la materia prima della sua filosofia. Il nostro mondo è diverso da quello di Kant, ma continuiamo a vederlo (anche se magari non lo sappiamo o non lo ricordiamo) come egli ci ha insegnato. La sua geografia lascia aperta per fortuna un'altra possibilità rispetto a quella da lui stesso praticata, la possibilità di una geografia basata appunto sul principio della classificazione fisica, su come le cose stanno di fatto l'una accanto all'altra: una geografia, per strano che possa sembrare, ancora tutta da costruire, l'unica in grado di fare davvero i conti con il processo della globalizzazione. Una geografia che forse è stata il primo sogno della cultura occidentale. E ancora lo rimane.

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Notes

- 1 Prima della morte di Kant vennero pubblicate in Germania due edizioni della sua *Geografia*, la prima, a cura di Gottfried Vollmer, che citiamo dalla traduzione italiana come Kant (1801), la seconda, a cura di Friedrich Theodor Rink, che citiamo invece dall'edizione dell'Accademia come Kant (1802).
- 2 La versione di Rink non è molto diversa: «1. Terre di cui conosciamo il profilo e l'interno; 2. Terre che conosciamo soltanto in parte; 3. Terre di cui conosciamo soltanto le coste; 4. Terre che non si trovano più; 5. Terre conosciute dagli antichi ma ora perse; 6. Terre la cui esistenza può essere soltanto ipotizzata» (Kant [1802]: 228).
- 3 Il principio di genealogia o parentela dell'antropologia kantiana diviene nella sua *Geografia* un principio di prossimità o vicinanza (Kant [1801]: I: 23 sg.; VI: 409 sg.): per tale ragione è corretto, come fa Tort, riferirsi alla metonimia che include ambedue i casi.

Aisthesis



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Planetary Spaces and Maps of Reason. Remarks on Kant's Cartographic Imagination

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Abstract. Focusing on the cartographic imagination of the European Enlightenment (1650-1800), this essay seeks to discuss the role of the cartographic representation of the Earth in the construction of a planetary space, as well as its function as a model for measuring human knowledge and as a metaphor for its systematization. More specifically, by analyzing Kant's geographical metaphors, I will reconstruct how the modern project of conquering the world as picture took shape in the design of the Kantian «cosmogram». I plan to show that the cartographic representation of the terrestrial sphere is not only the scopic model of Enlightenment planetary consciousness, but also the monogram of Kant's architectonic system, and as such the operative and imaginative matrix of his cartographic reason.

Keywords. Kant, geography, cartographic imagination, earth, metaphor

1. *Mapping as method*

The term globalization is now generally used to refer to that set of events, processes and experiences through which a global space has become significant, leading to a radical change in

the way the spatial dimensions of society and politics, economics and culture are represented. But it also refers to the story of how the exploration of the earth's geographical reality led to the invention of the globe, to its conquest and presentation as a picture. This was a scopic revolution that transformed both the world and the way we represent it and whose effects reverberate not only on the practical level of everyday life but also on the entire field of knowledge, changing thereby its epistemological, theoretical and paradigmatic structures. For as the Marxist geographer David Harvey (1990: 247) has written: «If spatial [...] experiences are primary vehicles for the coding and reproduction of social relations [...], then a change in the way the former get represented will almost certainly generate some kind of shift in the latter».

This new way of «reading time in space» (Schlögel 2003) gave rise to a fertile reflection on the cartographic roots of modernity. But why is cartography so important for those interested in spatializing history? And why is the map today emerging as a privileged media system with which to investigate and to question the transformations of our spatial consciousness and geographical imagination? According to Peter Sloterdijk, this has to do with the fact that maps and other depictive, planimetric media present «globalization as an image». In the Modern Age, the task of drawing and designing the new image of the world «no longer fell to the metaphysicists, but rather to the geographers and seafarers». It was their mission to present the terrestrial globe in pictorial form, operationalizing the whole planet as a map-image:

Beginning with the Behaim Globe from Nuremberg, made in 1492 – the oldest surviving example of its kind – and continuing up until NASA's photograms of the earth and pictures taken from the space station Mir, the cosmological process of modernity is characterized by the changes of shape and refinements in the earth's image in its diverse technical media. (Sloterdijk [2005]: 21)

However, on closer inspection, it is not only the modern, semi-metaphysical character of map-images that makes the art of reducing the sphere to a plane so interesting. There is something more specific in the way a map shapes and constructs spaces that makes it particularly attractive.

It is commonly thought that the map is an exact copy of reality, a mirror reflecting the physical surface of the earth as it is. However, this is a naive conception of cartography: an interpretation that nullifies its performative and operational potential, reducing the discourse to the primacy of the physical over the technical, the natural over the cultural, the thing in itself over the phenomenon. But maps do not merely represent spaces, they produce and encode them; they are «what transforms space into territories» (Schlögel [2003]: XXI). Maps, as instruments of power and forms of the representation of space,

are the sign that fixes and captures the historicity of our spatial consciousness; they are the trace of the mediation onto which our worldview is projected. And since each historical period has its own vision of the map, its own cartographic rhetoric, its own cartographic narrative, as Schlögel provocatively suggests, the history of cartography can be seen as an «alternative phenomenology of Spirit» (Schlögel [2003]: xx).

Although dedicated to exploring and interrogating Kant's «geography of reason» (see Hohenegger 2012), this article also resonates with the proposal to write the media-history of space through the prism of the map (Michalsky, Morawski 2024). But it does so in the conviction that this is only possible if we proceed from a general consideration of the hybrid and potentially nomadic nature of cartographic languages. Particularly important in this regard is the examination of the encroachments that occur in both directions between the visual and the discursive spheres. Indeed, it has been demonstrated, that the performative power of a map to represent, configure, express, construct or communicate the world does not only concern the territorialization and economization of space or the geographical icon of the globe, but also other media operations, such as writing processes, for which the map assumes the role of an «operational or imaginative matrix» (Dünne [2011]: 44).

Focusing on the cartographic imagination of the European Enlightenment (1650-1800), which historians have called the «Age of Cartography» (see Edney, Sponge Pedley 2020), this work seeks to discuss the role of the cartographic representation of the Earth in the construction of a planetary space, as well as its function as a model for measuring human knowledge and a metaphor for its systematization. More specifically, by analyzing Kant's geographical metaphors, I aim to reconstruct how the modern project of conquering the world as picture took shape in the design of the Kantian «cosmogram» (see Tresh 2005). I plan to show that the cartographic representation of the terrestrial sphere is not only the scopic model of Enlightenment «planetary consciousness» (see Pratt 1992), but also the monogram of Kant's architectonic system, the operative and imaginative matrix of his «cartographic reason» (see Farinelli 2009).

2. *The portrait of a lack*

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. And in the three hundred years since his birth, countless words have been written about the work of Immanuel Kant. This adage therefore seems most appropriate for opening a window on his geography of reason and discussing the important legacy of his thought. But which image to choose? And why?



This picture is an oil painting made in 1791 by the Berlin painter Gottlieb Döbler (or Doppler). It is one of the most important portraits of Kant that we know of. And although it is not the most famous, it is one of the most faithful and reliable, having been painted live during the artist's stay in Königsberg (Essers 1974). I have chosen this painting in particular, because it bears witness to a lack in the mass of books, articles, studies and dissertations written on Kant: the lack of geography. For, as Stuart Elden (2009: 8) has pointed out: «Of all Kant's work and all his wide areas of interest, the neglect of geography is perhaps the most glaring».

Döbler shows us a sixty-seven-year-old Kant at the height of his intellectual maturity – a year before he had published his third *Critique*, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). Two objects in particular, placed near his left arm, accompany the figure of the philosopher in the foreground: some pens and a globe. While the decision to include writing utensils in the setting can be seen as more immediate and easier to read, the figure of the globe may instead surprise those accustomed to thinking of Kant only as an author of philosophical texts. However, this is neither a coincidence nor an ornamental choice dictated by the fashion of the time. It is very likely that the painting's arrangement was shared by Kant himself, who, as his biographers repeatedly recall, was an avid reader of geography's texts and travelogues. But the globe is not just there to indicate a literary passion, however important and characteristic it may be. There is a deeper

reason for this stylistic choice, linked to a biographical fact that makes the figure of Kant a truly exceptional case (and for this reason worthy of particular attention) in the philosophical panorama of his time. Indeed, unlike other great philosophers of the modern age who also made extensive use of geographical metaphors (some of whom were also his direct sources: e.g., Bacon, Locke, Hume, Leibniz), Kant is the only one to have taught physical geography at university (Louden 2015) – 49 courses from 1756 to 1796, more than any other subject except lectures on logic (54 courses) and metaphysics (52 courses). He was the first philosopher in Germany to hold such chair – a few decades before the official establishment of a chair of geography at the University of Berlin (Carl Ritter was appointed to the post)¹ – and contributed both to the definitive «emancipation of geography from theology» (Büttner 1989) and its systematization as a «modern European science» (see Church 2011). And this is why geographers today speak of a «Kantian turn» (Livingstone [1992]: 113) in the history of their discipline. Kant, a geographer? Kant, a central figure in the history of geography? We never heard of this at school. But is it really so relevant? And relevant to the extent that it should be included in his official iconography?

It was Ernst Cassirer who firstly called Kant a «geographer of reason» arguing that during the pre-critical period he went from being an «empirical geographer» to a «geographer of reason» who «undertakes to map the circuit of its entire content under the guidance of definitive principle» (Cassirer [1918]: 45). In other words, he had moved from the description of the spatial cosmos to the description of the intellectual cosmos, from «empirical topography» to «transcendental topography» (Malpas, Zöller [2012]: 146). And indeed, it was Kant who established in Western culture the idea that even philosophy is in need of a spatial model for orientation. His work thus constitutes a relevant refutation of the thesis that modernity is obsessed with time, the idea of progress and grand narratives, while postmodernity is obsessed with space and a supposed end of history (see Siani 2021). But we might be more precise on this point. On the one hand, Kant was certainly a thinker of his time (see Jordheim 2010); he was not only reflecting on his own present, but also wondering what philosophy could do to meet the demands and challenges of his of his age, which he programmatically called «the age of criticism». An epoch, which «demands that reason once again take on the most difficult of all its tasks, namely that of self-knowledge» (Kant [1981]: 100). On the other hand, there is no doubt that his critical project would be different, perhaps even unrecognizable, without all the geographical metaphors that characterize it. But are they really just metaphors? Or are there deeper epistemological connections between the geographical images we encounter in his writings and the cartographic operations, the techniques of control, measurement and territorialization of space that characterized the planetary consciousness and geographical imagination of the Enlightenment?

3. *Kant's geography of reason reconsidered*

The long neglect of these questions – and of Kant's geography in general – has already been widely lamented. Here, as far as possible, I will attempt to fill the gap by exploring the «cultural techniques» (see Siegert 2015) by which Kant maps – materially, visually and metaphorically – the spaces and territories of reason. This entails an alternative view of metaphor to that of the classical history of ideas. What interests me most is beyond the discursive domain, it is the extra-conceptual, the non-human, the visual. In a word, technology, with its mode of functioning, its components, the position it assigns to the observer, and the operations and gestures it requires or enables. The challenge, then, will be to consider «the material world of technological objects and the discursive world of concepts as interacting elements» (Eliassen, Jacobsen [2010]: 65), while redrawing the boundaries between image and text, media and metaphor. And indeed, just as metaphor allows one to see what one could not see before and otherwise, and thus to think it, to develop operations of knowledge about it, transforming and transmitting experience, so also do media². This includes the map, which as a «technical prosthesis that extends and redefines the field of sensory perception», provides access to «new visual worlds, and in so doing, to new fields of knowledge» (Jacob [1992]: 29).

In line with the media-philosophical approach that reads maps as cultural techniques, I see Kant's transcendental project not (only) as a turning point in the history of modern philosophy but as an event in the technological history of space³. More specifically, I try to situate it within the history of the Western cartographic imagination (see Morawski 2024). While Kant is said to be the very first in the project of a «philosophical topography – a project that aims to explore the manner in which space, and also place, figure in human knowledge and experience as both the object of such knowledge and experience, and as part of its very structure» (Malpas, Thiel [2011]: 195) – the entanglement of his topographical method with the geographical systems for ordering knowledge has been largely neglected. Questions about the operability of «visual forms of knowledge production» (see Drucker 2014) in relation to the historical concept of space and place have not received the attention they deserve. In reading Kant topographically, scholarship focuses mainly on space as an a priori form of sensible intuition, without considering the epistemological connections between Kant's geography of reason and the universe of contemporary cartographic practices.

Here I will try to reverse this trend by exploring the significance that cartographic technique and its related operations may have had for Kant's philosophical imaginary his language, his argumentative strategies, and the problem of the form and representation of his transcendental system⁴. In this context, I plan to

discuss the «carticity» of Kant's philosophical writing, examining thereby the transmedial writing practices that emerge from the negotiation between the text and the map as a medium: that is, as a «specific system of sign combination and as a specific form of knowledge processing» (Stockhammer [2011]: 68).

The focus will fall on two cartographic metaphors in particular: the map of (the island of) truth and the sphere of reason. Kant's geography of reason shows us the surface of a plane, but this plane conceals sediments and stratifications. To confine the analysis of this geographical plane to the surface of metaphorical language alone, without asking whether traces of the scopic regimes (i.e., the operational and epistemic images and optical media that are intertwined with the historical materiality of its cartographic practice) are present in its subsoil, would therefore be to limit our heuristic space and our capacity for understanding. It would not be clear, for example, why Kant compares the generative cell of his philosophical system (the Table of Categories) with the map of a country and the topics of mnemotechnics. Nor would one understand the assumptions which underpin his definition of «architectonic reason» as the faculty of «describing a sphere of its own» (see Hohenegger 2012). Accordingly, I will consider the map of truth and the sphere of reason not as mere «illustrations of the text» (Tarbet 1969), but as mediations. This will serve the aim of shedding light on the processes of «remediation» (see Bolter, Grusin 1999) – intermedial and intertextual – that inform Kant's «cartographic writing» (see Conley 1996).

4. *The table and the map*

Let's begin our investigation by examining the analogy between the map and the table, insofar as the expression *Tafel* already suggests that spatiality, as an instance of order and as a totality preceding the parts, is part of the toolbox of the Kantian system.

At the heart of the Transcendental Analytics, at the center of one of the most important systematic moments of the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant prepares the passage to the deduction of the pure concepts of the intellect, one encounters two mirror-image tables (there are eight in the entire *Critique*). Both are divided according to four titles (quantity, quality, relation, modality), each of which contains three moments. The first is known as the (Logical) Table of Judgements, the second as the (Transcendental) Table of Categories. The importance of the image of the table in the economy of the work is established from the very first lines of the Transcendental Analytics. In this respect, point 4 is extremely clear: «That the table of them [the elements of pure cognition] be complete, and that they entirely exhaust the entire field of pure understanding». Kant, it is clear, considers the device of the *Tafel* as an integral part of the con-

structive tools of his philosophy. And accordingly he establishes a link between the architectonic idea of a «whole of the a priori cognition of the understanding» and their representation/visualization as a «unitary and systematic concatenation» (Kant [1981]: 201) in a table.

According to Reinhard Brandt (1991: 60), it is the possibility of presenting (*darstellen, vor Augen stellen, vorstellen*) and grasping coordinated elements at a glance that defines the order of the table as essentially spatial. Kant confirms this hypothesis twice: first, when he compares the Table of Categories to a «systematic topic», which makes it «easy not to miss the place where every concept properly belongs and at the same time make it easy to notice any that is still empty». The second time occurs when he compares the Table of Categories to a «map» of the «land of pure understanding» (Kant [1981]: 214; 339). While the comparison with the *topica* is intended to emphasize on the one hand the systematic nature of the table and to justify the unity and completeness of its order and disposition in relation to the tradition of Aristotelian logic, rhetoric and the art of memory, the analogy between the table and the map allows us to grasp on the other hand the strictly visual aspects of this device for organizing and classifying knowledge. It enable us thus to specify the operational links between the cartographic techniques of representation and the project of a cartography of reason.

In order to understand what the *Tafel* and the *Karte* have in common, it is useful to take into account the geographical vocabulary of the time and the fact these two terms had the de facto status within it of synonyms. Consequently, any attempt to draw a clear-cut boundary between the two is – at least from a historical perspective – problematic. This is also confirmed by the map-tables cited by Kant in his writings on earthquakes and wind theory. I refer in particular to Pieter van Musschenbroek and William Dampier's versions of Halley's weather map, entitled *Tabula Totius Orbis Terrarum* and *A Map of the World*, respectively. With reference to these maps, Kant transcribes a very interesting consideration in the *Note* preceding the conclusion of the essay, *History and natural description of the most noteworthy occurrences of the earthquake that struck a large part of the Earth at the end of the year 1755*:

If one were to extend the list of places on the Earth that have always experienced the most frequent and most violent tremors, one might add that the western coasts have always suffered far more incidents than the eastern coasts. In Italy, Portugal, in South America, and even recently in Ireland, experience has confirmed this correspondence. Peru, which is situated on the western coast of the New World has almost daily tremors, while Brazil, which has the Atlantic Ocean to its east, experiences nothing of this [...]. The reason for this law seems to me to be connected with another one, for which there is no sufficient explanation as yet: namely that the western and southern coasts of nearly all countries are steeper than the eastern and northern coasts, which is confirmed by a glance at the map as well as the reports of Dampier who, on all his maritime journeys found this to be almost universal. (Kant [1756a]: 362)

In this essay, Kant attempts to provide as scientific and coherent an explanation of earthquakes as possible, based not only on the testimony of explorers and travelers, but also on the Earth's system as a whole. In pursuit of this goal, he also refers to a map that shows the location, layout and orientation of these places. With this tool, he explains, it is possible to treat very distant parts of the Earth's surface according to a common analogical principle (in this specific case, the observation that earthquakes occur mainly on west-facing coasts, not east-facing ones). In fact, the map makes it possible to overcome the empirical narrowness of the observer's point of view and to compare the morphological coincidences of countries as far apart as Italy and Peru, Ireland and Brazil. Stripped of all elements of fantasy and religious beliefs, with no more leones or dracones populating its surface, maps in the XVIII century had «become abstract and strictly functional systems for the factual ordering of phenomena in space» (Harvey [1990]: 249). The hypothesis that Kant looks at maps by recognizing their systematic function finds further support in his *New notes to explain the theory of the winds*. There, the young geographer explains that in order to study the movement of the winds in a country as far away as Guinea «one need only look at the map that Jurin has appended to Varenieu's *General Geography*, or the one that Musschenbroek included in his *Physics*», and «in a moment» the rule of the wind's movement «will be before one's eyes» (Kant [1756b]: 377).

As Lorraine Daston (2015) has shown, the ambition to encompass a multiplicity of knowledges in order to discover the relationships between them had dominated major projects of the early modern period. Indeed, at the turn of the XVII and XVIII centuries, the vast amount of information collected through travel, scientific explorations, archaeological excavations and exchanges with other cultures had created unprecedented problems in the management of knowledge; a problem that affected both large-scale projects and the missions of individual explorers. In this context, the collection and processing of vast amounts of data required not only a new range of logistical systems and means of transport, but above all the development of specific «media technologies» capable of translating, cataloguing, representing and transmitting these data⁵. This latter task was one that texts, with their sequential structure, could no longer fulfil. And in fact, as Wolfgang Schäffner pointed out, it was «numerisation and algebraisation» on the one hand, and topographical representation techniques such as tables, maps and diagrams on the other» that imposed themselves as the privileged technology of this new way of processing and archiving knowledge. The main characteristic of these topographical systems of inscription is that, compared to texts, which are essentially linear, they allow for a different «economy» of signs and a different semiotic «operationality». And this means that, although they use fewer signs, they make it easier to visualize, read and transmit information in a «visual space» in which «formulae, writing and image overlap» and the «usual bounda-

ries between text and image dissolve». Among the different topographical systems, maps represent a peculiar space for collecting data, whose «signs can be read as texts, seen as images and used as instructions». In this sense, maps are no longer mere mnemonic supports, but epistemic images that allow the compression, connection and transmission of data, while guaranteeing a «total vision» (Schäffner [2020]: 359-360).

This is the same kind of vision that characterizes the maps cited by Kant in his writings, which allow us to embrace the entire globe with our gaze and confirm geophysical hypotheses regarding phenomena (such as winds, earthquakes or hurricanes) that would otherwise be difficult to describe, verify and understand. In fact, through those maps we can both visualize such phenomena as if they were simultaneous (defining a north, south, east, west orientation scheme that is no longer the empirical-perceptual one of the individual explorer but the one mediated by the cartographic table), and synthesize, compare and connect the data collected by locating them on the map's flat surface. In essence, cartographic tables allow those who examine them the synoptic visualization of a totality (or part of the earth's surface). And, outside of the realm of metaphor, the Kantian tables as well aspire to totality, although in this case the totality is «the whole of a priori cognition» (Kant [1781]: 201).

5. *On the carticity of Kant's philosophical writing*

Kartizität is a neologism introduced by Robert Stockhammer in the field of literary studies to investigate the writing processes that show a certain similarity to the cartographic device and its practices. By «carticity of the literary description» he means «its affinity or distance from cartographic processes of representation». Central for him is «the question of the relationship of literary texts to the map as a medium: as a specific system of combining signs and as a specific form of knowledge processing». Indeed, Stockhammer analyses those texts or passages that «thematise the medium of the map and in which one can find «implicit or explicit statements about its relationship to the medium of the literary text» (Stockhammer [2011]: 68). Thus, for carticity to be given, it is not essential that maps have been incorporated within the text. It is much more important that one can find, implemented by the processes of alphabetic writing, semiotic structures, functions and technological characteristics typical of the cartographic device. The structural affinity between writing practices and cartographic representation procedures is always the result of a «negotiation»; it is the product of a «transmedia translation», by virtue of which «the (ghostly) traces of the source medium, its semiotic and structural characteristics, do not vanish or become transparent, but remain perceptible and continue to function within the target medium» (Italiano [2016]: 38).

There is an example that might help us clarify the sense of these general considerations. When the project of the *Critique* was still in its incipient stage, Kant wrote a personal reflection in which we encounter explicit references to the image of the bi-spheric globe and its peculiar graphic syntax:

In metaphysics, like an unknown land of which we intend to take possession, we have first assiduously investigated its situation and access to it. (It lies in the (region) hemisphere of pure reason;) we have even drawn the outline of where this island of cognition is connected by bridges to the land of experience, and where it is separated by a deep sea; we have even drawn its outline and are as it were acquainted with its geography (ichnography), but we do not know what might be found in this land, which is maintained to be uninhabitable by some people and to be their real domicile by others. We will take the general history of this land of reason into account in accordance with this general geography. (Kant [1772]: 136)

Kant makes reference to the «hemisphere». Between 1650 and 1800 the representation of the globe divided into two distinct hemispheres dominated the European market, becoming a characteristic element of the cartographic imagination of the time (Armitage 2020). Developed around 1527, to visualize the Spanish and Portuguese spheres of interest after the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), the two-hemisphere figure provides both symbolic and conceptual advantages. One can represent and compare the New World on one side and the Old World on the other. Or the terrestrial hemisphere on one side and the oceanic or celestial hemisphere on the other (as in the case of Homann's *Planiglobii*, one of the maps found in Kant's personal library). If we accept the dating of the Reflection to around 1772, i.e., two years after the publication of the *Dissertatio* (1770), we can assume that the two hemispheres of reason refer to the phenomenal world on the one hand and the noumenal world on the other. In such a case, the spatiality of the cartographic device would be functional for the image of systematicity, because it would make it possible to represent the connections (bridges, access roads) between regions that are indeed distinct, as antipodes with respect to each other, but which, when viewed at a single glance, form a unified, architectonically organized whole. For Kant, it is worth remembering, the «architectonic» is the «art of system» – where by system he understands «the unity of the manifold cognition under one idea». And this idea for him corresponds to the «rational concept of the form of a whole, insofar as through this the domain of the manifold as well as the position of the parts with respect to each other is determined a priori» (Kant [1781]: 691).

There is another aspect that should be carefully considered in this quotation, because it is an element of apparent novelty. While referring to the connections between the cartographic device and the idea of a «general geography», Kant contemplates the possibility of representing human reason in spatial as well as temporal, historical terms. His allusion to a possible «general history of rea-

son» should not, however, come as a surprise. After all, the final chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is entitled *The History of Pure Reason*. Italo Calvino's argument applies here, for whom every map, even the most static, is «an Odyssey». It presupposes an «idea of narrative» and is conceived on «the basis of a journey» (1984: 18-19), as a series of chronotopes. Thus, the stages that led to the emergence of the critical method – i.e., the opposition between the skeptical and dogmatic methods but even before the contrast between the naturalistic and scientific methods – and that we find set out in the last chapter of the book, can be interpreted as confirmations, however indirect, of the cartographic character of the architectonic and, more generally, of the transcendental Doctrine of Method.

Kant's personal reflection effectively suggests this view: analyzing Kant's geography of reason through the prism of its carticity means investigating the way in which he textually (i.e., alphabetically) recodes the medial (operational and visual) characteristics of the cartographic device. This encompasses its instance of order, orientation and all-encompassing unity; its synoptic, top-down, zenithal and two-dimensional model of vision; its diagrammatic and narrative function. But it also includes its paradox. For, as Peirce (1933: 230) reminds us: «On a map of an island laid down upon the soil of that island there must, under all ordinary circumstances, be some position, some point, marked or not, that represents *qua* place on the map the very same point *qua* place on the island».

6. Mapping (the island of) truth

The image of the island of truth, a fundamental part of Kant's geography of reason, is found in a chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that lies between the Analytic and the Transcendental Dialectic. The author offers the reader who has followed him through the difficult sections of the Transcendental Deduction and the Analytic of Principles a general overview of the path he has just taken. The title of the chapter, *On the ground of distinction of all objects in general into phenomena and noumena*, echoes the title of the 1768 essay *Concerning the ultimate ground of the differentiation of directions in space*. An echo that is probably not accidental. It suggests that here too there is a problem of orientation. A problem that does not concern directions in space (up, down, right or left), but rather the distinction – and moreover a very important one for the description of the spaces of reason – between phenomena and noumena, between the logic of truth and the logic of dialectical illusion, inherent in the ideas of reason. This is the passage in which the carticity of Kant's writing is most evident:

We have now not only traveled through the land of pure understanding, and carefully inspected each part of it, but we have also surveyed it, and determined the place for each thing in it. But this land is an island, and enclosed in unalterable boundaries by nature

itself. It is the land of truth (a charming name), surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean, the true seat of illusion, where many a fog bank and rapidly melting iceberg pretend to be new lands and, ceaselessly deceiving with empty hopes the voyager looking around for new discoveries, entwine him in adventures from which he can never escape and yet also never bring to an end. But before we venture out on this sea, to search through all its breadth and become certain of whether there is anything to hope for in it, it will be useful first to cast yet another glance at the map of the land that we would now leave, and to ask, first, whether we could not be satisfied with what it contains, or even must be satisfied with it out of necessity, if there is no other ground on which we could build; and, second, by what title we occupy even this land, and can hold it securely against all hostile claims. (Kant [1781]: 354)

The image of the island of truth is a multi-layered image, a perfect amalgamation of the landfalls made by the main protagonists of the Age of Discovery. Kant assembles it by drawing on various textual and iconographic resources. Now, from the point of view of carticity, the references to the medial structure of the map as a device of panoptic vision are the first to catch the eye in this passage. A map on which, according to Kant, one should take another last glance before deciding whether it is really worth venturing out to sea in search of new knowledge. The second aspect to emphasize is the opposition between the habitable and measurable land of experience (i.e. the land of the intellect) and the impulse to sail into the ocean of metaphysical illusion. This is an elementary opposition that Kant had already used in the pre-critical period and that seems to be constructed in analogy to the typically modern opposition between the territoriality of states (that striated, metric, sedentary space that can be mapped and delimited within the boundaries of national sovereignty) and the fluid non-territoriality of the marine element (a smooth, vectorial, essentially nomadic space). On the other hand, land and sea form a conceptual pair in relation to which the image of the island acquires an exceptional status, qualifying the specificity of its geographical space as a *locus* of imagination: as a hybrid space in which the smooth and the striated naturally confront each other. But exactly in what sense do they confront each other? If we follow Kant, then the confrontation occurs when, after having traversed and surveyed the island in all its parts, we turn our backs on the mainland and look out over the ocean of metaphysics – it is then that «unexpected Friedrich-like landscapes» (one thinks of *The Sea of Ice*) open up before our eyes (Cacciari [1990]: 52). To satisfy our desire for knowledge, the only thing that seems possible is to step outside the narrow limits imposed by the understanding and venture out into the open sea. Led to the objective limit of experience, reason, as Kant adds in the *Prolegomena*, «sees around itself as it were a space for the cognition of things in themselves» (1783: 142). Out of this comes that «sickness of reason that has its germ in our nature» – or, in an alternative formulation, that «longing to leave our circle and to relate to other worlds» (Kant [1776-1778]: 209-210)

It is worth noting that in the passage in which he evokes the image of the island of truth, Kant prepares the (thematic, argumentative) transition from that region of experience in which categories have an empirical meaning and in which the intellect has its domain – a domain that coincides with the solid ground of experience – to that region in which, on the other hand, categories have a simply transcendental meaning. We can therefore expect to find two different types of philosophical cartography at work in the land of pure understanding and in the ocean of dialectical illusion. Two cartographic logics which the system of pure reason forces us, however, to see as interrelated. In the first case, we are faced with a cartography of immanence (which will appeal to the spatial presuppositions of state sovereignty). In the second case, the metaphysical curiosity for new lands of exploration will compel the intervention of a cartography of transcendence. That is to say, it entails recourse to a nautical chart that allows reason itself to draw the limits of its own legitimate domain (be it in relation to the concept of nature or that of freedom). The result is a map such as that representing the voyages of Cook's second Pacific expedition, in which the limits of the navigable sea are definitively marked on the paper.

Technically, Cook's map is constructed as a polar stereographic projection: «The South Pole is both the center of the projection and the fulcrum of the circumnavigation» (Bonazzi [2022]: 84). For the English captain, adopting such a point of view meant including in the representation of the experience of exploration a land, the *Terra Australis*, which had hitherto remained excluded from traditional cartographic representations of the world because it fell halfway between science and fantasy. In this regard, it is significant that in the early essay *Universal natural history and theory of the heavens*, published in 1755 (i.e., twenty years before Cook circumnavigated the entire globe), referring to his own philosophical project Kant still uses the metaphor of the *terra incognita*: «on the basis of a slight supposition», he writes, «I have dared to undertake a dangerous journey [...] and already see the foothills of new lands. Those who have the courage to pursue the exploration, will step onto those lands and have the pleasure of bestowing their own name upon them» (Kant [1755]: 194). By contrast, in the transcripts of his geography lectures dating back to the 1780s – thus after Cook's third expedition (1776-1780) to the edge of the world – Kant slightly modifies his scheme, claiming that the design of both sides of the Earth is now known.

The question, as we have mentioned, is above all methodological in nature: what is the cartographic model that allows us to represent reason as a systematic unity organized in a non-arbitrary manner? Which figures of thought should we resort to in order to think about the connection between the full space of experience and the empty space of the noumena in geographical terms? What cartographic operations make it possible to leave the island of truth in order to explore the field of intellectual concepts, without giving in to the temptation to occupy it with fantastic representations claiming to be knowledge?

7. Drawing the Sphere of Reason

Although Kant never described himself as a geographer of reason, the cartographic sense of his doctrine of method can be measured precisely by comparing it with «one of these geographers of human reason» (Kant [1781]: 654), namely the famous David Hume, who, according to Kant, was responsible for first interrupting his «dogmatic slumber» (Kant [1783]: 42). Aware of the novelty characterizing the project of a science that determines the horizon of reason itself, Kant states with conviction in the *Prolegomena* that no one before him had ever had this idea. Admittedly, Hume was the only exception in this regard as evident from «the hint that [his] doubts had been able to give». As Kant then goes on to elaborate:

Hume also foresaw nothing of any such possible formal science, but deposited his ship on the beach (of skepticism) for safekeeping, where it could then lie and rot, whereas it is important to me to give it a pilot, who, provided with complete sea-charts and a compass, might safely navigate the ship wherever seems good to him, following sound principles of the helmsman's art drawn from a knowledge of the globe. (Kant [1783]: 58-59)

Kant's invocation of the nautical chart and the compass as indispensable tools for safe philosophical navigation testifies in an original way to the distance between his geography of reason and Hume's *mental geography*. The spread of instruments such as the compass, the sextant, the theodolite or Harris's clock did indeed underpin the emergence of a new dimension in nautical charting. This technical revolution – for that is what it indisputably was – radically changed the issue of the itinerary, allowing explorers to pose the problem of navigation and the cartography associated with it in a new and much more complex way. The new instruments did not just respond to new geographical problems. Additionally they introduced an entirely new coordinate: that of reference (mediated by the stars and new triangulation operations) to the unexperienced, abstract notion of the geographical totality of the globe.

Now it is significant that Kant, in the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, uses the very example of the figure of the earth to illustrate the difference between skepticism and the critical method. The reason why it is significant is because, in his view, if Hume had recognized the synthetic and a priori nature of mathematics, his considerations would have been very similar to those found in the *Critique*. But what is the connection between mathematics and geography?

In his *Physical Geography*, Kant distinguishes different types of geography (physical, mathematical, political, moral, theological, mercantile). As a necessary prolegomenon to physical geography, mathematical geography deals with the «shape of the Earth» – which, «as Newton has established», and subsequently «observations and measurements have confirmed» is that of a spheroid – «the

size and motion of the Earth, as well as its relation to the solar system» (Kant [1802]: 451-453). It should be noted that in the 18th century mathematical geography was also called «mathematical cosmography», an ambiguous term which constituted the broad conceptual fusion of astronomy, geography and cartography, and which possessed a terrestrial as well as a celestial component (Forbes [1980]: 417-418). By adopting mathematical precognition in the realm of geography, Enlightenment geographers could draw imaginary lines of longitude and latitude «on the surface of a sphere on which we normally do not distinguish anything» (Kant [1802]: 458). Establishing a meridian is, in fact, the first act of global representation.

The Earth, we are taught in *Physical Geography*, is a spherical body. But a sceptic like Hume, relying only on the appearance of the senses, represents it simply as «an indeterminably extended plane», of which he can only know the limits. And by sketching the «survey of the region in which it [reason] finds itself», he will know that there is always something left to know, that there is a space in which it will be possible for him to proceed. Skepticism, in fact, Kant points out, «is not a dwelling-place for permanent residence; for the latter can only be found in a complete certainty, whether it be one of the cognition of the objects themselves or of the boundaries within which all of our cognition of objects is enclosed». Therefore, only those who, like the critical philosopher, investigate the «ignorance in regard to all possible questions of a certain sort» come to know that the Earth is round and that its surface is not flat, but spherical. Even if they start from a small part of it, such as the width of a degree, they will be able to know its entire diameter, and thus its boundaries and its entire extent, in a determinate and principled manner:

Our reason is not like an indeterminably extended plane, the limits of which one can cognize only in general, but must rather be compared with a sphere, the radius of which can be found out from curvature of an arc on its surface (from the nature of synthetic a priori propositions), from which its content and its boundary can also be ascertained with certainty. (Kant [1781]: 654-655)

In this passage, Kant seems to be transferring onto a philosophical level a cartographic problem that had opposed the intellectuals of the 18th century, in particular those of an English-Newtonian and French-Cartesian persuasion: namely, the problem of measuring the meridian arc, a measurement on which the precise determination of the shape of the Earth depended. To solve this problem (which had not only metaphysical and scientific but also political and economic consequences), two teams of scientists were selected in 1735: the first, led by Maupertius, was sent to measure the arc of the meridian in Lapland. The second, led by La Condamine, went instead to South America to carry out the same geodetic surveys near the equator, in Quito, Peru. By comparing these two measure-

ments, the exact shape of the Earth (a spheroid flattened at the poles) was finally determined and the dispute between Cartesian and Newtonian was settled once and for all in favor of the latter. In this respect, Quito and Lapland are both «the concrete location of the measurement lines (or chains) as well as the site of abstraction of the mathematical measurements that coordinate a simulation of the earth» (Parikka [2023]: 133). The local measurement of the length of a single degree of latitude is in fact the starting point for mapping the planet itself. As Ferreiro explains:

After the expedition confirmed the length of the chain of triangles, routine astronomical observations and mathematical calculations were all it should take to determine the length of a degree of latitude. Once they had the overall length of the chain, the scientists would take simple star sightings to establish the latitude at each end. Dividing the length of the chain by the difference in latitudes would produce a single number, the length of a single degree of latitude at the equator. When this was compared to the length of a degree back in France, they would know for the first time the true figure of the Earth. (Ferreiro [2011]: 133)

This example provides evidence that Kant was attentive to the complete mapping of the globe during his career, observing almost live the empirical construction of its global image. It turned out to be an event that influenced both the way he taught geography and the meaning and function of his geographical metaphors. Cook's drawing of the boundaries of the navigable sea and the geodetic expeditions of La Condamine and Maupertius contributed to the birth of a new "planetary consciousness", anticipating the jump in scale that is summed up in the concept of globalization.

For Kant, the ability to represent the unity of reason as a sphere is architectonic knowledge in its most universal form. If reason can be likened to a sphere, it is because its operationalization as a cartographic image allows the limits of experience to be drawn from within experience itself, and thus the continuity between land and sea, between intellect and reason, to be thought without contradiction. Globalisation (today as yesterday) reveals itself therefore to be not only a historical event, the result of an «adventure for seafarers», but also an «event in the history of knowledge» – a history that encompasses words, images and imaginaries.

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Notes

- 1 By 1870, there were only three chairs of geography in the whole Germany (see Tanca [2012]: 15).
- 2 According to McLuhan (1994: 57): «All media are active metaphors in their power to translate experience into new forms».
- 3 As Siegert (2011:13-14) explains: «A main feature of the analysis of maps as cultural technologies is that it considers maps not as representations of space but as spaces of representation». Such an approach is concerned with «the way changes in cartographic procedures give rise to various orders of representation, and read maps as media that are themselves agents of subject constitution. The marks and signs on a map do not refer to an authorial subject but to epistemic orders and their struggles for dominance over other epistemic orders».
- 4 For Kant's «philosophical imaginary», see Le Doeuff (1980).
- 5 For the map as an «immutable mobile», see Latour (1990).

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The Sensibility of Kant’s Globus Sphere Critical Philosophy, Physical Geography and the Situated Subject

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Abstract. This essay explores the metaphorical and conceptual significance of the globus sphere in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Physical Geography*. Through its integration of sensibility and corporeal spatiality into the heart of Kantian philosophy, the essay argues that the spherical shape accommodates a situated notion of the subject. A conception that further nuances the “hard-edged” dominance of reason and rationality over sensibility, which often is associated with Kant’s thought. While recognizing the viable critiques of Kant’s Eurocentrism and racism in *Physical Geography*, the essay concludes by demonstrating how Kant’s concept of the sphere – emphasizing that neither Earth nor reason has a fixed center – implies that Kantian critique could likewise serve as a potential alternative to colonial and hierarchical modes of thought, thereby indicating a path toward the notion of a universal reason of a truly global character.

Keywords. Kant, Physical Geography, globus sphere, situatedness, sensibility.

1. *Die Kante. Immanuel Kant.*

In German, the name Kant coincides with the noun “*Kante*”, meaning “edge”, “border”, “exter-

nality". The very name of philosopher Immanuel Kant is thus «a handy revelation of his predilections», as Gunnar Olsson puts it ([2007]: 215). An edge denotes the outermost part of a surface, the borderline where two surfaces meet, often at an angle. Geometry is full of edges, while at the same time we exhort the children to stay away from the edge and, at breakfast, help them to remove the edge crusts of their bread slice. All three meanings of the word "edge" are fitting in relation to Kant as the architect of critical philosophy, which aimed to formulate the conditional limits of the realms of knowledge, morality and aesthetics. They are especially timely if we consider the notions of Kantian philosophy as particularly hard-edged – in the sense of being centered on reason and devoid of sensibility – which have characterized much of post-war aesthetic theory. Here, the affinity between Kant's name and the image of an unappetizingly dry edge crust is close at hand. This line of thought can be summarized as a silly pun, but it points to a general inclination to emphasize a certain mind/body-dualism in Kant and to disregard themes in his writings which rather privilege the sensibility of life and thought.

If Kant's critical-philosophical work could be graphically profiled in a geometric figure, both the triangle and the rectangle are within easy reach. These figures would be fitting, not only to highlight the edginess that has made Kant obsolete in reflecting on thought's situated and corporeal nature. Besides the many triangles in Kant's examples from mathematics that are used throughout his writings, this is a self-evident figure to reflect upon the relationship between the experiences of human life treated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). Together, the three *Critiques* form a triangular field of tension that articulates the experience of life as such. The triangle also points to the complexity of the relationship between rationality and sensibility in Kant, which cannot be subsumed under the concept of a dualism. In a similar way, the figure of the rectangle also seems apt to graphically outline the critical project if we consider the form of the table of faculties (the faculty of knowledge, the faculty of pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire), the determinations of the mind (*das Gemüt*) which Kant, in the introduction to the third *Critique*, summarizes as the totality of man's theoretical-practical capacities (Kant [1790]: 83).

This essay, however, is about spheres and globes in Kant – about the spherical shape whose roundness, despite its gentleness, sharply contrasts with the aforementioned expectations of Kantian hard-edgy rigidity (*Kantigkeit*). Or rather, the sphere – as the surface of globe-shaped body – is a geometric figure that, by virtue of the space and materiality indicated by its volume, is able to multiply the meaning of Kantian edginess (*Kantigkeit*). The soft edge of the sphere differs not only from the sharp edges of the triangle and the rectangle, but also from the roundness of the circle by the addition of depth, the dimension that characterizes bodies, geometric as well as human.

I will attend to that aspect of the reciprocity between the geography of reason in the first *Critique* and the *Physical Geography* (1802), which demonstrates the key importance of feeling, corporeality and spatiality in critical philosophy. Identifying the globus sphere as a point of connection between the two works will further open a discussion on what we might call a global universalism of reason. To establish this perspective, from which the importance of sensibility in Kant's thought is focused, I start from the correspondence between the description of the limits of reason concerning the nature of knowledge, and the boundary that defines life on Earth. And then we haven't even touched on what is actually "Copernican" in Kant's so-called Copernican turn.

What kind of science is geography for Kant and what position does he give it? What role does the sphere, as the surface of that particular globe which is Earth – the object of geographical description – play in Kantian philosophy? To what extent does Kant rely on geographical terms, ideas and imagery in the first *Critique*? And, finally, what is the relationship between Kant's globus sphere and sensibility?

Response to these questions will be developed through a basic and contextualizing charting of the interconnective points in the above texts (paragraphs 2-4). These are critically tied together through the simultaneously ideal and bodily activity of orientation as it is presented in Kant's *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?* (1786) (paragraph 5), thus providing my main argument: that *Physical Geography* – illustrated by Kant's example of the arbitrary position of the prime meridian – holds the key to a situated understanding of the subject, indicating a path toward the notion of a universal reason of a truly global character.

2. Knowledge of the world

The aim of Kant's three *Critiques* is to explain how possible experience – that is, the *a priori* conditions of experience – is constituted by the interplay between the various faculties of the human being: the sensibility of outer and inner sense (representations of objects in space through the five senses, respectively of the inner states of the self as objects in time); imagination; understanding; and reason. Kant's so-called applied philosophy, on the other hand, addresses the experience of the exercise of these faculties in the world, as well as the constitution of this world. The *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798) deals with the experience of existing in the world as part of a political plurality of other beings (as *Weltbürger*) (Kant [1798]: 4) and constituting a possible object of experience for oneself. As a counterpart, *Physical Geography*, provides the descriptions of the material facts of nature that constitute the conditions of this existence. Although the second part of the *Anthropology* is dedicated to an-

thropological characterization (analyzing what makes man a rational animal by listing the characteristics of individuals, genders, nations, races and humanity as a whole), the book's emphasis is on man as a free acting being. In *Physical Geography* on the other hand, it is the world and the physical characteristics of people which are the main concern.

The relationship between “pure” transcendental philosophy and Kant's empirically based writings has historically been characterized by a divisive distance where the connections between these two parts in Kant's work has tended to become overlooked¹. Largely owing to feminist (e.g. Schott [1997]) and postcolonial (e.g. Eze [1995], Mills [2017], Bernasconi [2001]) initiatives, the elements in Kant's thought that provide clear links to its historical context have today been given a more prominent role in the comprehensive analyses of his philosophy. In understanding the critical project through its convergence with the applied philosophy, the *Anthropology* has had a particularly prominent function, with Michel Foucault (1961) being an early pioneer. With few exceptions (Adickes [1911]; May [1970]), less attention has been given Kant's physical geography. Possible reasons for this “delay” are the complicated origins and the contested composition and sources of the published lectures. It is only recently – in connection with text critical editions and the publication of the English translation in 2012 – that the material has been made available to a wider readership and integrated into the research field of critical co-readings of critical and applied philosophy, owing to the comprehensive anthologies (Elden, Mendieta [2011]), and articles on Kant's geography (Louden [2014]; Clewis [2018]) that have emerged in the last decade².

Unlike the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* – the last text Kant himself prepared for publication – and the majority of the works published in the *Akademie-Ausgabe*, the work published as *Physical Geography* lacks a manuscript that Kant himself authorized for publication. The version claimed to be the authoritative one is a compilation of some twenty student notes and Kant's own notes, edited at his request by his friend Friedrich Theodor Rink, who himself made a number of additions to the text³. Despite all the ambiguities and variants of the geography, there is nevertheless an overall continuity in the structure of the content that makes it possible to attribute the text to Kant. Thus, the expressed racism and Eurocentrism must be taken more seriously than merely being «a political and intellectual embarrassment», to use David Harvey's oft-quoted phrase ([2000]: 532)⁴.

Being both a study of nature and a study of the freedom of human nature (what man is capable of in accordance with his nature as a freely acting being), physical geography and pragmatic anthropology are closely intertwined. These disciplines constitute two distinct modes of enquiry with one common educational aim of generating the knowledge of the world (*Welterkenntniß*) that Kant in both

works emphasizes as a prerequisite for tackling problems of a more fundamental kind, such as the structure of our faculty of knowledge (Kant [1802]: 445-446; Kant [1798]: 126). On the one hand, this *world knowledge* involves a theoretical familiarity with nature as a whole and with man as a natural and cultural being. On the other, it comprises an understanding of how this knowledge best can be applied in life and in the world (Kant [1777-1778]: 261⁵; Kant [1798]: 4).

In the case of the lectures in geography, Kant's more specific aim was to develop the students' ability to recognize the diversity of the world and, in relation to this pluralism, to be able to orient themselves as to the differences between forms of life in various places and people's adaptation (epistemologically, morally, politically, socially) to these diverse environments and climatological conditions (Louden [2000]: 65, 95; Wilson [2006]: 20). Geography would help them to develop a holistic sense of the world as a whole through which they could realize the potential of their reason – what in pedagogical historical terms is referred to as cosmopolitan civic education. To be comprehensible, the objects of our reason or perception must be fitted into a larger, coherent framework. The task of geography is, according to Kant, to provide thinking with such a framework. Geography's world knowledge is thus established from a simultaneously rational cosmological and empirical perspective: according to Kant, «world» here denotes the synthesis of our knowledge according to the pure rational knowledge of reason – inner sense [*Sinn*] – and the sensuous knowledge of experience – outer sense (Kant [1802]: 445-446). Knowledge of the world thus consists of the union of the experience of nature – the world as the object of outer sense – and the experience of man – the world as the object of inner sense. In other words, the description of the globe and its surface by the discipline of physical geography, combined with the anthropological study of human life which is thereby made possible.

Understood as the world of the senses (*mundus phenomenon*), the world is that whole which the *Critique of Pure Reason* describes as the sum of all that can be perceived with the senses: the sphere of all possible experience (Kant [1781/87]: 249). This means that the world as «absolute whole of all appearance» can only be «an idea» (Kant [1781/87]: 319)⁶. The idea of the world as the totality of all interacting material substances is the transcendental idea of the unity of all appearances. This is the essence of Kantian rational cosmology (*cosmologia rationalis*), the transcendental science of the world (Kant [1781/87]: 323) which – through the idea of the unity of all appearances – allows empirical disciplines, such as geography and anthropology, to coordinate the infinite diversity and substances of life according to the systematics that define scientificity (Kant [1781/87]: 653). Rational cosmology makes a secular and purely mechanical explanation of the universe conceivable without having to reject the idea of God's causality, since it is precisely the lawfulness of the whole that can be attributed to divine causality (Wilson [2011]: 162).

As Olsson (2007) lucidly has staked out, the establishment of the limits of knowledge by the critique of reason is immanently linked with geography in Kant's thought⁷. Both the concept of a geography of reason and the echo that characterizes the relationship between empirical science and transcendental conditions for scientificity, as indicated in the above sketch of the concept of the world, point to this. How, then, is this intertwinement expressed and what are the consequences for our understanding of reason and sensibility?

3. *Physical geography*

Kant lectured on physical geography throughout his time at the University of Königsberg with a continuity and persistence which, as Stuart Elden proposes, makes the discipline possible to understand as an archaeological register of his work (Elden [2011]: 1). This register lists a possible origin of a well-known philosophical imagery: in the geographic ordering of the world and by attributing a concrete place to the outlook on this world, the main features of the method that characterizes critical philosophy is traced. But the register also displays the conditioning of the language of critical philosophy by a specific geopolitically coded situation. Namely, the historical situation recognized as the exploration of the world and the mercantile expansion that constitute the foundations of the second wave of European imperialism and colonialism (Mignolo [2011]). These conditions are particularly evident in the antagonism implicit in Kant's idea of a cosmopolitically united humanity (Kant [1784]: 111-112). As a regulative organizing principle for universal community, cosmopolitanism simultaneously postulates, on the basis of geographical differences, a hierarchical concept of progression that makes the white race superior to all others (Mendieta [2011]: 362-363). Moreover, cosmopolitanism is a useful example of how philosophical concepts and historical conditions always relate to each other, even if the analysis of a geographical imagery discursively may emphasize one or the other aspect.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the discovery of the *a priori* determination of objects by mathematics is described as a far more important revolution in thought «than the discovery of the passage round the celebrated Cape of Good Hope» (Kant [1781/87]: 19). From such a formulation, it is easy to imagine Kant as a boxed in armchair philosopher, interested only in purely abstract reasoning about the world. An impression that is reinforced by Kant's strong emphasis on the value of (synthetic) *a priori* knowledge, that knowledge of the world can be obtained independently of sensuous experience, as well as by the widely known fact that he never left the region of his birthplace. However, Kant stands out among his contemporary colleagues for his profound interest in natural science, an interest that leads to both substantiated and highly speculative publications

on, for example, the natural history and theory of the heavens (1755a), the nature of fire (1755b), the causes of earthquakes (1756), and the humidity of various winds (1757). It is to these works on fundamental scientific problems that the comprehensive volume *Physical Geography* can be counted. With his lectures, Kant also gave the discipline of geography scientific status in a university context. At the time, the information gathering activities of the discipline were mainly determined by the state's need to organize land taxation and to carry out military operations, as well as by the requirement for economic growth linked to world trade. Kant was thus one of the first to academically "formalize" this empirical-practical discipline (Church [2011]: 22-27). In 1755 and 1756, after Kant had presented the thesis required for a *Magister*, he became a *Privatdozent* at the University of Königsberg and then immediately advertised the lectures in physical geography. A *Privatdozent* did not receive salary from the university, but earned his living by charging students per lecture.

Since geography was a novelty in the course curriculum, there was no regular textbook. This was usually a requirement of the Prussian Ministry of Education to approve a course at the university, but Kant was granted an exemption to this request. The course was based on an eclectic mix of scientific works as well as travel reports from missionaries, traders and colonial explorers in travel books and journals (May [1970]). Between 1756 and 1796 Kant lectured on the subject forty-nine times – his third most frequently taught course – compared to the fifty-three lectures on metaphysics and the fifty-six lectures on logic (Louden [2000]: 5). And we should bear in mind that from 1770, Kant was serving as Professor of metaphysics and logic. A significant change in the geography lectures took place in the winter term of 1772-73 when some of the material was reorganized as part of a separate course in anthropology. Thereafter, these well-attended and popular lectures alternated between geography in the summer term and anthropology in the winter term⁸.

Physical geography is a descriptive science that, according to Kant, claims wholeness. It is a description of the Earth (*Erdbeschreibung*) as a whole. In its broadest sense, geography is defined as an account of the present state and spatial variations of the Earth. This description of nature differs drastically from contemporary systems of classification such as Carl Linnaeus' similarity-based taxonomy of species (Farinelli [2012]: 378). Instead of following a logical (conceptual) order, Kant's description of the Earth is based on a physical classification in which the objects of nature are organized according to the place where they are located (Kant [1802]: 447-449). Physical geography is the main field that underlies all other types of geographies. Kant makes the following divisions: mathematical geography deals with the shape, size and motion of the Earth, as well as its relation to the solar system; moral geography concerns the different customs and characters of people in relation to different regions;

political geography links laws to the inhabitants and environment of an area; commercial geography concerns the question of why one country has an abundance of a resource while another suffers a shortage of the same resource; and theological geography deals with the regional variability of theological principles (Kant [1802]: 451-453). Unlike mathematical geography, which has its own section in the introduction, Kant's brief discussions of the other areas are undeveloped and scattered throughout the general sections on different continents and countries.

Physical geography is instead divided into the following sections: mathematical geography; the natural history of land masses, rivers, oceans and winds; animals, plants and minerals; and Asia, Africa, Europe, America. The final section, based on the continents, focuses on how cultural practices (moral, political and theological) are causally determined by their natural environment. It also contains the grotesque descriptions of the moral aspects and inherent hierarchies of racial differences that have come to be at the center of both straightforward expositions of Kant's racism and discussions of the philosophical consequences of racial thinking (e.g. Sandford [2018]).

The descriptions of nature in *Physical Geography* are initially contrasted with the narrative of history (*Erzählung*) (Kant [1802]: 447). Unlike history, which deals with the division of successive events in time, geography deals with phenomena characterized by their simultaneity in space (Kant [1802]: 449). The division of these two sciences in terms of space and time thus takes place according to the *a priori* forms of transcendental aesthetics for all appearances. According to this model of categorization, the historical narrative implies a fixed order, while it – to some extent – is possible to rearrange the descriptions of the sea, the winds of the atmosphere and the flora, fauna and population of the Earth's surface. In any case, these descriptions do not depend on the same strict disposition. In this respect, the divisions of space, which are nevertheless necessary for its description, involve an inherent arbitrariness. One example Kant gives of this arbitrariness is the position of the prime meridian (Kant [1802]: 459). However, as the use of terms like “natural history” and “hierarchy” suggest, geography and history stand in a complex relationship. The two sciences do not completely coincide but, like the two dimensions of space and time in transcendental aesthetics, they are inseparably linked. Geography provides the discipline of history with a concrete foundation, while the discipline of history informs geography with explanations of the origins of the state of the Earth. But geography's descriptions also involve – albeit unintentionally – other kinds of narratives, as the example with the location of the prime meridian indicates. We find here a cultural and scientific Eurocentrism that is most painfully expressed in the representations of human races. One of several examples of this is found in the second part of the volume, *Particular*

observations concerning what is found on the earth, where Kant begins with a few paragraphs on the climate related differences between the various appearances and characters of people.

In the torrid zones, humans mature more quickly in all aspects than in the temperate zones, but they fail to reach the same [degree of] perfection. Humanity has its highest degree of perfection in the white race. The yellow Indians have a somewhat lesser talent. The Negroes are much lower, and lowest of all is part of the American races. (Kant [1802]: 576)

This quote also makes it clear that the geographically distributed differences between people imply a temporality by being related to the evolution of “humanity”. Insofar as the object of geography is the whole world, which necessarily implies becoming and change, geography is only possible – and therefore equally impossible – as a complete systematic science by including history (Marcuzzi [2011]: 120). On the one hand, this means that a description of the Earth’s surface can only be properly geographical if it abstracts from the processes – geological as well as political – that have brought about its present state and will produce its future change. On the other hand, such a “timeless” description would be incomprehensible if we take into account both the abovementioned racist rationale of the variations in human endowment and concrete phenomena such as volcanoes, winds and high and low tides. A description of the Earth can therefore only be a description of change. It is this impossible position in relation to scientific systematization, the fact that geography requires history, that makes the arbitrariness of the conventions in geographical description discernible. As we now turn to the discussion of Kant as a geographer of reason, it is worth keeping this problematic in mind.

4. *Critique and geography*

Kant is a pioneer of «philosophical topology» (Malpas, Thiel [2011]: 195), that is, how space and place figure in human knowledge and experience not only as its object but as part of its structure. A crucial feature of geography’s methodology to consider in relation to the critical project is how Kant emphasizes the open relationship between traveler and map (Kant [1757]: 388). The traveler must constantly be prepared both to compare his observations with the map, which is necessary for undertaking the journey at all, and to simultaneously reassess and adjust that map. This reciprocal interplay between traveler and map is reminiscent of how Kant later defines the main characteristic of critical philosophy as a philosophizing without philosophy. «[W]e cannot learn philosophy; for where is it, who is in possession of it, and how shall we rec-

ognize it?» (Kant [1781/87]: 657) Philosophy neither comprises a set of doctrines nor a technical apparatus to be mastered. As far as reason is concerned, Kant famously writes, «we can at most learn to *philosophize*» (Kant [1781/87]: 657), which means for reason to excel in the process of its self-questioning and struggle with itself, defining the internal limits and outer bounds – the edges (*Kante*) – of its domain. And it is in the very idea of such limits and boundaries that the geographical is invoked in the first *Critique* (Olsson [2007]: 213, Malpas, Thiel [2011]: 198). It is well known that Kant’s epistemology throughout is defined in geographical terms, not least by presenting the conditions of knowledge as a mappable territory. It is a matter of relocating metaphysics to its proper place within the limits by which it can maintain itself and be prevented from knowledge of the absolute. The geography courses include several seeds to critical philosophy and, together with examples drawn from a range of other disciplines such as mathematics, physics and chemistry, Kant gives metaphysics the status of a science, which is required for its mapping of fundamental *a priori* knowledge. But while a characterization of the critique of reason as being “chemical” or “mathematical” is ill-motivated, accepting its character as geographical is a general truth for Kant.

At one point in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant refers to David Hume as one of the geographers of human reason (Kant [1781/87]: 606). And although Hume’s achievement is said to be incomplete – since he merely points out the “horizon of human reason” instead of determining, as Kant himself does, this horizon of reason’s determinate limits on the basis of principles – the critique of reason follows the same geographical approach. In introducing the distinction between phenomena and noumena, Kant explicitly acknowledges this character of his thinking and provides the reader with an image of this “land of truth” in connection with thought’s temptation to always go beyond these limits:

We have now not merely explored the territory of pure understanding, and carefully surveyed every part of it, but have also measured its extent, and assigned to everything in it its rightful place. This domain is an island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth – enchanting name! – surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fogbank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer ever a new with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion. (Kant [1781/87]: 257)

In this account, geography is completely entwined with cartography as a field, which on the one hand involves strategies of binding and consolidating knowledge, and on the other hand allows its own generalizations to point to the provisional nature of projecting spatial information (Farinelli [2012]: 380-381). Critically, the map shows how geographical knowledge and meaning are constantly under negotiation in ongoing geographical/geopolitical and conceptual processes

of change. But even if maps need to be continuously redrawn, their absolute condition is constant in accordance with the following fact:

The shape of the earth is almost spherical, or, as Newton has established more precisely on the basis of [his] fundamental laws and the law of attraction, a spheroid; and this assertion has subsequently been confirmed by repeated observations and measurements. (Kant [1892]: 453)

Like the condition imposed by the spherical shape of the Earth on the two-dimensional map projection, factual empirical knowledge may in some sense be subject to change, but not the fact *that* our knowledge is conditioned. «Reason, considered as the faculty of a certain logical form of knowledge» (Kant [1781/87]: 320)⁹ to draw conclusions from transcendental ideas – e.g. the idea of the unity of all appearances – is for Kant a globe. To understand knowledge as something with a given determined structure is to understand it as spherical. Kant writes:

Our reason is not like a plane indefinitely far extended, the limits of which we know in a general way only; but must rather be compared to a sphere, the radius of which can be determined from the curvature of the arc of its surface – that is to say, from the nature of synthetic a priori propositions – and whereby we can likewise specify with certainty its volume and its limits. Outside this sphere (the field of experience) there is nothing that can be an object for reason. (Kant 1781/87: 607-608)

Kant opposes an account of reason as an extended plane on the grounds that we will never be able to show the boundaries of such a surface from within, or with reference to, this surface itself. The curvature of the spherical surface, on the other hand, entails precisely the kind of immanent limit – or edging – that the *a priori* demarcation of reason aims at (Malpas, Thiel [2011]: 201). Unlike the determination of the limits of reason as such, which can only be performed on a *a priori* basis, one can gain knowledge *a posteriori* of the limits within its domain; this is what constitutes perception. This is exemplified by Kant with the difference between knowing that the Earth is a globus sphere and the sensible perception of the Earth's surface as a flat plate:

If I represent the earth as it appears to my senses, as a flat surface, with a circular horizon [*als einen Teller.*], I cannot know how far it extends. But experience teaches me that wherever I may go, I always see a space around me in which I could proceed further; and thus I know the limits of my actual knowledge of the earth at any given time, but not the limits of all possible geography. But if I have got so far as to know that the earth is a sphere and that its surface is spherical, I am able even from a small part of it, for instance, from the magnitude of a degree, to know determinately, in accordance with principles *a priori*, the diameter, and through it the total superficial area of the earth; and although I am ignorant of the objects which this surface may contain, I yet have knowledge in respect of its circuit, magnitude, and limits. (Kant [1781/87]: 606)

The purpose of critique is to ensure that the truth claims of philosophy and science are placed within the limits of reason. It is a purpose which stems from reason's inherent tendency to transcend the limits of the understanding and thus also its own boundaries, partly by means of the power of imagination. In the world as a cosmological whole, reason thus finds a self-limiting system that resembles itself in its critical activity. As we have seen in the case of geography, this reciprocity between critique and geography implies that spatiality is inscribed into philosophy on several levels. Something that points to further investigations of both the importance of geoscience as a philosophical foundation and Kant's recognition of critique as an open-ended endeavor, akin to the traveler's relationship to the map. It would also be constructive to include the question of how geographical structures – such as the idea of the global – permeate thought when place (history) – the local – is highlighted as fundamental in a critical-transcendental investigation of the mode of thought. This applies, for example, to questions such as the one raised above concerning the relationship between Kant's imperialist view of the world and his concept of cosmopolitanism. In light of such issues, how are we to understand Kant's claimed premise that the point of departure for an understanding of the conditions of philosophy is universally valid? The passages in *Physical Geography* concerning the arbitrariness of the location of the prime meridian, in relation to the Earth as a centerless globe, suggest an opening in Kant's own critical thought to specify and problematize the implications of the universal in relation to these conditions.

The aspect of the connection between spatiality and thinking implied by Kant's spherical reason, which I will elaborate on under the last heading of this text, is of aesthetic nature. It is a matter of the sensibility of the body as the constitutive condition of thinking. Admittedly, this is an approach which, by extension, provides resources for a critique of Kant's concept of the subject. This would be a critique based neither on a conception of the Kantian subject as universally acting beyond the body and history – a conception in which corporeality in Kant *per se* is understood as synonymous with racialized bodies – nor on its male whiteness as the embodiment of the universality of experience (Lloyd [2019]). The point I wish to make is that the spherical shape of reason emphasizes the globality of its universalism. If the *universal* etymologically denotes a more uniform whole – which has usually also encompassed a centripetal corrective, returning the diverse multiplicity of the world to a European center – the *global* is a concept which is open to a different kind of whole. As a term emphasizing materiality, the global – from the Latin “*globus*” (compact mass of spherical shape), of the same base as classical Latin “*glæba*” signifying lump, land, soil (*Oxford English Dictionary*) – constitutes a whole which includes the very decentered multiplicity that *Physical Geography* – again in contrast to Linnaeus's taxonomies – shows the empirical world to consist of. The corporeality

attributed to reason by the globus sphere, thus seems to hold the possibility of a similar decentralization. And perhaps herein also lies the possibility of a truly universal universalism¹⁰?

5. *The sensibility of the globus sphere*

Kant's critical turn towards the transcendental conditions of the possibility of knowledge, ethics and aesthetics opens to a historically new understanding of human sensibility. Since sensibility in addition plays such an important role in Kant's theoretical conceptualization of the critical turn itself – remember its many imaginative metaphors and examples – it will serve as point of departure for the last section of this text. I will now show how the three-dimensional body of the shape of the globus sphere – which provides reason not only with its inherent boundary, but also with mass and weight – is related to sensibility as the fundamental element in all the abovementioned areas of Kant's philosophy.

Kant's sharp separation of the spontaneity of reason and understanding from the receptivity of sensibility has commonly been identified as synonymous with a dominant reason and understanding. Despite the constant interest in Kant's philosophy, his concept of sensibility has been largely unexplored or criticized. The tendency to emphasize Kant's general centering of reason and the suppression of sensibility by the understanding is found in readings belonging to both the so-called "analytic" and "continental" traditions. But questions concerning embodiment and the role of sensibility in Kant's philosophy have come under more consistent scrutiny in the last decades, and broader reconsiderations of sensibility in Kant can be discerned (Meld Shell [1996]; Svare [2006]). My reflections on how Kant's geography relates to the multifaceted nature of human sensibility and its complex interplay with the understanding and reason respectively are based upon Angelica Nuzzo's ([2009]) comprehensive study of what she terms the "ideal embodiment" in Kantian philosophy. As Nuzzo points out, sensibility in Kant is not confined to its empirical dimension of experiential sensations, but also includes an ideal dimension of thinking. The latter in turn combines an element of free, aesthetic reflection – as well as the feeling/sensation of thought in reflection – with its opposite: the conceptualizations of the understanding. Sensibility thus encompasses both mere sensations, such as the feeling of pleasure, and theoretical queries about perception and knowledge (form, object). That is, it includes both subjective perception and objective materiality. This immanent duplicity of sensibility itself both presupposes and facilitates an analytical interface between Kant's critique and geography I have argued for.

Thus, Kant's pursuit of systematics is not by definition a suppression of the singularity and multiplicity of sensibility, as many of his contemporary critics

would argue¹¹. Similarly, the often-invoked equivalence between the Kantian subject and the idea of a metaphysical subject exclusively grounded in reason has meant that aspects of reason's interaction with sensibility have been obscured. However, the metaphysical subject, as founded in spherical reason, already has a sensuous dimension. That the subject thus appears only with reference to sensibility is to say that Kant grounds the humanity of reason in its embodiment as a transcendental "human" form, that is, in *a priori* sensibility, and not in an excluding concept of «human nature» (Nuzzo [2009]). For Kant, the body is partly a physical fact that can be empirically explored, anthropologically observed, genetically and historically described and reconstructed, etc. On the other hand, it is a transcendental condition for something to appear as such a fact. It is this condition of our cognitive, practical and aesthetic orientation in the world that Nuzzo calls an "ideal embodiment", a notion derived from the tension between the transcendental critique of pure reason and the anthropological demarcation of this domain. This notion is pertinent to grasp the reciprocity of the globus curvature of reason and the shape of the Earth, as well as anthropology's close ties to geography. In particular, it is Kant's establishment of space and time as *a priori* forms of sensibility that transforms the entities of body and soul into formal conditions of experience, operating on the same plane. This relocation expands the field of sensibility – which is thus able to transcend the dualistic split between body and mind and thereby dissolve the classical opposition between rationality and sensibility – and complicates the very concept of man as a union of a material body and an immaterial subject (consciousness) (Nuzzo [2009]: 8).

In one sense, Kant's sphere presents us with a paradox. On the one hand, it signifies the materiality of the globe, whose mass and weight evoke the corporeality of the Kantian subject. On the other hand, this same corporeality is indirectly articulated through the hollow space spanned by the curvature of the sphere – the space for movement that renders the subject's action and thinking possible. The signification of the globe as both a lump and an empty sphere recalls the interaction in Kant's philosophy that simultaneously unites and maintains the separation between sensibility and rationality – those two stems of knowledge that must be kept separate discursively, yet are necessarily united in experience. Nothing expresses this paradox better than the familiar lines: «Intuition and concepts constitute, therefore, the elements of all our knowledge, so that neither concepts without an intuition in some way corresponding to them, nor intuition without concepts, can yield knowledge» (Kant [1781/87]: 92).

Through its thematic coupling of *Physical Geography* and *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's essay *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?* is essential for understanding the coexistence of the globe's signification as both materiality and space. The essay's main objective is to demonstrate how man can give

direction to thought, in other words, how to think without relying on dogmatic claims about reason. Since humans neither need nor have access to a transcendent reality beyond experience (God) that could put an end to their disorientation once and for all, they must find the conditions and boundaries of their thoughts' movements within themselves. It is important to keep both Kant's antidogmatic idea of autonomy and space as an *a priori* form of intuition in view when embodiment as the form and condition of thinking is articulated in *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?* In the essay, Kant approaches questions about the constitution and faculties of human reason through an extended comparison between geographical orientation on Earth – physical movement in contingent space – and orientation in thinking, which involves both the fixed direction of deductive conclusions and the free movement of reflections. In both cases, the corporeality of the human being is defined as constitutive. To orient oneself in the proper meaning of the word, Kant writes, means to use a given direction in order to find the others – «literally, to find the *sunrise*»:

Now if I see the sun in the sky and know it is now midday, then I know how to find south, west, north, and east. For this, however, I also need the feeling of difference in my own subject, namely, the difference between my right and left hands. I call this a *feeling* because these two sides outwardly display no designatable difference in intuition. (Kant [1786]: 8)

The body is indisputably the seat of sensory effects, but it also constitutes the faculty of a particular feeling of orientation – one that perceives a difference that cannot be discerned by the senses nor specified solely by the concepts of understanding. This feeling, in its structure, is recognizable as the aesthetic feeling of (dis)pleasure, leading us, for a moment, into the realm of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Because the concept of faculty here has a double meaning – analogous to how the *Third Critique*, in addition to specifying the conditions of aesthetic judgment, also identifies the coordinates of the experience of applying judgment, as shown in the passages on the nature of laughter and wit in §54. As a faculty, the feeling of orientation involves both the force to realize change (in direction) and the condition that makes certain actions and activities (perception, desire) possible. The difference between left and right of our bodily asymmetry is not only a physical fact, an object of experience, but also functions as the necessary *a priori* condition of this experience itself. In Nuzzo's words, the body is ideal, as it possesses the formal dimension associated with space as a form of intuition – the condition of our experience of outer objects.

The source of orientation for both mind and body can thus be traced to a subjective feeling. Although this feeling can only be experienced within the subject, it also has an “outer” or “external” dimension, as it presupposes the world – the given area within and from which the subject tries to orient themselves. The

possibility of an important clarification thus presents itself: the Kantian subject (of knowledge) does not oppose the attribution of place, of being localized. The subject is already situated in relation to seasonal changes and geo-historical configurations, as well as to institutions and the multiplicity of other thinkers alluded to in the third *Critique's* concept of “*sensus communis*” (§40). Proceeding from the global universalism of the sphere, of spherical reason, we can see how the first of Kant's questions designating the field of philosophy in *The Jäsche logic* – «*What can I know?*» (Kant [1800]: 538) – does not contest, but on the contrary is able to generate, the following question: «Who is the knowing subject and what is his or her material apparatus of enunciation?» (Mignolo [2011]: 325). That is, the question of his or her given place, the material circumstances of his or her orientation? The critique of Kant's racism in the *Anthropology* and *Physical Geography* is largely based on the premise that Kant positions himself at the center – of a circle – from which knowledge of the world is defined and blindly emanates. This suggests that Königsberg, or Europe, functions as a zero point, failing to account for its own situatedness.

Here again, the inherent paradox of the sphere – as both the surface of a lump and as an empty form – asserts itself: it is precisely Kant's own historical-geographical position – which, among other things, manifests in *Physical Geography* through the anchoring of central concepts such as the cosmopolitical within patriarchal and racialized hierarchies – that points to the potential of his philosophical methods and concepts to develop alternatives to such colonial modes of thought. As Kant demonstrates, both with the meridian example in physical geography and with his geography of reason, neither Earth nor the sphere has a center. The method of physical geography defines the center as that place on the surface where one happens to be located, which implies constant displacement in relation to the whole. Thus, while the given area of our orientation is a universally valid condition for thinking, it does not imply that the given is a fixed center, either geographically or historically.

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Notes

- 1 As recently as 2000, the anthropological writings were described as a well-kept secret within Kant studies (Louden [2000]) – a description that applies even more fittingly to *Physical Geography*, largely due to its philological complexities, being based on heavily edited student notes.
- 2 The following contextualizing accounts of the origins of Kant's geography and its place in his work are based on the above-mentioned works on the *Physical Geography*.
- 3 For information on the origins of the geography course, the manuscripts, and Kant's sources, see Adickes (1911), May (1970), Werner Stark (2011), and Eric Watkins (2012).
- 4 Taking aim at liberal voices like Martha Nussbaum, Harvey uses the particularities of geography and anthropology, which he takes as troubling for a universal ethic, to undermine contemporary interpretations of Kantian cosmopolitanism according to such an ideal.
- 5 In the *Pillau* notes from Kant's anthropology lectures (1777-1778), knowledge as such is defined from a pragmatic point of view as precisely knowledge of the world: *Weltkenntniß*.

- 6 «I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience» (Kant [1781/87]: A327/B383).
- 7 In addition to Olsson, my discussion in the following paragraphs elaborates the studies of Franco Farinelli (2012) and Jeff Malpas and Karsten Thiel (2011).
- 8 For the relation between geography and anthropology see Wilson (2006) and (2011).
- 9 Full quote: «Reason, considered as the faculty of a certain logical form of knowledge, is the faculty of inferring, *i.e.* judging mediately (by the subsumption of the condition of a possible judgment under the condition of a given judgment). The given judgment is the universal rule (major premiss)».
- 10 A universalism analogous to Souleymane Bachir Diagne's concept of the universal as the decentering of thought through translation (Amselle, Diagne [2018]).
- 11 Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on Kant's transcendental method in his general critique of the tendency in the history of philosophy to intellectualize perception and overlook embodiment, can be considered one influential reference to the view of Kantian philosophy as suppressive of sensibility. «Human being is *antiphysis* [*Freiheit*] and completes Nature by opposing itself to it [...] Kant opposes human being to the cosmos and makes all that there is of finality rest on the contingent aspect of humanity – freedom». (Merleau-Ponty [1995]: 26)

Aisthesis



The Mind and the Map Kant and the Image of Reality

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Abstract. This article aims to show the relationship between representation, subject and thing-in-itself in Kantian thought, in the light of a cartographic analogy articulated through the triad map, mind and territory. From this point of view, the mind is to be understood as a threshold, as a place of passage between the thing and the map. This leads us, on the one hand, to see in Peirce's semiotics a revival and reworking of Kantian thought. On the other hand, it leads us to the alternative between Grenze (bound) and Schranke (limit), which will be analysed in parallel with a pivotal problem in philosophy, namely that of the limit between being and not-being, as articulated in Plato's *Sophist*.

Keywords. Kant, Peirce, Plato, Map, Mind.

The heavy pewter lamp suspended in chains over his head, continually rocked with the motion of the ship, and for ever threw shifting gleams and shadows of lines upon his wrinkled brow, till it almost seemed that while himself was marking out lines and courses on the wrinkled charts, some invisible pencil was also tracing lines and courses upon the deeply marked chart of his forehead. (Melville [1851]: 201-202)

In the essay *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Michel Foucault shows the analogy between Smith's metaphor of the invisible hand and Kant's transcendental dialectics (Foucault [1979]: 278-283): almost in the same years, following different paths, the two realised what we might call the "non-totalizable nature" of reality. Economic rationality is "based" on the fact that the totality of the economic process is unknowable by the individual players; similarly, in Kant's thought, the knowability of all phenomena entails the notion of totality, i.e. the idea of the entire series of phenomena. This totality is unknowable and, depending on how we consider it, is called soul, world or God. Rather than on a theoretical level, the problem can also be declined in moral terms: just as the collective good in Smith cannot be calculated, which coincides with the impossibility of an economic sovereign, so too in Kant the highest good – i.e. the connection between the actions of all individuals and the happiness of each (Kant [1787]: 679-680 [B837-839]) – remains just a regulative ideal.

On this very topic, there is a third name that could be recalled here, namely the mathematician and geodesist Carl Friedrich Gauss. In 1827 he published his *Disquisitiones generales circa superficies curvas* (Gauss [1827]), in which we find the *theorema egregium*, according to which surfaces with different curvature cannot be isometric to each other. Since the sphere has strictly positive curvature, while the plane has zero curvature, the sphere cannot be isometric to the plane. In other words, planispheres always involve some form of distortion: this is something known long before Gauss, who nevertheless offers a mathematical demonstration of it. The theorem can be read, in my opinion, as a further chapter in that novel written by many hands between the late 18th and early 19th century, and which could be titled *The "non-totalizable nature" of reality*.

The visualisation – but we should say better: the representation – of the sphere on the plane fails to "totalize" the sphere, i.e. to render all the characteristics of the sphere. To transfer the sphere onto a plane means giving up some of the characteristics of the sphere, and more generally, it means recognising an ineradicable difference between the sphere and *our* representation of it.

1. *The territory and the map*

Starting from Kant's definition of the transcendental (Kant [1787]: 149 [B 25]), we could call cartography that cognition that is occupied not so much with the object "sphere" but rather with our mode of cognition of the object "sphere" when we make a representation of it, reducing it to a plane¹.

The birth of the map – I mean: the map as a tool, as a product of a given cultural context – entails, first of all, a difference between a territory and its representation. In other words, «the world can never be apprehended in a single

synoptic gaze of the mapmaker's eye» (Brotton [2012]: 14). Kant's thought puts in perhaps the most radical terms the difference between a thing and its representation. Using Simmel's words, we can say that in Kant's conception «every thread by which the metaphysicians believed they were tying together thinking and being in arcane harmony is cut off» (Simmel [1899]: 151-152). There is a huge gap between the two: the bridge between the objective and the psychological was broken by Kant (Simmel [1918]: 26).

It is absolutely important to highlight that the map, or any other image of the world, in order to function at its best, must also attempt to *remove this difference* in some sense.

As Denis Wood rightly points out, the map does not claim its impartiality simply by trying to hide this difference: if this were the strategy, it would always be possible to reply that we are still dealing with an image of reality, a mask, or, put in more radical terms, a lie (Wood [1992]: 66). The strategy is different: instead of presenting itself as a "record" of reality, the map presents itself as the image of a dream to which the world is forced to conform (Wood [1992]). In other terms, «the map creates this territory, the map ... brings it into being» (Wood [1992]: 68). This allows the map to claim absolute objectivity. The territory does not exist in itself, but exists only as a projection of a map. *This thesis coincides with the idea of transcendental knowledge as formulated by Kant.*

Thus in Kant we are dealing with both a *difference* between map and territory², but also with the *erasure of this difference*. And it is precisely this paradox that we must explain.

Let us now take the difference between territory and map, i.e. the separation between being and thought, in the strictest terms: we cannot say that things in the territory are already "connected" to each other, or even just "arranged" in *a certain way*, as if thought would only have to try to discover this connection later and adjust itself to that certain connection. We cannot refer to that "certain connection" as if it were something actually present and operating in the territory – as if this connection already existed before thought began its investigation. That "certain connection" – let us say for a moment: the true and the real connection in which things would be connected and arranged in being – is not *real* at all, but is already a *projection* of our thinking. We imagine things as if a configuration were already present in order to be able to trace it back to a model constructed by our mind: that "configuration", however, is part of the overall model through which thought tries to configure the relationship between itself and reality. The idea of a nexus between being and image, between territory and map, is already part of the image, part of the map. In Kantian terms, «The understanding therefore does not find some sort of combination of the manifold already in inner sense, but *produces* it, *affecting* inner sense» (Kant [1787]: 258 [B155]).

We have placed a distance between territory and map, that is, between being and thought. In the light of this difference, however, we will never deal with being, but only with the image we have made of it. Through mapping, a territory appears for the first time: it is no longer an issue involving the territory “in itself”, so to speak, since that is unapproachable, but rather the map is the only “way” in which the territory can be, i.e. the map is the way the territory appears to us, thus according to our way of mapping and knowing it.

The paradoxical result is as follows: the very awareness of a *difference* between territory and map leads to an *identity* between map and territory. In other words, Kant is the awareness of this inescapable gap between representation and thing (what we have called the “non-totalizable nature” of the real), but he is also the inventor of the transcendental (in the sense that he assigns the intellect a “total” role in representation, i.e. in the construction of empirical reality).

2. *The mind and the mapping of reality*

At this point someone might argue: «do you really want to deny that the river is already to the right of the mountain anyway, even when you have not yet mapped the area?». And the answer is: «yes, we deny that the river is to the *right* of the mountain *before* the mapping». Firstly because “right” or “left” already imply a reference to our way of knowing. If the realist were to demand a cartographic reference, we can say that “right” or “left” will depend on how the map is oriented, south or north. There is no point in asking what position the river occupies in relation to the mountain, in absolute terms, but only in what way the river appears to us, thus also assuming a particular position in relation to the mountain. As Kant puts it: «that our object is not the nature of things, which is inexhaustible, but the understanding, which judges about the nature of things» (Kant [1787]: 150 [B 26]).

Up to this point we have been dealing with two elements: being and thought. Otherwise we could say: the territory and the map. However, we have kept an ambiguity: thought has sometimes been presented as the actual map, as the image of being, but at other times as the activity of mapping the territory. This ambiguity must be cleared up precisely by looking at the cartography. We have seen how it is the map that brings the territory into existence – where the existence of the territory is not its absolute “being” (to which we do not have access), but only the way in which the territory appears to us, precisely because it is so and so mapped. This can happen because there is a widespread belief that the map should actually be understood as the externalisation of a *mental map*, as if it were «the consciousness of a pre-verbal, pre-signifying ... *pre-given* world» (Wood [1993]: 53). Of course, that “pre-given world” will remain inaccessible: we can only externalise the map that the mind has made of it.

So we would have not two, but three elements: the territory, the map and the mind. The *lectio facillior* imagines that first there is a territory and then the mind produces a map of the territory. The very wording of this sentence allows us to question this process: we – so we have written – *imagine* that territory exists first. But we should ask ourselves: “where do we imagine this?”. Or better: “where do we *imagine* that very difference between territory and map if not within our own mental map?”. This is also the right place to point out that Gauss’ theorem itself is not about the difference between the earth itself and its map, but rather depends on the difference between the curvature of the sphere and the curvature of the plane. Obviously, the concept of curvature is a notion built by the intellect. Here we can clearly see how we have already brought the earth within our own representation: we speak of the curvature of a sphere – a concept that is constructed by our way of knowing – and in fact we are able to compare it with another concept which is the curvature of the plane.

You cannot say that there is first the territory and then the mind invents the map. The territory only exists when the mind produces the map: the territory takes on certain characteristics because it is in some sense drawn on the map. On the other hand, we have to take into account the fact that the production of the map does not leave the mind as it was before. The moment the mind manages to project its “map” outside, the mind also begins to understand the territory differently: for the first time the river will really appear to it to the right (or left) of the mountain. By doing so, the mind will be able to better control the territory; thus it will enrich the map with new details, and thus bring new details to exist in the territory (Siegert [2011]: 13-16). This is a decisive point: territory, mind and map are to be understood as maximally concrete, in the sense that mind, map and (awareness of) territory literally grow together (*cum-crescere* in Latin, from which we derive “concrete”) and support each other. No element can claim precedence over the other two.

We are faced with these three factors: the territory, the mind and the map. While the territory and the map are things, the “nature” of mind here remains ambiguous. By “mind” we do not mean the brain, nor can we mean a simple psychological dynamic. If this were the case, the mind would be reduced to a thing or a representation respectively, but we know that Kant has broken the bridge between the objective (the supposed object in itself) and the psychological (the representation of the object occurring in the mind)³. The mind here can only be considered a *threshold*, a transit from territory to map and from map to territory⁴. Mapping is the gesture that continuously brings into dialogue the two. With good approximation it can be said that this gesture actually constitutes the heart of what Kant calls transcendental schematism.

The schema is not an image, but a «rule of synthesis» (Kant [1787]: 273 [B 180]), a «pure synthesis in accord with a rule of unity» (Kant [1787]: 274 [B 181])

through which images first become possible – we might say it is that “gesture of the mind” through which all maps first become possible. On the other hand, this rule of synthesis must be understood as «the rule for the determination of our intuition» (Kant [1787]: 273 [B180]), in the sense that this synthesis «has as its aim no individual intuition, but rather only the unity in the determination of sensibility» (Kant [1787]: 273 [B 179]). The schema is a sort of mechanical belt between the territory and the map: the schema constructs images that help to unify and make the territory comprehensible in a certain sense. Schematism is the activity that connects what we called “a pre-given world” within an image by offering a unitary vision that we have called territory and so it is the activity of «procuring meaning» (Kant [1787]: XXX 224) by connecting the territory with its sign (its map).

Since the schema is a transit, we cannot describe it in a single step, but need two steps.

a) First, we can say that the schema is the transit from a pre-given world to a map. However, we know that we do not have access to the pre-given world, but only to its reconstruction through a rule of synthesis.

b) So we must say: the schema is the consolidation of a certain rule of synthesis. In the light of this rule, the pre-existing world is unified and configured, giving rise to something we call territory. This same rule therefore entails the concept that makes the territory comprehensible in a conceptual key.

Thus the schema constructs images that help to unify and make the territory comprehensible in a certain sense. Schematism is the activity of «providing concepts with a relation to object» (Kant [1787]: 276 [B185]). This can only take place through a “rule” that on the one hand allows the unification of the pre-existing world and on the other produces its comprehensibility on a conceptual level as a territory mapped on a map, i.e. its transformation into a sign (Krämer [2016]: 254-259).

3. *Semiotic triangle*

In this sense, the schema could be seen as “something” very similar to the third vertex of Peirce’s semiotic triangle, the territory being equivalent to the thing and the map to the sign. Let us take the proposition 2.274: «A *Sign*, or *Representamen*, is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its *Object*, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its *Interpretant*, to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stands itself to the same Object» (Peirce [1902]: 156). Instead of what would later become, during the 20th century, the classical theory of signifier and signified, Peirce shows the need for a third element: the third is actually only a rule of conjunction between the first and the second, which brings us back to Kant’s rule of synthesis.

Karl Otto Apel had already pointed out the deep connection between Kant and Peirce⁵ more than fifty years ago: «Peirce’s philosophical approach may be understood as a semeiotical transformation of Kant’s transcendental logic» (Apel [1972]: 94). Taking advantage of the parallelism already proposed by Kempski (Kempski [1952]: 57-63), Apel says that «thirdness as a mediation by signs or representation of something to an interpretant is in Peirce’s language something like an analogue of Kant’s objective unity of ideas in a selfconsciousness» (Apel [1972]: 95). Apel also points out that Peirce attempts to structure thirdness within a semiotic dimension that replaces the consciential horizon still present in Kant: in other words, Peirce would root the rule not in the “I think”, but in a sort of connection between signs, capable of overcoming any psychologism and anthropocentrism, since the mind on the one hand is the instigator of correlations between signs and things, but the mind, when using these same laws of correlation, itself becomes a sign. Peirce imagines an interesting prosopopoeia in which words are addressed to man (see propositions 5.313-314):

But since man can think only by means of words or other external symbols, these might turn round and say: «You mean nothing which we have not taught you, and then only so far as you address some word as the interpretant of your thought». In fact, therefore, men and words reciprocally educate each other; each increase of a man’s information involves and is involved by, a corresponding increase of a word’s information.

Without fatiguing the reader by stretching this parallelism too far, it is sufficient to say that there is no element whatever of man’s consciousness which has not something corresponding to it in the word; and the reason is obvious. It is that the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself. (Peirce [1868]: 188-189)

From a certain point of view, we can say that Kant himself had already perfectly overcome any risk of anthropomorphism or psychologism when he stated, with regard to the so-called “I think”: «Through this I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = x , which is recognized only through the thoughts that are its predicates, and about which, in abstraction, we can never have even the least concept» (Kant [1787]: 414 [B404]). In this sense, we will see that the formula used by Kant – «Ich, oder er, oder es» – has much in common with the following formula: «*Quod statim patet quia quicumque hoc pronomen, “ego”, vel “tu”, vel “ille” vel quodcumque audit, aliquis permanens apprehendit, tamen non ut distinctum vel determinatum nec sub determinata apprehensione, sed ut determinabile est sive distinguibile per alterum unumquodque, mediante tamen demonstratione vel relatione*» (De Marbasio [1995]: 64). We are quoting Michael de Marbasio, a Parisian master active in the 13th century. We are not suggesting that Kant could have read this passage, which we translate here: «What is immediately clear is that anyone who hears this pronoun, “I”, or “you”, or “he”, or anything else, permanently apprehends it, yet not as distinct or determinate, nor under a determi-

nate apprehension, but as being determinable or distinguishable from each other, by means of demonstration or relation». What we are saying, however, is that the definition of “I think” – which could just as well be “he thinks” or “the thing thinks” in the sense that through these different “formulations” we only intend to refer to a transcendental subject of thought – is tremendously similar to a definition of a pronoun given by an exponent of medieval scholasticism.

This passage through medieval scholasticism should help us see a connection with Peirce’s semiotics: Kant simply made explicit the presence of a transcendental support that remained, so to speak, unthematized, or at least implicit in the scholastic tradition, whereas Peirce traces this same substratum back to an intersubjective dynamic. Indeed we can say that transcendental subject of thought is exactly equivalent to the entire semiotic process and thus founded on the intersubjectivity of communication by an infinite community that underlies Peirce’s speculation.

What matters most, in fact, is the way in which the mind is understood. On the one hand, in using signs that have already been instituted, the mind merely respects the law of their connection, in the sense that it is totally absorbed in the chaining of signs: it is itself a sign. On the other hand, however, the mind is also such a gesture that it is able to construct, or reconstruct, the link between a sign and a thing: in this respect it is clearly neither a pure thing (a territory) nor a pure sign (a map), but it is the capacity to transit from one to the other. In this transiting, the rule of synthesis that Kant spoke of with regard to schematism works and is consolidated into meaning (*Bedeutung*).

Therefore, it becomes clear that it is impossible to set an order of priority between any of the three factors: territory, map and mind. The territory only takes shape in the light of the map, and the map in turn is formed around a “rule” for reading the territory that is based on the mind. The mind, is only the forming of this rule, through which the territory is determined, is mapped on the map. This was well understood by Schelling:

The schema is not a presentation determinate in all its aspects, but merely an intuition of the rule whereby a specific object can be brought forth. The nature of the schema can be explained most clearly from the example of the craftsman, who has to fashion an object of specific form in accordance with a concept. [...] In the commonest exercise of understanding, the schema figures as the general link (*das allgemeine Mittelglied*) whereby we recognize any object as of a certain sort. (Schelling [1801]: 136)

When we read that the schema is “*das allgemeine Mittelglied*” (which we could translate “the universal medium”), through which an object is determined, Peirce’s words come to mind. According to Peirce (see proposition 8.332) «the essential function of a sign is to render inefficient relations efficient, – not to set them into action, but to establish a habit or general rule whereby they will act on

occasion» (Peirce [1904]: 390, ita 191). The schema is configured here as a true *gesture of the mind*, indeed the gesture par excellence: a transiting from the thing to its image thanks to a rule of synthesis that is itself formed in this continuous transiting that gives form to both the map and the territory⁶.

4. *Bounds and Limits*

The mind is not a thing, nor a representation, but rather that movement, that gesture that happens around the threshold between the two, thanks to which a representation of the thing is constructed and which at the same time allows a representation to be applied to the thing. In this sense, the distinction between limit (*Schranke*) and bound (*Grenze*) proposed by Kant is inescapable: «Bounds (in extended beings) always presuppose a space existing outside a certain definite place, and inclosing it; limits do not require this, but are mere negations, which affect a quantity, so far as it is not absolutely complete» (Kant [1783]: 79). As an example we can say that mathematics, physics and the other sciences only recognise limits, those limits that determine the perimeter of study of the various disciplines: these disciplines may know that something else lies beyond their own sphere, but they have no tools with which to reach and analyse it. Metaphysics, on the other hand, knows only bounds. It stops at no limit: each discipline only deals with its own phenomena, whereas metaphysics aims at the unconditional (Sini [2012]: 9-10).

Our thesis is as follows: *becoming aware of the difference between the bound and the limit is, in fact, to turn every supposed limit into a bound*. It is true that, from the point of view which belongs to the different disciplines, a single disciplinary field will remain enclosed within definite limits. However, alongside the strict disciplinary view we are now able to place that of metaphysics, which – where all disciplines see rigid limits – is able to see that limit as a bound⁷. Consider Kant's example: if I take the earth as a plate, I continue to experience new "pieces of the world", but from time to time my knowledge of the earth will be closed within limits. If, on the other hand, I think of the earth as a sphere, then I will be able, even starting from a small part of the surface, to know the diameter and surface area of the whole sphere (Kant [1787]: 653 [B787]). We can say that once the idea of earth as a sphere is introduced, it will no longer be possible to consider it only as a plate. The moment the notion of bounds arises, as capable of marking the threshold between a "here" and a "beyond", no limit could maintain its rigorous closure. The limit establishes the closure of a territory, or of a thing as separated from another; the bound, on the other hand, involves the awareness that each thing is in relation to the other. Once the concept of a bound is exhibited, it even becomes difficult to really think of a limit: the determinacy of the

thing will not be a moment of closure of the object in itself, but even a “*locus of openness*”, implying the relationship between one thing and all the others.

The transformation addressed by Kant with the distinction between bound and limit –with the effect of reducing every limit to a bound – could be clarified by a similar case. I am referring to the Platonic innovation concerning the way of conceiving the concept of “not-being”, invented to overcome the Parmenidean impasse related to a sharp opposition between being and not-being. As is well known, instead of maintaining the strict opposition between the two, Plato distinguishes two types of “not-being”: the “not-being” as absolutely other than being (the so-called Nothingness) and the “not-being” which is simply something else, something different: «not as something contrary to being (ἐναντίον), but merely different (ἕτερον)» (Plato, *Soph.*: 258 b3-4).

Thus negation ceases to be merely excluding, rather it becomes the general form of the relation between different entities. Each individual entity is distinguished from every other entity, but not in the sense that it denies them *in toto*, but rather insofar as each individual thing is simply different from the others. Negation discloses the mutual relation between entities, insofar as they are all different from each other, without being excluding. Heidegger writes, «Hence Plato understands the “not” and negation as disclosive» (Heidegger [1992]: 387). The strict opposition between being and not-being is succeeded by a relationship of *mutual otherness* between different entities, indeed between entities that are now thought of as *different* from each other.

But here is the analogy to the Kantian operation: when we start to think of “not-being” as “something different”, it becomes almost impossible to keep thinking “not-being” as absolutely opposed to being. Once we have conceived negation as something that discloses a relation, how can we go back to thinking of it as excluding? Let us immediately give the decisive example, taken from the fourth book of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: «that is why we assert that even what is not is a thing that is not» (*Metaph.*: 1003 b10-11). It is no longer possible to really think of “not-being” as absolutely nothing, in the sense of a “not-being” which is really the absolute opposite of being, without any relation to it. For even of “not-being” we are forced to say that it *is*, in the sense that it somehow *exists*. So it falls into the sphere of being in a certain way: since we express it, by this act we bring it, so to speak, into the realm of being. If we want to use Kant’s language, we can say that there is no longer a strict limit, but only a bound between being and “not-being”. Nor can we imagine “non-being” as something that is so absolutely opposed to being that it does not reveal itself in some way even in relation to being itself⁸.

So “not-being” becomes something “else”, and we only have a remote memory of nothingness as that which is absolutely opposed to being: we are now in the condition whereby even of nothingness we must say that it *is* nothing. The

same applies to the relationship between map and territory: the map is so powerful that it includes the territory in itself. And what about that territory in itself, that *pregiven* world? We only have a remote memory of it, but we can no longer access it ... except through our maps.

5. *The map of the mind. The mind as a map*

We started from a precise thesis, however paradoxical: *the very consciousness of a difference between territory and map leads to an identity between map and territory*. Kant sets up the absolute difference between being and its image, and it is precisely this difference that gives him access to the transcendental, that is, the awareness that any image we make of being is our own image and has nothing to do with real being.

We have said that in Kant every limit is destined to turn into a bound: think of the famous image of the “land of truth” set against the “vast and stormy ocean” – a page dedicated to the foundation of the distinction of objects into *phaenomena* and *noumena* (Kant [1787]: 354 [B295]). On that page, actually, the strictest possible limit, the one that marks the difference between land and sea, is transformed into a bound: in spite of the fact that we feel safe on the land of truth, i.e. the realm of phenomena, and in spite of the fact that the sea deceives the voyager with false promises of new lands, nevertheless we are pushed to embark «to search through all its breadth and become certain of whether there is anything to hope for it» (Kant [1787]: 354 [B295]) and moreover to try to find out «by what title we occupy even this land, and can hold it securely against all hostile claims» (Kant [1787]: 354 [B295]). Not even the sea can propose itself as a limit that cannot be crossed: it too becomes a bound.

Out of metaphor, starting from the difference between being and image (between territory and map) Kant discovers the notion of the transcendental: we do not have access to being itself, but only to the image we make of it. In this sense, “being” will always appear only within that “image”, so that being will turn out to be identical with that image. In cartographic terms: we start from the difference between the territory and the map (or between the sphere and the plane), but since the only way we can study the territory is to map it, everything we will know about the territory will be “on the map”, and therefore the territory itself will turn out to be *identical* to the map. Here is the contradiction to think about: *the map is different from the territory, but the territory – since it can only appear on the map – ends up being identical to the map*.

The whole reflection of so-called German idealism will be a way of assessing whether and how the transformation of every limit into a bound also applies to the distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena*. To put it with the precision we

can find in the latest Fichte, we have “being” on the one hand and on the other the “knowledge of being”, which is an image. We will call this first image “a”. «There is absolutely no other difference between being and a, except that the latter is not essence itself» (Fichte [1812-1813]: 213). However, the awareness that there is a difference between being and the image of it, which we have called “a”, is a new content of knowledge, thus a new image, which we shall call “b”. Thus “b” contains the awareness of a difference between being and “a”, although in every other respect being coincides with “a”. If we assume the viewpoint of “a”, then we see only identity with being, whereas in the light of “b” we can say that the two turn out to be indistinguishable from each other, even if they are not *the same thing*.

It is easy to see how this approach has decisive implications on the cartographic level: we place a difference between the territory and the map. But in turn this difference can only appear on a new map: the role played by this “second map” is exactly equivalent to that transiting from one to the other, from being to image and from image to being – that constitutes the original gesture of the mind. Only through this transiting, moreover, the establishment of a correlation between territory and map – the connection between objects and concepts that Kant calls meaning – becomes possible (Kant [1787]: 276 [B185]).

Unlike intellect and reason, which rule over a territory, imagination does not insist on a territory, precisely because it is a continuous transit from thing to knowledge: on this also depends the ancipitous nature of imagination itself, which at once belongs to sensibility but is also presented as an act of spontaneity. Inevitably Kant simultaneously defines imagination as «determining» and yet at the same time as «determinable» (Kant [1787]: 257 [B 151]).

A contradiction that emerges even more explicitly in the first edition of the Critique: «Both extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of this transcendental function of the imagination» (Kant [1781]: 241 [A 124]). This function is exactly the art hidden in the depths of our soul (as we have seen, Schelling will speak, by analogy, of a craftsman). How territory can generate a map (a map through which for the first time a territory becomes “visible” and further analyzable and mappable)? We might ask: How does matter become a body (a body that can get an idea of what matter is)? In logical terms we should say: how do we manage to identify two different things? How does that synthesis happen in which the very difference between being and image is overcome?

Of this art – as Kant punts it – we will never be able to fully unravel the real operations (Kant [1787]: 273 [B 181]). This is not a matter of a lack of faith in science, but rather the awareness that every answer, gradually more precise as research progresses, will always be written *on a map*: ever more evolved, ever more detailed maps in which for a moment we will have the illusion of having

grasped the authentic essence of the territory (this is the identity between the territory and the map), until the moment when the differences between map and territory, between image and being, will re-emerge, forcing us to invent new maps and new models.

And this is the reason why science announces itself as an endless task.

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Notes

- 1 See Kant (1787): 149: «I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*».
- 2 On this topic see Morawski (2024): 207-237.
- 3 On this problem concerning the relationship between image and thing in itself, on which depends also the refutation of idealism within the first critique, see Desideri (2023): 165-172.
- 4 The expression that best renders the idea of the mind as threshold is perhaps to be found in the third Critique, when Kant speaks of «*reflectirte Wahrnehmung*» (Kant [1790]: 25 [A 191]). On this topic see Desideri (2011): 73-74.
- 5 At least partially in favour of a semantic conception of the transcendental, but completely against such a parallelism between Kant and Peirce, as illustrated by Apel, is Hogebe (1974): 162-164.
- 6 By imparting this direction to our argument, we clearly downplay the role that Kant assigns to the concept. In Kant, the concept is a kind of supply that the intellect has always possessed (Kant [1787]: 150 [B 26]): here, on the other hand, moving from German idealism and American pragmatism, we understand the concept itself as a meaning that has been constructed by the very activity of the mind.
- 7 This statement is to be understood in the following way: whenever the mathematician, economist, or jurist ventures into areas that belong to other disciplines, their speculation ceases to be purely scientific, that is, related to the study of its specific field of phenomena, and takes on a metaphysical perspective. In this sense, the metaphysical perspective is the one that each individual scientist tends to adopt whenever he or she enters into dialogue with other disciplines.
- 8 It is here that all the aporias related to the relationship between being and nothingness arise: Platonic invention no longer allows us to think of nothingness as absolutely other than being.

Spaces of Reason

Aisthesis



«We lay the path by walking on it»: *Kant, Bergson and the Power of Space*

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Abstract. It is usual to oppose Kant and Bergson as the cartographic reason and its other. Yet, considering the role that space plays in the philosophy of both, it is possible not only to point beyond this opposition. The mediality of space, its natural schematic property, makes it possible to identify a significant proximity between space as a pure form of sensibility and the pure perception with which Bergson opens *Matter and Memory*. The aim of the article is to argue in favour of this kinship by considering above all the role that space plays in the first edition of the *Fourth Paralogism of Pure Reason* and in the *Opus postumum* through the filter of the arguments used by Bergson, in the third chapter of *Creative Evolution*, to demonstrate the simultaneous genesis of matter and intelligence.

Keywords. Kant, Bergson, space, intuition, pure perception.

The only feature of an object outside me are the representations of the vigil concordant with those of other human beings

(I. Kant, *Reflexionen* 5400, AA XVIII:172; our transl.)¹

1. *Kant vs. Bergson*

One would have a good game in opposing Kant and Bergson just as, in his works, Franco Farinelli (see Farinelli [2003]; [2009]; [2016]) opposes the two images of the Earth, Gé and Ctòn, the two ways of travelling, that of Cristoforo Colombo, who did not realise he had found America because the map indicated it as India, and Marco Polo who, instead, modified his maps according to the territorial changes he encountered along the way, and the two eras of what Farinelli calls «cartographic reason» (Farinelli [2016]), the modern one in which the world became the image of its map and the medieval one in which, on the contrary, the map was taken as an image of the world (Farinelli [2003]:16): Kant and Bergson stand in front of each other as the cartographic reason and its other, the a priori knowledge and that which a priori is never known insofar as it «constitutes the real difference [*der eigentliche Unterschied*] between empirical [*des Empirischen*] and a priori cognition» (KRV A167-B209: 291), namely sensation: «the irreplaceable giver of the concrete and unforeseeable qualitative aspects of the world» (Luporini [1967]: 203; our transl.). Where critical reason is a reason that reduces the world to its map or representation, Bergson's reason is in fact a global reason, in the sense that the term "globe" acquires in the works of Farinelli: a concrete and living reason which is insensitive to the sirens of the Renaissance's perspective thanks to which Kant's *natura formaliter spectata* was constituted. For Farinelli, today we need this kind of reason because *globalisation* means that «it is no longer possible to rely, in our relationship with reality, on the extremely powerful cartographic mediation which, by reducing the terrestrial sphere to a plane, has so far made it possible to avoid coming to terms with the Earth as it really is, i.e. with the globe» (Farinelli [2016]: 107; our transl.) in which *vivimus, movemur et sumus*. When the world becomes spherical again, the *simple location* of the perceptual datum in three-dimensional space and linear time characteristic of the *scientific materialism*, an expression with which Alfred North Whitehead refers to the fatal mixture of idealism, mechanism and Aristotelian logic responsible for the formation of the *idolum mentis* of a nature composed «of an irreducible brute matter spread throughout space in a flux of configurations» (Whitehead [1926]: 22), is no longer possible. In what Marshall McLuhan called the «global village» and Farinelli proposes to understand as «landscape», directions «no longer correspond to fixed relations between one part and another, but are instead mobile and interchangeable indications, depending on how the subject, the same subject who, in front of the map, remains motionless, moves» (Farinelli [2016]: 107-108; our transl.). The world wide web asks us to vary our maps as places change, that is, to relativise Kant's a priori in such a way as to make our understanding intuitive and sensible otherwise from how Kant did. According to Farinelli, Kant's pure understanding, unlike Kant's

physical teaching of geography, is not a good guide to orient us in the field of unified consciousness-experience created by the new technologies because, as Bergson says in the third chapter of the *Creative Evolution* (henceforth *CE*), it «only finds again in matter the mathematical properties which our perception has already deposited there» (Bergson [1907]: 224). Kant, as we know, confirms this from the beginning to the end of the critical period, i.e. from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (henceforth *KRV*) to the *Opus postumum* (henceforth *OP*)². In the second edition of the preface to the *KRV*, he writes that «reason has insight only into what itself produces according to its own design; that it must take the lead with principles of its judgments according to constant laws and compel nature to answer its questions rather than letting nature guide its movements» (*KRV* B XIII: 109), while, in the *OP*, he repeats relentlessly that «we make everything ourselves» (*OP*: 189; AA XXII:82), even ourselves, because even the *Setzung* of the outer object is a *Selbstsetzung*. Indeed, by separating space from being, transcendental idealism gains from the very beginning the possibility of reaching the outer world without leaving the subject: «the outer world is the phenomenon of the outside, which feeling, with its spatiality, gives us as distinct from the phenomenon of the inside, which feeling itself gives us with its temporality» (Carabellese [1969]: 425; our transl.). Insofar as it is a «perception that refers to the subject as a modification of its state» (*KRV* A320-B377: 398), sensation is in fact only a species of the genus *representatio* «which designates a reality in space and time» (*KRV* A374: 428). Educated by criticism sensation becomes luminous for science only as graduated (read: qualified) matter whose presence makes intuition empirical, that is only when perception extracts from sensation what can be anticipated a priori – the degree of reality of all phenomena (*KRV* B208A166-B218A176) – anticipation being, after all, this same extraction. It follows that, what the *Critique* calls “empirical” is nothing more than an object *represented* as given as to its existence. Sensation is «that *through which* things are given to us [*das wodurch die Dinge gegeben sind*]» (*Refl.* 4629, AA XVII: 614; our transl. and italics) and intuition is a reference to the object by means of sensation (*KRV* A20-B34), i.e. «*how* things are given to us [*wie sie gegeben sind*]» (*Refl.* 4629, AA XVII: 614; our transl. and italics). Yet only intuition, for Kant, is transcendental; only intuition is a *mode of* receiving that is worth a *form*, a priori, of receiving. Still in the *Critique of Judgement* sensation is defined as «the material through which something existing is given [*das Materielle wodurch etwas Existierende gegeben wird*]» (*KDU*: 75). But if there is *Critique* only on the condition that this sensitive *wodurch* is translated into the intellectual medium of perception – a «representation accompanied by consciousness» (*KRV* B209: 291) or «by sensation» (*KRV* B147: 254) – is because Kant’s understanding, to borrow an image that Bergson uses in the third chapter of the *CE*, «is bathed in an atmosphere of spatiality to which it is as inseparably united

as the living body to the air it breathes» (Bergson [1907]: 223). All that it feels, therefore, reaches it only «after having passed through this atmosphere» (Ibid.) because perception is a preliminary plan with which we meet that which meets us that, for both Bergson and Farinelli, seals the *productive*, because *projective*, character of the pure reason.

For Kant, in short, *we receive* because *we can receive*. But since everything that we cannot receive (read: anticipate a priori), is «left to experience [*der Erfahrung überlassen*]» (*KRV* B218: 295) insofar as «constructing sense impressions is impossible» (*Refl.* 3940, *AA* 17: 356; our transl.), the reduction of matter to form undertaken from the outset of the *Transcendental Aesthetics* because of the embarrassment – made explicit later by Jacobi in his famous invitation to criticism (Jacobi [1912]: 336) – that the *affizieren* procures for criticism, is never complete (an incompleteness that, as is well known, embarrasses both post and neo-Kantians). For Kant, in fact, everything is form, even matter, but outside form, the *Anticipations of Perception* tell us there remains all the life, dynamism and organicity of nature. «That which is really merely empirical [*was eigentlich und bloß empirisch ist*] and pertains to sensation» (*KRV* A165/B217: 295) represents an a posteriori which can fill the forms that condition its giving but it is not something that these forms can give to themselves. Hence, between the anticipation of perception as it is described in the *Critique* and the *Amphibolia*'s statement, within the same *Critique*, that there is no matter that is not form, that even transcendental matter is only a requirement of which we could not even understand what it is, even if someone could tell us (*KRV* A277-B333), there is a patent cleavage: the *Critique*, as a whole, claims that matter is given and cannot be contrived at will because existence is «the most of the concept» (Carabellese [1969]: 53; our transl.); the *Amphibolia*, within the *Critique*, specifies that all that is given is a form that refers back to a matter which is a form as well. A cleavage, moreover, that seems irrecoverable given that nobody can anticipate affection, i.e. sensation as «the effect of an object on the capacity for representation, insofar as we are affected by it» (*KRV* A20-B34: 155). Sensation is «that by means of which we become conscious of something and not something of which we are conscious» (Lange [1988]: 52; our transl.). Its transcendental function as «*Erzeugung des Empirischen*» (*Brief.*, *AA* 12: 213) cannot be planned because the transcendentality of sensation is the very transcendentality of the empirical: an «autonomous and radical» (Henry [2001]: 78) transcendentality that also escapes the purest of forms according to Hermann Cohen (see Cohen [1883]), namely “reality”. Within the critical framework we can only know its *eidolon*, i.e. sensation as the matter of the appearances, through the atmosphere of the *Urteilkraft* – a refraction from which, according to Bergson, we get the hybrid and abusive notion of intensive magnitude (Bergson [1889]: 123) – because, even when the understanding, in the *OP*, starts inventing – *erdichten* (*OP*, *AA* XXII: 476; our transl.) – those problematic concepts to which only

a new schematism can provide a solid basis, i.e. the ether as hypostatized space, intuition will still be sensible. Indeed, it is always a matter of schematism because, and this is Kant's conclusion in the *OP*, «we have before us the finite and not the infinite spirit» which «only by means of a subjection becomes active, only insofar as it receives a material can work and form» (*OP*, AA XXI: 76; our transl.). Infinite, on the contrary, is the spirit *in front* of which, *within* which, Bergson installs himself. “Feeling” is the name that, almost in the same years, his friend William James reserved for it, inviting us to understand the term “feeling” as a synonym for «pure experience» (James [1912]: 99), i.e. the experience drawn out in its immediacy before the distinction between knowing subject and known object can take place and which is not devoid of theory, i.e. of forms, relations and concepts. With the term “feeling”, which can be replaced also by “thought” or “idea” in the sense that John Locke gave to this term (James [1909]: 2), James refers to what Bergson calls «durée»: every act or state of thought which is not yet determined by a specific cognitive function or a specific representational content. This experience, like Bergson's global duration, precedes and founds the understanding we have of it because it is an experience neither constructible nor plannable but continually becoming and creating. Nonetheless, feeling is not an unknowable thing-in-itself. In contrast to Kant, Bergson bets on the possibility of going beyond the human condition and rejoining, thanks to a metaphysical intuition – an absolute and direct knowledge of the thing (Bergson [1903]: 1) –, to the inexhaustible source from which our intelligence – which Bergson opposes to intuition – derives as a local concretion or function. To do this, Bergson's transcendental empiricism replaces Kant's possible conditions of experience anticipated by perception with the real and genetic conditions emerging *in* and *from* sensation. The latter are conditions tailored to the conditioned because they are not a priori forms, but strange «a-posteriori a priori» (Bryant [2008]: 229) or maps-territories which, instead of anticipating experience, are dictated by it. When it is transcendental, in other words, empiricism renounces neither the transcendental nor the concept, both of which are conditions of experience, but makes them the objects of an encounter: intensities that are not distinguished from the thing they refer to because they are materially inherent to its thisness. For Farinelli we need such empiricism capable of illuminate a denser, though more obscure and confused, reality than that of Kantian experience reduced to (human) cognition, because

[i]t is by no means true that the postmodern epoch, as ours is usually referred to, is determined by the «precession of the simulacrum», by the precedence of the map over the territory (Baudrillard [1981]: 10). This has certainly been true throughout the modern era and was already true for Anaximander. On the contrary, our world is founded precisely *on the end of such an anticipation*, because by now the map and the territory are no longer distinguishable from each other, *in the sense that what we can see of the latter has fully assumed the form* and nature of the former, and we can therefore understand little of how the world works. (Farinelli [2016]: 10; our italics)

2. *The intuition of space*

In his works, Bergson calls «space» what Farinelli calls «map» and «plan»: a scheme of decomposition and recomposition of reality following which our intelligence substitutes the already made for the *se faisante*, the solid for the fluid, «the corpse for the living», to use the terms with which Carl Ritter qualified the cartographic gesture (Ritter [1852]: 34-35). If intelligence feels at home among inert objects and triumphs in both geometry and cartography, it is because it constructs its concepts with the frames that perception cuts out and picks up from the becoming unimultiplicity of duration, that is to say, because intelligence is a particular function of the mind essentially related «to a certain aspect of inert matter» (Bergson [1907]: XXII) in virtue of a reciprocal adaptation that, in the third chapter of the *CE*, a chapter devoted to answering the Kantian problem “how is science possible?”, Bergson presents as the «simultaneous genesis of matter and intelligence» (Ibid.: 204). In his opinion, Kant did not solve it because, «he did not think that the mind overflowed the intellect, and in the second place (and this is at bottom the same thing) because he did not attribute to duration an absolute existence, having put time, a priori, on the same plane as space» (Ibid.: 225). To space yes, making it something akin to «a veritable *deus ex machina*, of which we see neither how it arises, nor why it is what it is rather than anything else» (Ibid.: 224). But Kant’s space, like any space for Bergson, is only a simulacrum of duration as real time. In *Time and Free Will* (henceforth *TFW*), Bergson criticises it as an abstract symbol: a map of territory different in kind from territory and yet mistaken for it by virtue of what Whitehead denounced as the *fallacy of misplaced concreteness*. Yet, Kant’s space is not, as Bergson said in *TWF*, «the conception of an empty homogeneous medium» (Bergson [1889]: 95). Kant’s space is an intuition. Bergson can understand it as a conception because, by criticising it, he holds together what Kant distinguishes: the space as pure intuition and formal intuition of the *Transcendental Aesthetics*; the space as extensive magnitude of the *Axioms of Intuition* and the space as empirical intuition of the *Anticipations of Perception*, the latter two principles, like the entire *Analytic*, never being considered by Bergson in his works. The result is that Bergson imputes to Kant’s space what, in the *KRV*, results from different functions. In his *Aesthetics*, in fact, Kant distinguishes scrupulously between perceived and conceived, empirical and pure space, just as he generally distinguishes, contrary to what is said in *TFW* (Ibid.: 232-236), between duration and its symbol, between duration, which for Bergson is real time, and spatialised, or homogenous, time, which is its intelligent counterpart. Moreover, this distinction, although not formulated in the same terms (in the language of the *Transcendental Deduction*, to give just one example, it is the distinction between the «synthetic unity of apperception» and the «I think»), is the lintel of the *Critique*. Therefore, as emerges

most clearly in the *CE*, the real difference between Kant and Bergson is the way of understanding the relationship between representation and its other³ rather than the difference between space and duration.

As intuition, Kant's space escapes Bergson's accusations for the same reason that, according to Bergson, doctrines based on intuition escape Kant's critique (Bergson [1903]: 88), i.e. because it is an intuition. And what is more important, as intuition, as pure intuition, Kant's space recalls what Bergson entrusts, in the opening of *Matter and Memory* (henceforth *MM*), the resolution of the dualism between mind and matter, soul and body, intensity and extension, namely «pure perception». In resolving the fourth paralogism in the first edition of the *KRV*, Kant invited to reformulate the old, metaphysical question about the relationship between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* in the one, new and transcendental, that asks «how is outer intuition, namely that of space (the filling of it by figure and movement), possible at all in a thinking subject?» (*KRV* A 393: 438). Such a reformulation is particularly valuable, although usually little considered, because, even if this new question is not critically answered either (space, as pure intuition, is not perceptible), in the *OP*, while elaborating the *Selbstsetzungslehre* and revising *Transcendental Aesthetics*, Kant still seems to be faithful to it. Between the possibility of this space that takes the place of a *commercium* among heterogeneous substances and that of a space indistinguishable from a pure self that *actively suffers* itself, i.e. space as «the formal element of pure (not empirical) intuition [that] represents the self-determination, how the subject affects itself» (*OP*: 136, AA XXII: 480), there is more than one correspondence. The new space that, in the *OP*, replaces the old imagination of the *KRV* in the new schematism is in fact a space that undergoes, acts and *is given as a given space* in such a way that the self-consciousness of both intuition and thought comes together in a representation that allows Kant to write: «I am, at the same time, conscious of myself as the thinking subject and of myself as the object of intuition» (*OP*, AA XXII: 22; our transl.), *cogitable* and *dabile*, intense and extended, even in a corporeal sense. In the *OP*, space and time form a pure representation, given a priori, «with which the subject posits itself and makes itself the object of the senses [...] not only analytically but synthetically, by means of a construction of concepts in the complex of the manifold of intuition as the true object» (Ibid.: 25; our transl.) which – this is the novelty of the *OP* with respect to the fourth paralogism – presupposes the body. And if the possibility of space, so understood, also ends up resembling the possibility of pure perception – the perception of bodies, or matter, in space in the sense that space is this very perception of the universe as an «aggregate [*ensemble*] of images» (Bergson [1896]: 18) – it is not only because pure perception is pure space and the aggregate of images that Bergson calls «matter» resembles the aggregate of atomic sensations that space unifies a priori as a pure form of sensibility: as phenomena, these sensations are already

the relations of which the ether as thought-matter given a priori constitutes, in the late *OP*, the imperceptible basis of determinability. The aggregate of images with which *MM* opens is the world grasped *sub specie physicae* (Ibid.: 17), and pure perception is a boundary-perception which, like the perception of the ether, and the perception of pure space «exists in theory rather than in fact and would be possessed by a being placed where I am, living as I live, but absorbed in the present and capable, by giving up every form of memory, of obtaining a vision of matter both immediate and instantaneous» (Ibid.: 34). It is pointless, in this regard, to object that, for Bergson, the images whose aggregate forms the matter of the world are not representations but «an existence placed halfway between the “thing” and the “representation”» (Ibid.: 9): ether too, as was already the case with the first scheme, with the first common root thought by western philosophy, i.e. the Platonic *Chōra*, is halfway between the intelligible and the sensible, the transcendental structures and the physical entities insofar as it is a matter prior to every sensible body. Indeed, in the *OP* ether lies at the foundation of every possible experience as, one might say, another *Erzeugung des Empirischen* because, as soon as it ceases to be understood as matter-substance or physical object and becomes, rather, an object of physics, it also ceases to be something merely hypotheticalal.

As the non-empirical condition of the material unity of experience related to the I-think as the formal unity of this same experience, ether gains the status of an inevitable appearance, a necessary *ens rationis*: not an empirical fact but a great, maybe the greatest *etwas*, the greatest what-character⁴ which gives itself to thought by affecting reason without being experienced. And that is why, if seen as an act, pure perception is so similar to space as the *formale* of the *dabile* required by the schematism of the *OP*, i.e. to that space which is «the very intuition of the sensible object insofar as the subject is affected by it and, therefore, is only given as phenomena according to the formal» (*OP*, AA XXII: 10; our transl.): both pure perception, which is pure insofar as it is devoid of memory as well as of sensation, and the phenomenality without phenomena thanks to which phenomena are given, i.e. space as *ens imaginarium*, are limits of our capacity to think in which that «initial freedom of phenomenality» (Taminiaux [1967]: 44) – *Chōra* as the manoeuvring space of being, *Chōra* as the being’s becoming – takes place. We can grasp it with a «*loghismos tis nothos*», a bastard reasoning, says Plato, adding, as rarely noted, that this reasoning occurs «*met’anaesthesias*» (*Tim.*, 52b2), with an absence of sensation, «with the sense of this absence» (Diano [1973]: 179)⁵. As in dreaming, we read in *Tim.* 52b5-7, *erdichten* writes Kant in the *OP*. And what does it mean to perceive, to feel with an absence of sensation, if not to experience, exactly as happens in the last *Konvolute* of the *OP*, the giving of an empty intuition, of a «pure receptivity with no object but itself»? (Agamben [2019]: 71; our transl.). Moreover, in the light of Kant’s last

manuscript notes, one can even argue that the traceability to which, commenting on the *Axioms of Intuition*, Kant had referred when writing that «we cannot represent ourselves any line, no matter how small it may be, without drawing it in thought» (*KRV* A162: 287), does not differ, in the end, from the space in terms of whose possibility Kant had invited to reformulate the *vexata quaestio* of the relationship between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* in 1781. The A-text of the fourth paralogism seems in fact to say that the mind's influence on the body is nothing other than the possibility, for the mind, of perceiving or intuiting the body (in Bergson's terms: the possibility for an intensity to intuit its opposite, i.e. the extended thing), because that the mind's influence on the body is an outer intuition, i.e. an intuition of space and of what fills it, suggests that this influence is intuition itself: the perception of the body as other and outer in relation to me⁶, as I am other and outer in relation to the other bodies I see and these are so in relation to each other. Yet, to the extent that the *potentia* of this, almost forgotten, space is indiscernible from a *patentia* that pays homage to space etymon – “space” comes from the Latin “spatium” and this, in turn, from the verb “patere” meaning “to open up”, “to extend”, “to span”, “to manifest” (and note that the adjective “spontaneous”, from the root “span”, also has the same meanings) –, the space of 1781 already resembles the realised space that, in the *OP*, allows for a new schematism. If, nevertheless, we must wait for the *OP* to see all these connections made explicit, is because it is only in the *OP* that Kant, replacing the imagination with the “new” space, can think pure space and matter through a self-affection in which the subject is affected by its own receptivity. In the *OP*, the *possibility* of the critical space becomes the *actuality* of a *Setzung* that is, at the same time, a *Selbstsetzung*. What here becomes clear is that the possibility of space and of what fills it, i.e. sensation as matter of perception, like the possibility of the thinking being in general, would not be actual without a concomitant affection and the idea we have of it: an idea, as we have seen, that is nothing but the “pure receptivity with no object but itself”. Almost as if, what is lately developed, it was not only the need to transvaluate the question about the reality of a *commercium* between heterogeneous substances into a question about the possibility of a single kind of intuition, but also the fact that outer perception is «the real in space» (*KRV* A375: 429) in the meantime that this same space, «with all its phenomena, is exclusively in us» (*Ibid.*), as the form of receptivity, the form of being affected by this real.

For Kant, although «space is nothing other than mere representation, only what is represented in it can count as real» because «every outer perception immediately proves something real in space or rather is itself the real» (*Ibid.*). This immediacy, as is well known, constitutes the *demonstrandum* of the future *Refutation of Idealism* where perception, i.e. «the mere, but empirically determined consciousness of my own existence», immediately «proves the existence of ob-

jects in space outside of me» (*KRV*B275:326). Yet, this immediacy also precludes the immediacy with which, in the *OP*, the self posits itself as both *cogitable* and *dabile* passing, just as in the *Refutation* (Desideri [2013]: 173-175), from the simple logical consciousness to the determinately given (actual) consciousness in intuition: it is space, indeed, that plays somehow this passage both in the first edition of the *Fourth Paralogism* and in the *Refutation of idealism*, and finally in the *OP*. In all these textual places we find that space is the preferred reference to show how the simple apriority of pure reason constitutes, by itself, the empirical. If, in fact, according to the postulate of empirical thought to which the *Refutation* is added as an insert, reality extends as far as our perception extends (*KRV*A226-B273), it is space, somehow, the agent of this extension, not to say it is this extension itself. As a form of sensibility, space is a psychic function that, «exercising itself over sensations, is called intuition» (Simmel [1913]: 60; our transl.): *a forma formans* that can neither be intuited within us nor extracted from the relations of what appears outside us in the manner of an empirical concept: as pure intuition, space is a necessary representation that is a priori in the soul. For Kant it is the foundation of all outer intuitions as well as of all conceptions of space because, on the fact that space cannot not be presupposed (its absence is not representable), on space's character, to paraphrase Henry More, of «unavoidable imagination» (More [1662]: 163), depend both the apodictic certainty of all the principles of geometry, and space's a priori givenness. And it is this inevitability of space that now is at stake and we must investigate. The *Aesthetics* tell us that space is given as something unique in a way that critical reason cannot understand, namely as an original intuition, a «primitive product» (*OP*: 176, AA XXII: 37) that must be in us *before any perception*, even if not in a psychological sense. As early as 1768, Kant made it a principle of possibility of the composition of matter, at the same time refusing it the title of geometric principle. The space of geometry is *gemacht*, thus made, composed, and *abgeleitet*, i.e. derived, while space as pure form of sensibility is *gegeben*, given, and given originally, subjectively and not objectively insofar as it is an «actu infinitum a parte cogitantis» and not a «potentiale infinitum» (Fichant [2004]: 537). Therefore, it is difficult to reduce Kant's space to a homogeneous, abstract and merely conceptual medium as Bergson did. The *Axioms of Intuition* tell us that space is an extensive magnitude but, just as Leibniz distinguishes between *spatium* and *extensio*, understanding the latter as an extensive magnitude and the extensive magnitude as a discursive concept abstracted from the properties of bodies perceived *partes extra partes* even though well founded in the intermonadic relation (Gueroult [1946]), Kant too seems to admit that geometric extension is something that space receives by materialising itself into magnitude. However, if this is the case, it is also difficult to think that such a space is “in us” spatially, i.e. extensively.

In *MM*, after all, Bergson too says that we can get out of *extensio* without getting out of that other, qualitative and psychic extension, which, in 1896, he defines in the same terms in which, until then, he had defined duration: a continuity of heterogeneity (Bergson [1896]: 210). To resolve *TWF*'s reactive dualism, indeed, in *MM* Bergson deploys a soul that is not only inextended and an extension that is not only spatial: the extensive as something intermediate (like a scheme?) «between divided extension and pure inextension» (Bergson [1896]: 245). The extensive is neither the extension nor the extended but a tension towards the outside *before* the outside is constituted and *so that* («zum Behuf» Kant repeats in the *OP* – see, e.g. *OP*, AA XXII: 309; AA XXII: 550) it is constituted: a sort of tracing before the tracing from which mathematical space derives as a physical line drawn by its psychical sign, i.e. as the image «that intelligence renews itself when it is exercised» (Riquier [2009]: 33; our transl.). In the *MM*, Bergson states that this drawing begins when the tension of duration stretches out until it almost vanishes and the heterogeneity of the qualities that succeed one another in our perception is «sufficiently diluted to become, from our point of view, practically negligible» (Bergson [1896]: 182). With the consequence, only implicit in *TWF*, that it is duration itself, which Bergson compares, not by chance, to an elastic band (Ibid.: 104), that contributes to the formation of the blade with which intelligence attempts to divide its undivided act; it is «the same movement by which the mind is brought to form itself into intellect, that is to say, into distinct concepts, brings matter to break itself up into objects excluding one another. The more consciousness is intellectualized, the more is matter spatialized» (Bergson [1907]: 207). In the third chapter of the *CE*, matter is in fact said to consist of the movement of the consciousness pushed further and the latter, therefore, «feels at its ease, moves about naturally in space, when matter suggests the more distinct idea of it. *This space is already possessed as an implicit idea in its own eventual detention, that is to say, of its own possible extension*» (Ibid.: 221; our italics). The mind finds space in things but, and the passage deserves to be quoted in full,

could have got it without them if it had had *imagination* strong enough to push the inversion of its own natural movement to the end. On the other hand, we are able to explain how matter accentuates still more its materiality, when *viewed* by the mind. Matter, at first, aided mind to run down its own incline; it gave the impulsion. But the impulsion once received, mind continues its course. The idea that it forms of pure space is only the *schema* of the limit at which this movement would end. Once in possession of the form of space, mind uses it like a net with meshes that can be made and unmade at will, which, thrown over matter, divides it as the needs of our action demand. Thus, the space of our geometry and the spatiality of things are *mutually engendered* by the reciprocal action and reaction of *two terms which are essentially the same*, but which move each in the direction inverse of the other. (Ibid.: 221-222; our italics).

3. *The intelligence of matter*

Mind, for Bergson, materialises while matter idealises, and this identity of movement is another way of stating that *res cogitans* and *res extensa* coincide, reaffirming, in 1907, the monist result drawn in *MM*. Only intensity, in fact, extends itself being nothing other than a need for extension, and Bergson does not hesitate to call «consciousness» this principle – the intensive *élan* – «that has only to let go its tension may we say to defend in order to extend», taking care to specify right after that this consciousness is not «the narrowed consciousness that functions in each of us», i.e. empirical consciousness (Ibid.: 259). Yet, precisely in attempting to solve the Kantian problem – how matter bends to our reasoning and our forms accord with objects that we have not produced –, in the third chapter of the *CE*, Bergson ends up greatly complicating *MM*'s monism by working four terms together: matter and intelligence, space and *élan*. Not only that: abetted by a certain dogmatism about matter inherited from Plotinus to whom, in the years preceding the drafting of the *CE*, Bergson had dedicated several studies and courses, sometimes he now seems to conceive of matter as something transcendent with respect to the intelligence, without the clarity of certain statements succeeding in dispelling the confusion that hovers over all these terms. Nothing in these pages suggests interpreting the nexus matter/intelligence as the empirical translation of the transcendentality of the nexus space/*élan*. Bergson, indeed, inherits from both *TWF* and *MM* the ambiguity about space⁷ without inheriting, at the same time, *MM*'s conception of matter as an aggregate of images, i.e. a phenomenal conception of matter. Consequently, while in *MM* the dualism of soul and body was given as resolved in the opening – the theory of pure perception serves this purpose – in the third chapter of *CE* – the chapter in which, so to speak, Bergsonian transcendental deduction takes place – a kind of substantial dualism seems to loom large again although the passage we have quoted at the end of the previous paragraph seems to hold true to the monistic instance of the 1896's work. Consequently, it is only by pointing to the latter that it is possible to argue that the thinking of the simultaneous genesis between intelligence and a matter, if matter is a phenomenon, is not so different from that which Kant arrives at in the *OP* by resolving the *Anticipations* in an amphibolic sense. Matter, for Bergson, is in fact not transcendent with respect to the intelligence one has of it because this intelligence is the *élan*'s own anticipation of the *res extensa* as the end of its creative impetus: an end never reached because «neither is space so foreign to our nature as we imagine, nor is matter as completely extended in space as our senses and intellect represent it» (Ibid.: 222). For Bergson space is the never-achieved limit of matter because the integral or perfect spatiality, which Bergson thinks of here only extensively, coincides with a perfect exteriority of the parts that is never given, and is never given because,

for the Leibnizian Bergson, there is no point of matter that does not act and is not connected with any other. Yet, also for Kant space as pure intuition is never given (read: never perceivable) for a similar reason to that put forward by Bergson: one never stops having sensations and the anticipation of the degree of reality of all phenomena is also the anticipation of the fullness of space at every point. That every sensation has a degree or that the real of the phenomenon always has an intensive quantity, albeit infinitely small, allows Kant to deny the existence of the void (*KRV* A 168B210/A172B214) and, given Bergson's misunderstanding of Kantian space, there are good reasons to believe that what is said in the *CE* about geometric space also applies to space as pure intuition: empty space is never given, i.e. is imperceptible, because the absence of reality-sensation is a *nihil privatum*. Moreover, even if he does not speak of simultaneous genesis, Kant also suggests that «in all that it has that is intelligible, matter is our own work» (Bergson [1907]: 224), and that this work, after all, is also of matter.

For Kant, in all that it has that is intelligible, matter is a work of ours and it is so even before he anticipates matter, in the late *OP*, in the form of a hypostatised space – ether as the basis of all relations of motive forces – such that to place (*setzen*) this place as determinable is to subject oneself to determination, i.e. to place (*setzen*) oneself as determinable. In the *OP*, and especially here, space is the form in which we are affected but, another novelty of the *OP*, is that the space of *Transcendental Aesthetics*, thanks to ether, becomes now perceptible and this perception is a self-perception: the effect of the “I think” on the “I feel” analogous to that «effect of the understanding on the sensibility» in whose terms the second edition of the *Critique* defines imagination (*KRV* B152: 257). Yet, as «Mittelbegriff» (Lachièz-Rey [1950]: 460) whose task is to signify the affection of the senses once it has occurred, and maybe also when it occurs, already in the *Aesthetics* matter is an idea of sensation as a modification of our sensibility. The definition of *Empfindung* in *KRV* (A20-B34: 155) says no more, even though it is the *Anticipations* that inscribe sensation in thought, that objectify sensation by making it a noema for the understanding. Hence, even if Kant never denied the existence of objects outside of us in a transcendental sense, we could say that already in the *Aesthetics* and the *Anticipations*, namely before the *Anfangsgründe* (henceforth *MAN*) undertake the construction of matter, Kant admits that the empirical manifold is a form produced by thinking. The resolution of the cleavage between *Anticipation* and *Amphibolia* is in fact also prepared by that reduction of the outside to the form of our feeling – the outside that results to us – which is a consequence of the transcendental ideality of space and thus, in addition to *Transcendental Aesthetics*, also by that correction of 1781's fourth paralogism which is 1787's *Refutation of Idealism*. The latter, after all, is a confirmation of the *Transcendental Aesthetics* rather than a real refutation: a *petitio principium* with the value of a «tautology» (Benoist [2006]: 306). Kant there

merely restates his thesis on knowledge – «the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience» (*KRV* A158-B197: 283) – because what he wants to show there is that «every empirical interiority is conditioned by an empirical exteriority» (Luporini [1967]: 185). Nonetheless, if it is always a matter of interiority, given that outer things exist in the same way as the subject exists – as representations of whose reality one is immediately conscious – it is because what here really interests Kant is the condition, i.e. the determination. The evidence of the I-world correlation can indeed only be ascertained insofar as it results from the interaction of a complex of forms that constitute it, because, from a transcendental perspective, an empirically determined consciousness can only be given if, at the same time as it, a determination is also given. With respect to this *petitio*, the construction of the matter initiated in the *MAN* and completed in the *OP* undoubtedly marks a more conscious resolution of the cleavage between *Anticipation* and *Amphibolia* because Kant will fully assume the formalism and productivity of pure reason, going so far as to radicalise the proleptic movement that the first *Critique* limited to the form of sensation alone «to extend it to sensation as a whole, hence to sensation not only for its “being impression”, but, metaphysically, *for its being*» (Branca [2024]: 304; our transl.). If, in fact, the dynamic anticipation of the force at work in *MAN* is the realisation of the anticipation of perception that gives mathematics the “material” to delineate and construct, in the *OP* Kant undertakes an anticipation «*quoad materiale*» (*OP*, AA XXII: 345) of the experience by researching what the conditions are for sensation to occur. The old Kant wants «to present a priori that which depend on perception» (*OP*: 141, AA XXII: 493), that is «to anticipate the data *materially*» (Mathieu [1991]: 136; our transl.), to *anticipate the material formally*. *Forma dat esse rei* is the motto of the entire science of the *Übergang* because its task is to investigate how form determines the thing itself grounding the experience of a given object. Yet, without in any way detracting from the objective advancement, not to say completion, of transcendental idealism that is realised in the convulsive pages in which Kant demonstrates the existence of the ether – the protagonist of the “passage” in the sense that it does the passage from the form of experience (a transcendental structure) to empirical matter (a physical entity) –, it is worth noting that, to the extent that the degree of reality of all phenomena is the what-like form which is present a priori in the soul, the anticipation of this *form of a content as content* is not so dissimilar to that *enunciation of a presupposition* that is indiscernible from the *assumption of this presupposition as the anticipation of the presupposition itself*, in which the analytical proof of the existence of the ether – the greatest *etwas*, the greatest what-like form – is resolved. The latter is the paradox of a thought, of an idea that indicates existence itself: «the *position of thought* insofar as it turns out to be the *thought of the position* itself» (Branca

[2024]: 361; our transl.). But even though it is only in the case of the ether that Kant admits a *consequentia* from *posse* to *esse* (*OP*, AA XXI: 592), the *esse* is always thought because ether is an idea. Moreover, to the extent that, for any givenness to be given, for there to be the giving of sensation, there must already be an apprehension, even the real materiality of sensation is, in the end, «an internal effect of thinking itself in which it suffers, so to speak, its own operation» (Branca [2024]: 227; our transl.) becoming impassioned with itself. The presupposition of a non-phenomenal trigger of the phenomenon is still a phenomenon because, even that of a *solicitatio* activating the capacity of judgement is, like the ether, the thought of experience as the thought of something existing that acts on me and, only to this extent, exists. This means that even colours, tastes and sounds are thought in their non-predictable, empirical quality: they are always the way, to apply what Kant says of space-time, «in which the mind is affected by its own activity» (*KRV* B67: 189). Perception is in fact «an intuitive grasp» (Alexandre [1978]: 60; our transl.) by which we give ourselves an impression instead of receiving it. And so, despite the fact that in the *Critique* only «that which is connected [*zusammenhängt*] with the material conditions of experience (of sensation) is actual» (*KRV* A218-B266: 295) and not these same conditions; despite the fact that the thing itself is not yet, as it will be in the *OP*, «another respectus of the representation to the same object» (*OP*, AA XXII: 26; our transl.), thus a phenomenon; and despite the fact, finally, that pure forms are never self-active, that is to say, capable of provoking their coming into operation (reduced to the matter of phenomena, the critical sensation is the most intense conception of the need for forms to be actuated but, indeed, it is a conception), one should recognise that the premises for the future amphibolic resolution of the *Anticipations* are already contained in the *KRV*. It is not only in the *OP*, in other words, that intellectual spontaneity stimulates outer affection. So often, although not with the same clarity, we find in the *KRV* that «the material element of sensible representation lies in perception – that is, in the act through which the subject affects itself and becomes appearance of an object for itself» (*OP*: 146, AA XXII: 502) and «the inner phenomena in perception that the subject arouses in itself, i.e. sensations, are simply phenomena of itself» (*OP*, AA XXII: 483; our transl.). Matter, in those rare moments in the *KRV* in which Kant thinks about it, and which are, significantly, the moments in which transcendental idealism defines itself («that of empirical is its ultimate theme» – Benoit [2006]: 306; our transl.), is always «a thought in us» (*KRV* A385: 434) which, «thanks to the outer sense, is represented as «being found outside of us» (*KRV* A385: 434), albeit only empirically. Therefore, everything lies in understanding what this representation can and how far it goes, what its otherness is, what pure thought can do (a question at the heart of Cohen's reinterpretation, in terms of scientific idealism, of the *Anticipations of perception*).

Contrary to Bergson's admission, Kant knows very well that duration exceeds intelligence, i.e. that thinking is not knowing. And the question that arises in the light of the *OP* is to understand whether the other from representation is thinking which, in its incessant and always presupposed exercise, never coincides with the constructions we make of it in the sense that the latter are like rules waiting (but where? and how?) to be implemented in order to become actual (in the *OP*, from this point of view, forms reach the apex of waiting: «the possibility of the possibility of experience» – *OP*, AA XXI: 76; our transl.), or that *feeling-thought* which is absolutely invadable because it is absolutely immanent, which Bergson calls both «duration» and «qualitative extension», meaning the act in act of consciousness which is ours only in the sense that it makes us, as its, to itself (*MM*'s monism tells us that, with respect to this absolute, our constructions are local crystallisations differing only in degree because even stillness is a motion, albeit a slowed one). To put it differently, we must ask *if* and *why* space as pure form is an *ens imaginarium* different from *nihil privativum* as a state in which, only temporarily, nothing is felt. Does *met'anaesthesias* indicate an insensibility *de iure*, i.e. the *anaestheton* that Plato reserves for the intelligible, or an insensibility *de facto*, i.e. the absence of sensation caused by its being relativised, frozen, overwhelmed by something else, e.g. that time that makes sensation flow away, «with all the magnitude of its intensity» (Scaravelli [1973]: 173; our transl.)? Which, given that affections do not give rise to sensibility despite arising in it, means asking: how can something give itself *in* a source? How can something give itself *as* a source? How can we think of a pure receptivity, of a phenomenality before any phenomenon? If space and time, as imaginary entities, are a pure nothingness, a simple and vacuous reasoning, why – and this is the *OP*'s problem – do they not remain empty but instead offer principles to perception, such as matter and gravitational forces? In short: how does the ether, which is *de iure* imperceptible, make space perceptible, if space, for its part, is imperceptible both with the senses of physiology and with those educated senses that are empirical intuitions, i.e. perceptions? What perception are here we talking about? How does an «empty concept without object» fill «an empty intuition without object» (*KRV* A292B349: 383)? And *where*, especially, does this filling take place?

4. *The perception of thought*

In the answer to all these questions, as is easy to guess, the status of what, according to Heidegger, is «Kant's greatest achievement» (Heidegger [1962]: 158) – the non-sensitive sensibility – is at stake. Hence, also that of pure perception as pure space or pure intuition. For Bergson, indeed, the adjective “pure” does not only indicate that this perception exists *de iure*. Precisely because we know

that, when pure, space is not conceived, “pure” next to “perception” also indicates the absence of judgement, i.e. the absence of that category which, as the third analogy of experience, comes to remedy, in the *Analytics*, the deficit of both the space of the *Aesthetics* and the space of the *Axioms of intuition*: the reciprocal action (*KRV* B257-A218). Kant makes use of it because, although space provides the *possibility* of this action, it is not sufficient to establish its *actuality*: in the possibility of a local commonality made comprehensible by outer intuition there is no simultaneity without introducing the logical determination of *commercium*, i.e. without distinguishing the “world” as a mathematical whole from “nature” as a “dynamic whole” based on *Gemeinschaft*. Without grounding space’s formal relations in the category of reciprocal action – the third analogy of experience – there would only be the representation of a geometric coexistence of points or volumes (*communio spatii*), i.e. that matter grasped by the act of pure perception as an «aggregate of images». The matter-Seurat with which *MM* opens is indeed a simultaneity of points-instants that can be expressed mathematically because it is like «a consciousness where everything balances and compensates and neutralizes everything else» (Bergson [1896]: 219). Equilibrium, however, is a limit, a threshold: that in which the elastic of consciousness becomes paralysed and the sensation with which we come and go from the world selecting and releasing images knows a lull. As soon as the lull ceases, without this suggesting that lull is a state, i.e. a delimited portion of time since the instant does not exist as such, the images whose aggregate forms matter, namely the «images that exist themselves» (Ibid.:57), return to relativise themselves in proportion to how much we begin to look at them, breaking the fleeting enchantment of their eyes on us. Pure appearance is thus reduced to empirical appearance and the images become representations, namely images of something for someone. This means, and it is Frédéric Worms who has shown this (see Worms [1997]), that depending on where the emphasis falls in the syntagma «aggregate of images», on “aggregate” or on “images”, we have the two modes, pure and empirical, of perception, i.e. the two modes, pure and empirical, of intuition. As an *aggregate* of images, in fact, matter is nothing other than the event of appearing, the world in its «pictorial» state (Bergson [1896]: 10): the pure, kaleidoscopic, visibility of the real in the double sense of the genitive. In the *OP* Kant calls it «phenomenon of phenomenon», meaning the appearance of what appears. As an aggregate of *images*, on the other hand, matter is simple phenomenon, *Gegenstand*, object for a subject rather than object *in pro* (*zum Behuf*) experience. Yet, given that between the two there is only a difference in accent, whenever finding ourselves in the presence of images, we go towards them by anticipating them, the field looms up as a field of selected figures to the detriment of the background; conversely, if we remain still, simply in presence, and focus, with a transcendental sensation, on the ongoing unity of this field, i.e. on the tension that, vibrating, shapes its edges, we coincide with this pure, non-sensible ex-tension.

Depending on where the emphasis falls, that is, the same field, the same act of perception-consciousness, can be the transcendental field-act of pure perception-intuition as the nexus of appearing/being of appearing, or the empirical field-fact of conscious perception and empirical intuition as the site of the apparent. In the first case we have Farinelli's globe; in the second Farinelli's map, i.e. the environment, the world-globe for us. In between, as medium, there is that slightly misty landscape that, in *The Invention of the Earth*, Farinelli defines, very significantly, as «a formidable model of perception» in that it is what, of the earth, remains «after the map, the cartographic image, has represented what it can represent».

In this intensive rather than extensive “where”, according to Farinelli, «there are no defined objects; no delimited objects with clear and distinct boundaries» (Farinelli [2016]: 100; our transl.). Yet, the spectacle of pure perception is «a harmonious aesthetic-sentimental totality» in which not only are there no individual objects: in this «organic totality that admits of no internal separations» there is – as Farinelli remarks out – «not even the possibility of separating the object from the subject» (Ibid.; our transl.). Pure perception «possesses in very truth the indivisibility of our perception; so, inversely – Bergson adds – we may without scruple attribute to perception something of the extensity of matter» (Bergson [1896]: 219). In this limit state, for every degree of extension, there is in fact a degree of the mind that accompanies it, as if thought were the essence-power of extension and extension, i.e. materialisation or manifestation, were the essence-power of thought. Indeed, when matter is an aggregate of images, the thought that one has of it, precisely because it is the thought-perception of this matter in the twofold sense of the genitive – pure perception belongs to things and these things participate in it (ibid.: 212) – cannot but share its mass and weight, stretching out until it coincides with the immense, ubiquitous and continuous spider web that unfolds before our eyes as soon as we open them again after having closed, says Bergson, with all dogmatic, i.e. substantialist, conceptions of thought and extension (Ibid.:10); that is, we might translate, as soon as the *vexata quaestio* of the union of heterogeneities is posed, as Kant invites us to do in ‘81, in transcendental terms. When this happens, what one witnesses, what one appears in, is a pure appearance, a pure *patentia* or manifestativity: an abyssal phenomenality that appears to itself in the meantime that it appears to someone who appears in it and that does not cease to appear appearing itself according to that «iterative and paralogistic structure of reason» (Branca [2024]: 331; out transl.) such that, seeing itself, seeing itself seeing, reason sees itself in the sense that propose, explodes, ex-tends itself in a vortex that verges on tautology or, it would be better to say, on «tautoegory» (Lyotard [1991]: 8-14). *Giving itself form*, here, is barely discernible from the *form of giving itself* because pure perception images its occurrence, as if its future were nothing more than its appearance, nothing other than the *becoming landscape of its escape*. «Positing

and perception, spontaneity and receptivity, the objective and subjective relation – Kant writes in the *OP* – are simultaneous; because they are identical as to time, as appearances of how the subject is *affected* – thus are given in the same *actus*» (*OP*: 132, AA XXII: 466) in which there is no difference between *thought of space* and *space of thought*. In *MM* Bergson symbolises this act with a point that is, at the same time, the vertex of the cone of memory and a point on the plane of matter (Bergson [1896]: 42-43). This point is the place of the insertion of memory in matter, of soul in body, namely *the place of the having place of pure perception*. This is why pure space is not perceptible: it is perception. As such, it is not in the scopic field as an image among images: it is a vision rather than a thing seen. If it is a receptivity without reception, therefore, it is because in space and time as pure intuitions, in the ether as pure space rendered perceptible, or in the thing itself as other *respectus*, we are not dealing with phenomena, but with the way in which the subject, in the phenomenon, is affected not by the object, but by itself, by its own receptivity. Here, the subject lays its path, the path it is as object, by walking on it insofar as the phenomenon of the phenomenon «is the representation of the formal with which the subject impresses itself and is to itself spontaneously an object» (*OP*, AA XXII: 333 f.; our transl.), thus «the phenomenon of the subject affecting itself» (Ibid.: 401; our transl.). For Bergson this means equality between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. But even in the *OP* it is almost impossible to maintain a firm distinction between subject and object, as is proven by the fact that the one term often appears instead of the other. Pure perception is only the name for the simple fact/act that things appear and are as they are, as they seem to us. There is the aggregate of images, and this is the absolute factum of cognition. Kant takes this fact as *KRV*'s starting point, but he is wrong to interpret this cognition that knows itself only as the cognition that of itself, of itself as object, or of the object, has a subject: it is rather the whole universe, Leibniz had said taking up the Hippocratic *sympnoia panta*, that knows itself through all subjective cognitions. And since the universe is not a universal witness or a maxi-consciousness – it seems to us to be such because “simultaneity” says together the deception and the whole, or the whole as deception, i.e. the whole-hypostasis, the whole or the *Chōra* or the space as a third thing in relation to the two Cartesian – it must be concluded that the universe that is known through each individual cognition is nothing other than the simultaneous happening of the many, infinite, singular cognitions knowing each other: a plurality of *Selbstsetzungen* so similar to that world of pure experience that James, in his *Essays on Radical Empiricism*, compares to a mosaic whose

pieces are held together by their bedding, for which bedding the Substances, transcendental Egos, or Absolutes of other philosophies may be taken to stand. [...] there is no bedding; it is as if the pieces clung together by their edges, the transitions experienced between them forming their cement (James [1912]: 86).

Indeed, the true *commercium*, the *Gemeinschaft* that is the «sorceress and queen of existence» (Scaravelli [1980]: 121; our transl.), is not the map that contains the act that draws it by making it a mere point, that is, by making the act the obscurity of the world's scene, but a map that includes both this point and the act of drawing it. In pure perception, the whole is not given to itself as a drawing that also contains the position in which it is drawn just because, of the act that draws this position, it makes a sign, but a territory that maps, draws itself without a third dimension. Not, then, a pure power simply waiting to pass into action: the non-perceptibility of pure perception, the fact of never being able to transcend or relativise the field of images of whose *quidditas* pure perception is the *quodditas*, is the sign of the *continuous giving of a datum* that, like the territory, does not exist as a separate thing from its inhabitants. To the third analogy, in fact, the *OP* adds that the reciprocal action between substances presupposes an interaction with the body of the subject who, therefore, is a body among others. Where the *KRV* makes space the locus of interaction and interaction, which is true *Gemeinschaft*, the unity of experience of which the transcendental subject, as the synthetic unity of pure apperception, is the principle, the *OP* clarifies that realised or perceived space is the material with which transcendental subject makes the unity. Therefore, the transcendental subject, as bodily, acts at the same time as empirical subject, without its transcendentality being diminished because «the possibility of experience as such depends on the existence of a corporeal subject who makes it» (Mathieu [1991]: 34; our transl.). A consequence, this, unthinkable from the *KRV* and which, in the *OP*, is only explained by the recognition of the transcendental function of a space that «cannot be empty, but, in itself, at every point, must be in its own place moving and moved» (*OP*, AA XXI: 231; our transl.), namely of the space to which, for a moment, the refutation of the fourth paralogism in the first edition of the *Critique* had sketched the outline. Here's why, as Bergson invited his high school students to do already in 1893, we should imagine positions

in an infinite number, simple and analogous to our own, arranged in such a way that their arrangement translates for our perception into the form of visual and tactile extension, which finally acts without pause, without contact in the proper sense, without impulse, but by virtue of a universal law that dictates that every change of state in one affects all the others as if by magnetic influence. (Bergson [1893]: 83; our transl.)

Influence is not a shock or a bump, nor even a category, but that continuous, diffuse and non-local action of which the ether, for a long time, was, even for Kant, just another name. This influence is silenced in that contemplation of the end or beginning of life that Bergson calls «pure perception»: silenced but present, given that, according to the *Anticipations of perception*, the threshold condition of anaesthesia is the completeness of sensation, its ultimate phenomenal-

ity. The sensation that reaches this limit feels itself as lacking an outer sensible object through *the perception of an imperceptible mediated by the absence of perception*. Thanks to this bastard reasoning, for a moment incalculable even by the infinitesimal method, that of self-affection, time merges with space, concept with intuition, form with matter and objectivity with objectuality. It is a qualitative change, almost a «transference of state» (Bergson [1896]: 202). In the landscape, terrestrial things are grasped, *sub specie aeterni*, as stars in the firmament, Cartesian *raisons de l'astronomie*, indirect phenomena. But all it takes is for an image to rebel and become a picture, phenomenon or physical object, so that from the science of nature we plunge into human ignorance with a «synthesis of uniform increase from 0 up to the given empirical consciousness» (*KRV* 218: 295) with which we try to draw what is already, and always, drawing us.

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Notes

- 1 Kant's *Reflexionen aus dem Nachlaß* have been translated by me and are indicated by the abbreviation *Refl.* followed by the volume of the Akademische Ausgabe, abbreviated *AA*, and the page number in Arabic numerals separated by a colon.
- 2 The fragments of the *OP*, when not available in the cited English edition, have been translated by me. The bibliographical indication appearing in round brackets refers to the Academy edition and is structured by the abbreviation *OP*, a comma, the abbreviation *AA* followed by the Roman numeral for the volume and Arabic numeral for the page.
- 3 In *TWF* Bergson appreciates the Kantian distinction between a form and a content of sensibility and, again in the *CE*, shows that he holds it in the highest regard by elevating this distinction to an emblem of a revolution initiated, but not accomplished, by Kant (Bergson [1907]: 289). Nevertheless, in Bergson's works, it is not always clear what this distinction distinguishes, i.e. what, precisely, form and matter correspond to. Sometimes, especially in the *CE*, the distinction seems to trace that between phenomenon and noumenon insofar as distinct matter is an extra-intellectual matter from which intelligence should derive by diminution just as, in *MM*, conscious perception derives from pure perception (Bergson [1896]: 36; [1907]: 391); sometimes, instead, the difference between pure intuition and empirical intuition, i.e. between the form of sensibility considered in itself, irrespective of any reference to the matter it orders and shapes, and this same form understood as a way and means of immediately referring to an object through sensation; sometimes, finally, the difference between empirical intuition and the matter of phenomena, i.e. between space, what Kant calls «form» in the phenomenon as an indeterminate object and sensation, what, on the contrary, Kant calls «matter» of phenomena.
- 4 For Kant, the objects of perception only show themselves if from the outset they have been made showable. Such an offering and presence «can only be perceivable as present and lying-before insofar as it is represented in advance in the light of a what-character, in the opened domain of the real in general. The sensible can be sensed only on the basis of the open background of the what-like» (Heidegger [2018]: 149), and, in the *Anticipations*, intensive magnitude is this «what-like»: the limit that defines the object as «etwas» instead of as «Gegenstand» opening the transcendental horizon in which phenomena can appear. This is why intensive magnitude does not come *from* sensation but *to* sensation. The form of «what-like» is in us because that which, in the sensible and as sensible, has the character of «what-content» must be known a priori by the mind.
- 5 It is to Agamben's credit having connected *Timaeus*' third kind of knowledge to *OP*'s empty intuition insofar as both are modes of self-affection (Agamben [2019]).

- 6 In the reformulation of paralogism in *KRV*'s second edition we read: «I distinguish my own existence, that of a thinking being, from other things outside me (to which my body also belongs)». This is equally, says Kant, is an «analytic preposition» because «other things are those that I *think of* as distinguished from me» (*KRV* B409: 446).
- 7 Whereas in *TWF* space is a product of the endosmosis between the duration of the facts of consciousness and duration of the objects of the world, i.e. a *succession with exteriority* resulting from the combination of psychic duration as a *succession without exteriority* and worldly duration as an *exteriority without succession* in *MM* it is a pragmatic scheme of divisibility of the undivided. On this ambiguity see Miravete (2023): chapters 3-5.



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The Enlightened Reflection. Kant and the Philosophical Care for Reason

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Abstract. The paper intends to investigate the task that Kant assigns to reason to orient itself in thought. For understanding the meaning of this task, we utilize reflection as the means to carry forward as best as possible the self-reflective nature of reason. What status does reflection assume, then? And what function does it perform in determining especially the activity of philosophy and the philosopher? We therefore propose a reading in which reflection in transcendental philosophy cannot be separated from the practical use of reason, and indeed reason, insofar as it is reflective, primarily indicates a conduct of thought oriented toward the care of supreme ends.

Keywords. Orienting-in, thought, reflection, criticism, reason, boundary.

1. *To orient oneself with reflection*

If we cannot restrain the tendency to move beyond what is known, we have no choice but to rely on a need of our reason. Thus, in a footnote of the essay *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?*, Kant offers the general definition of the main issue of his essay. It is somewhat striking that what initially appears to be merely a

condition of reliance on reason – which is groping for footholds in the darkness of knowledge – transforms itself into the «right of reason's need» (Kant [1786]: 6). It is not just a need, but the right that arises from that need. And it is not just any right, but the supreme maxim of the enlightened reason and therefore of thinking on our own. For reaching this outcome – as always within the horizon of the critical philosophy – it is crucial to observe the method Kant uses. Therefore, we must not forget what relevance in this essay is assigned to analogy. Kant states: «By analogy, one can easily guess that it will be a concern of pure reason to guide its use when it wants to leave familiar objects (of experience) behind» (Kant [1786]: 5). Analogy is the compass for navigating when it comes to the orientation of thought. Therefore, regarding analogy, we must also remember some clarifications that Kant offers in par. 59 of the *Critique of Judgement*. First, the idea of purging language of the analogies contained within is futile. The standard of a completely technical language, free from any sensible characteristic and aimed solely at the purity of arguments, is totally in vain. Kant defines analogies as «indirect presentations of the concept» and provides a brief list of expressions that designate concepts only by «transferring the reflection upon an object of intuition to quite a new concept, and one with which perhaps no intuition could ever directly correspond» (Kant [1790]: 180). The main example that Kant provides is the monarchical state, which can be governed by constitutional laws as a living body or ruled by the absolute will of one alone, as a mere machine like a hand-mill.

There is no likeness between the elements of the analogy, but rather a proportion between the rules with which we reflect on both. These rules correspond to a method for orienting ourselves, just as in the case of the writing *What does it mean to orient itself in thinking?* They are partial, non-determinative viewpoints that serve to illuminate fundamental philosophical issues. When Kant describes geographic orientation, he argues that it must be considered a subjective standard as the guiding thread; in the same way, as he exemplifies, I orient myself at night: if I am to walk when I cannot right distinguish anything on the streets, through the mere feeling of a difference between my two sides, the right and left. If we turn to reason, it does not feel, but it reflects on its lack and «through the *drive for cognition* it effects the feeling of a need» (Kant [1786]: 8). Where there can be no intuition of objects, there is nothing to do but two kinds of operations. First, to verify if the concept is free of contradiction, and second, «to bring the relation of the object to objects of experience under the pure concept of understanding – through which [...] we do at least think of something super sensible in a way which is serviceable to the experiential use of our reason» (Kant [1998]: 6). This last operation seems very close to the act of reflection, as described in the *Critique*. Before highlighting this point, however, we must observe that

the need of reason is twofold: it has a theoretical use and a practical use. If the first one is conditioned, far more important is the use of reason in its practical use. What identifies a philosopher is a care inspired by conduct; its practical use of reason does not mark a range of duties but rather a moral destination for a rational world. Metaphysics and critical philosophy are joined together to orient this practical interest. For that reason, what Kant calls *pure rational faith* becomes the compass through which the thinker orients himself when he travels into the field of no sensible objects and each person with a healthy reason can mark out his path in accord with the end of his vocation. We are dealing with a cosmopolitan concept of thinking; the way Kant synthesizes it is not so much a wealth of cognitions to be learned and conveyed to others. Rather, it is a negative principle aimed at fighting against the solitude of thinking, the individual size of reasons, and at translating the consequences of what everyone can assume into a cosmopolitan dimension.

Another text from Kant's *Reflexion* 903 offers a significant analogy for the rational *ethos* of knowledge. In this case, the figure chosen as a symbol of the distorted use of reason is the Cyclops, described as an egoist of science. What makes a cyclops a cyclops is its being monocular, not its strength. There are cyclops in literature, theology, law, medicine, and geometry. What each of them lacks is the second eye, which is on the one side «the self-knowledge of our human reason» (Kant [1923]: 395) and, on the other side, the inclination to humanity to confront each other. How much would we think if we did not do it as it were in community with others? Not too much, states Kant; what he calls *Lenkseligkeit* of the judgement is quite the opposite of a solipsistic vision. Rather, it is the ability to extend knowledge up to its widest relations with the ends. *Antropologia transcendentalis* is the Kantian name used to mark this self-knowledge of understanding and reason, with a definition that has much more to do with critical philosophy and metaphysics than with pragmatic anthropology (See Failla [2006]: 453-465). We could say that critical philosophy, in its role as both propaedeutic and metaphysics, is the way to coordinate two forms of vision, where one completes and compensates for the other. This issue occurs between intellect and imagination, as well as between the search for systematic unity and the focus directed towards the ends.

In a *Reflexion* dating back to the years of composing the *Philosophical Encyclopedia*, Kant wrote that «Alle philosophie hat zum object die Vernunft: die Maximen, die Grenzen und den Zweck. Das übrige ist Vernunftkunst» (Kant [1928: 52]). To dealing with maxims and ends defines what philosophy is: a practice, the highest rational form of life; this activity directs knowledge towards the idea from which stems the system of science and, for achieving this purpose, it needs to gather and address objective knowledge in the perspective of the whole. There is no method for reason that does not have to take on this task. This way of

comprehending self-knowledge is characterized by a specific reflexivity, which is not empirical introspection at all but instead takes on its full meaning within the enlightenment character of reason as a reflective state of character. Thus, it is stated very clearly the meaning of transcendental investigation which gives value to his method. It consists in addressing the *how* of reason by reflecting on the possibility of the rational form of thought. From this perspective, autonomy and reflection are the main traits of enlightened rationality.¹

What Kant means as the enlightenment ideal is a conception of the *originality* of thought. Enlightenment should be understood as a disposition to think for oneself, just like Kant declares in his most famous essay: «Have courage to make use of your *own* understanding!». Despite the juridical use of language, enlightenment is conceived as an end that man is inclined to adopt because of respect for one's own humanity. This concept of autonomy leads us towards the notion of spontaneity and to the way in which it should be understood. As Allison noted, Kant does not offer any «ontological conclusion regarding the absolute spontaneity of the self from his epistemological analysis [...] spontaneity functions in the technical Kantian sense as an idea in light of which the act of thinking must be conceived in order to retain its normative status» (Allison [1996]: 64). The spontaneity-claim does not improve a metaphysical inference to the absolute spontaneity of the “thing which thinks”, but it regards rather the way in which the thinking subject must be conceived as endowed with cognition.

After all, someone who has merely been trained, for example, by learning the principles and definitions of the Wolffian system, has not yet exercised «a capacity to produce», but only «a capacity to imitate»: he is «a plaster cast of a living human being» (KrV A 836/B 865). This passage appears in the *Critique's* Doctrine of Method as a preamble to Kant's description of the species of rational cognition. It is also an answer to the question about which kind of thinking we must describe as a spontaneous act. Kant suggests that originality is connected to the possibility of criticizing and rejecting what one has learned.² For Kant, to use reason means to be concerned with principles, for philosophy is a «*cognitio ex principiis*», and a principle is a universal proposition from which, as he further claims, it is possible to stem in a systematic order. We can take something to be a principle because we consider it to have a significant application; but on what basis would this assumption not be arbitrary? Only if «it has been drawn out of universal sources, or principles of reason from which also arises the criticism, indeed even the rejection of what has been learned» (KrV A 836/B 864). The only way to avoid considering Kant's answer a circle is to regard the «capacity to produce» as a practice that I can enact spontaneously, the capacity to appreciate the significance of what one has been thought as rules governing particular cases. Originality is nothing but the talent (*Talent*) of recognizing the relevance of a rule. It is a sort of free

imitation that is practiced through the observation of given attempts. They are, of course, examples for which the history of philosophy thus has a supportive value. What seems most significant is the reflective character of the intellectual activity in question, through which this talent is exercised.

2. Method as architectonic unity

While the idea of a doctrine of method (*Methodenlehre*) initially grows up for Kant within a general logic, also influenced by a tradition where Meier's *Lehrart* stands out, it assumes a conclusive arrangement only in the first *Critique*. In fact, Architectonic is the place where the theme of organizing knowledge and its original systematic structure indisputably prevails. Here, the method finds not so much its most significant illustration, but certainly the heart of its critical meaning; thus, the problem becomes again the one of the circularities between the construction and the design of the system. Opening the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, Kant defines this part as «the determination of the formal conditions of a complete system of pure reason» (KrV A 707-8/B 735-6). Therefore, only Architectonic states how a system might be understood starting from a relationship with the concept of idea. A systematic structure is «the unity of the manifold cognitions under one idea» (KrV A 832/B 860) and this role comes to the forefront as a pivot of «the rational concept of the form of the whole, insofar as through this the domain of the manifold as well as the position of the parts with respect to each other is determined a priori» (KrV A 832/B 860). In this passage we find some significant claims. First, the architectonic unity of a science is founded on a priori idea that can establish the position of each part of the system and its link to the whole. Second, Kant states «the scientific rational concept thus contains the end and the form of the whole that is congruent with it» (KrV A 832/B 860). The idea operates as an end, because each part has the function to realize the whole. What Kant means for architectonic unity is not the coherence between a body of cognition and other existing sciences. Architectonic unity stems from the fundamental idea proper of that specific science. In this regards, mathematics and physics are examples of sciences even though a complete system of all sciences does not yet exist.³ It is possible that this kind of unity will be enough to set up a science, but it is by no means certain that access to this idea is guaranteed.

Nobody attempts to establish a science without grounding it on an idea. But in its elaboration the schema, indeed even the definition of the science that is given right at the outset, seldom corresponds to the idea: for this lies in reason like a seed, all of whose parts still lie very involuted and are hardly recognizable even under microscopic observation. (KrV A 834/B 862)

In this case, the idea is an operative principle; to realize its function, it does not need to be entirely brought to consciousness or expressed as a rule. On the other hand, the schema is not merely a product of the author. If it were, indeed, nothing could rule out the possibility that it is merely a technical attempt external to the content. There is, in fact, another way to design a schema. It involves starting from the primary end of reason, within which it is a product that possesses the systematic articulation and boundaries of science. What remains unclear, however, is how to bind these two moments together according to immanent necessity. In other words, there is no certainty – nor could there realistically be – of achieving full explication of the systematic principle. The question, then, is whether this could be potentially an obstacle, a kind of a misstep of knowledge, or whether, instead, this gap between the teleological idea and the relationship between the parts is the driving force to give metaphysics its highest reflective profile.

If we now look at the question concerning metaphysics and its possibility of becoming a science, it becomes particularly relevant the issue about philosophical method, and accordingly, about the access to the real idea of science. The distinction between the school concept and the cosmic, or *worldly*, concept of philosophy plays a central role in this sense. Both, each in its own way, achieve a certain systematic unity. In fact, we know that the name of metaphysics comprehends the whole of rational cognitions that can ever be cognized a priori (KrV A 841/B 869). If we adhere to this definition, nothing prevents philosophy from simply consisting of a system of cognition in which its end is the logical perfection of the cognition itself. In other words, this is what Kant calls the scholastic concept of philosophy (KrV A 838/B 866). What are its limits? Kant states them explicitly in a footnote: they are the limits of any discourse based on rational principles for which cannot be provided irrefutable proof. Whether a proof is refutable or not depends on the relationship with the power to establish it, that is, with reason. It would therefore be impossible to call a principle or a rule of conduct rational «regarded only as one of the skills for certain arbitrary ends» (KrV A 840/B 868). What must therefore be proven is the intrinsic link of the principle to the power of reason, from which every evaluation of rationality derives and that is characterized as a reason's self-knowledge.⁴

3. *From method to reflection*

Already in his famous 1770 work, *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*, Kant intends the method as an instrument for avoiding metaphysical errors, without therefore doing away with the possibility of a metaphysics *tout court*. Regarding the real use of the intellect, Kant uses the

term *ontology* to define the discipline that, together with rational psychology, provides the general principles of the intellect, those that are originally acquired by means of the intellect itself.⁵ Partly by connecting it to the preliminary function that this discipline has for metaphysics, in part returning to the objective of the work as stated at the start of the first section, Kant opens the fifth and last section of the *Dissertatio* introducing the topic of the *method* of metaphysics. He does this first by distinguishing between the sciences whose principles are laid by means of intuition, as natural science and geometry, in which *usus dat methodum*, and pure philosophy, such as metaphysics, where «method precedes all sciences» (Kant [1770]: 406). The discriminating element is provided by the different kind of origin between sensitive principles and «concepts of things and of relations, and the axioms themselves» (Kant [1770]: 406). If the space of metaphysics is the real use of the intellect, which prevents it from proceeding like all the other sciences by empirical trial, it is, therefore, necessary that «the right use of reason» be that which «sets up the very principles themselves». In other words, the exposition of the laws of pure reason is the genesis of science. In this perspective, the method of metaphysics and the real use of the intellect coincide.⁶ These assertions give a precise approach to the problem of method. In the first place, according to Kant, philosophy and method belong to each other in a more original way than that for the other sciences. If philosophy does intend to present itself as a science, it needs a method, meaning a specific way of acquiring its knowledge. Lacking that, what could confer determination, meaning and destination to philosophical knowledge? But while the problem of method presents itself in this way, we come to something of a stumbling block that concerns philosophy alone. Only metaphysics – though it would apply as well to critical philosophy as a preparation for metaphysics – cannot assume an already fully constituted method, nor allow that it be obtained by the mere accumulation of empirical results, i.e., through use. For having a method endowed with truth, and therefore capable of leading us where and how it purports to do, it must already in a sense belong to the true knowledge that is, however, its objective. Because of this point, a possible solution may be coinciding the real use of the intellect with the method of metaphysics; this makes it possible to avoid the split between the exposition of knowledge and its production which causes the circularity between the scientific claim of philosophy and method. This theme is indeed one that returns decisively in the first *Critique*; the reason is very likely because in 1770 there was still too much ambiguity about the status of the *intellectualia* to be able to critically develop and deconstruct the theoretical structure of the real use of the intellect. What we see in the *Dissertatio* gives an interesting suggestion of what would determine the object of the transcendental method: «the infection of sensitive cognition by cognition deriving from understanding»; the risk is not only pertaining to

those who will be fooled «in the application of principles» but also that which is at the origin of «spurious principles themselves in the guise of axioms» (Kant [1770]: 407). We must, therefore, avoid principles of sensitive knowledge from going beyond their limits and invading the field of intellectual knowledge. It is indeed possible that a sensitive concept, regarding the sensitive conditions of knowledge, from a logical point of view takes a position to prove the condition of an intellectual concept [*intellectualis*]. The example is given by the common axiom, «*Whatever exists, is somewhere*», in which the predicate that expresses the sensitive conditions of knowledge is *illegitimately* enunciated by a subject of the judgment that expresses any existing entity («anything whatsoever which exists») (Kant [1770]: 408). Another important point is now stated. What understanding does concerning the construction of experience and its form, although still exclusively logical, has a specific reflective quality. He writes on this point:

In the case of sensible things and the phenomena, that which precedes the logical use of the understanding is called appearance, while the reflective cognition, which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding, is called experience. Thus, there is no way from appearance to experience except by reflection in accordance with the logical use of the understanding. (Kant [1770]: 386)

It should, therefore, be noted that we can see within the logical use of the understanding two theoretical principles coexisting and connected to one another: one that subordinates sensitive cognitions and the other cognitions of the same type or shared concepts, and the other consisting in comparing different aspects of the understanding.

Experience, therefore, is the result of these operations that describe a reflective activity of the understanding. As such, it is significant that within the lectures on logic from the early 1770s Kant gave a definition of experience [*Erfahrung*] as «Eine reflectirte Empfindung» effectively confirming the direction of the *Dissertation* (Kant [1966]: 446). This meaning of *reflection* seems to give the general characteristic of a thought that can operate with data by connecting and organizing them but without being a productive source of data. In this sense, reflection is the operation that corresponds to the logical generality and the discursive character of a thought in general.⁷ It should be added, however, starting from those same years, that reflection took on decisive importance in the lectures on logic, and especially later at a critical level in the appendix about the *Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection*. Transcendental reflection is put into play in the conclusion of Transcendental Analytic and has its root in the idea of *Überlegung* that Kant explains in his lecture notes on logic. According to a dictation seemingly unchanged from *Logik Blomberg* (1771) to *Logik Busolt* (1789-1790), reflecting means «comparing a cognition with the power of cognition from which it is supposed to arise (sensitivity or the understanding)» (Kant [1800]: 579). In

this regard, in *Logik Blomberg* we can note a clear distinction between the two activities, both tied to the spontaneity of the intellect, reflection and investigation (*Untersuchung*):

Reflecting is distinct from *investigating* and *investigation*. *To reflect* is to compare something with the laws of the understanding. *To investigate*, however, is actually to reflect mediately. Concerning many things we can quite well cognize without investigation what is true, what false. But *reflection*, on the other hand, is always necessary for any judgment, and for the distinction of the true from the false, even if it be in general, or in a [particular] cognition, etc., in all cases indispensable. (Kant [1992]: 127).

Reflection does not concern the ground for a judgment; rather, the problem is whether and how a judgment is connected to objective principles and, therefore, whether it can represent an objective validity; in short, it is a question of the possibility of bringing a judgment within the faculty of the intellect or not.⁸ On this matter Dieter Henrich emphasized especially the nature of reflection which Kant presents as a precondition of conscious rationality; in this perspective, reflection is something distinct from and that precedes the critical investigation (*Untersuchung*).⁹ This is Henrich's argument. Our cognitive faculties form a mixture and are not spontaneously reduced to only one intellectual operation with a defined domain of application; because of that, for achieving a genuine cognition, we must have a preliminary control that brings these operations within the bounds of their own domain. This is the task of reflection. This reading has the advantage of shedding light on the operational context of reflection, identifying it in a perspective that comes before, or at least "lateral", to that of the transcendental judgment. Henrich is, therefore, right in emphasizing the importance of this *metacognitive* function taken on by reflection in itself; in a sense, this already alludes to a "topic" of the intellect, as it operates on the level of provisional judgments, impeding them from turning into definitive judgments.

4. *The role of reflection as sense of bearing*

To reflect is the operation that connects knowledge to its faculty. At the opening of the *Amphiboly* Kant writes: «Reflection (*reflexio*) does not have to do with the objects themselves, in order to acquire concepts directly from them, but rather it is the state of mind in which we first prepare ourselves to find out the subjective conditions under which we can arrive at concepts» (KrV A 260/B 316). We must be careful not to interpret this reflection as empirical introspection, as an individual and inner mental state. Kant intends to focus on the subjective conditions of judgment rather than the determining capacity of the judgment itself. Specifying the definition of transcendental reflection already provided at the beginning of

the Appendix, Kant continues: «The action through which I make the comparison of representations in general with the cognitive power in which they are situated, and through which I distinguish whether they are to be compared to one another as belonging to the pure understanding or to pure intuition, I call transcendental reflection» (KrV, A 261/B 318). Not every judgment requires an «investigation» (*Untersuchung*), but any judgment needs an act of reflection that consists in distinguishing the cognitive power to which the given concepts belong. By investigation Kant means «an attention to the grounds of truth» (KrV A 261/B 316), which is unnecessary when a judgment is endowed with immediate certainty, as is the case with the postulates of Euclidean geometry. However, if all judgments require reflection, it is primarily because there is not just one way in which these concepts can be connected. Thus arises the request for a reflective act, even at the transcendental level: to establish how these concepts must be considered, it is necessary to trace back to the place where each of them should be assigned. Indeed, the relation between concepts is one thing; the relationship these concepts maintain with the faculty to which they belong, when related within judgment, is another. The former depends on the latter; in other words, how things relate to each other depends on their placement in relation to the kind of knowledge, whether sensible or intellectual. In other words, the question Kant raises is whether the objects are to be treated as phenomena or noumena.

Concepts to which Kant refers are those from which any kind of comparison can be derived; they are identity and diversity, agreement and opposition, external and internal, matter and form. But – as Kant himself specifies – these are not mere concepts of comparison (*conceptus comparationis*), for they are not compared with each other on the ground of their relations of identity, opposition, inclusion, and implication, as it would be the case if we were dealing with their logical form. Instead, it is about determining whether objects are identical or different, in agreement or in opposition; what comes into play is therefore the transcendental reference of the concepts to a sensible manifold. There is a transcendental species of reflection because Kant points to it as a requirement of judging *a priori* just as he points to reflection as an appraisal of the empirical judgement. On the other hand, it would be a grave misunderstanding of Kant's intention to reduce reflection to a mere frill in contrast to the objective field of judgment. This passage leaves no doubt: «one could therefore say that logical reflection is a mere comparison [...] transcendental reflection, however, (which goes to the objects themselves) contains the ground of possibility of the objective comparison of the representations to each other and is therefore very different from the other» (KrV A 263/B 319).

First, it is so clear that no comparison is possible by reflection regardless of the domain in which transcendental reflection establishes it. If the latter is the condition of the objective comparison, this serves as a reference to the possible experi-

ence. This means that the *a priori* nature of the concepts of reflection does not correspond to that provided by the logical comparison.¹⁰ Secondly, once the cognitive-transcendental and not merely logical capacity of reflection has been defined, it must be understood the reason why it does not reduce to the level of determining judgment. Here, it is due to revisit the sense of the anteriority of reflection as noted by Henrich. At the same time, however, its significance in the realm of transcendental judgment must be emphasized more strongly. In fact, whether the way in which a concept is developed through reflection is not the same as that through which pure concepts determine an object, this does not imply a duplication of the faculty of judgment at all. Rather, it indicates an extension of the faculty of judgment toward a transcendental *practice* concerning the *a priori* judgments related to experience in general (Analytic of Principles) but not reducible to it. Transcendental concepts of reflection express this kind of activity; while it always remains within the field of the empirical understanding of phenomena, it expresses possible forms of relationships between the objects. These are not alternative forms to those defined by pure concepts; in this sense, the concepts of reflection do not produce a previous comparison to which the synthesis of pure *a priori* judgments would then follow; nor do they identify a different portion of the world from that reserved for the empirical object. What reflection emphasizes, rather, is the possible character concerning the conceptual relationships of experience. We have seen this before: there are different possible ways in which a concept can be thought. But to account for this statement, according to Kant, it is necessary to trace back to a logical-cognitive space that precedes the pure *a priori* judgment. From this need arises the anteriority of reflection as a prior operation that is presupposed by judgment. Therefore, it is not a folding back of the conscious subject onto itself, but rather a «transcendental topic» (KrV A 268/B 325) as it is defined in the «Remark to the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection». The transcendental place of representations is the space where their cognitive capacity is established. In the realm of transcendental reflection, the act of comparing occurs between these concepts we have yet mentioned earlier; reflection acts on these concepts, by bringing them not to a generic place of origin, but to that transcendental place from which the *how* of their possible relationship depends. It is therefore correct to draw a parallel with the schematism of pure concepts. Through its connection to time, schematism determines the conditions under which the pure concepts have their meaning, by restricting it to empirical use. Similarly, reflection does not simply distribute concepts on the map of faculties, that is, the sensible and the intellectual; it cannot be painted as highly general assessment of human cognition, neither as the achievement of the whole Transcendental Analytic;¹¹ rather, it promotes the production of a conceptual fabric endowed with a meaning that overturns the merely logical; by doing so, it delineates a transcendental horizon of meaning that is even broader than that of pure *a priori* judgment.

5. *Metaphysics of spontaneity*

There is another element that the comparison between schematism and reflection allows us to observe. Both, in fact, present an intellectual function that, at least in the case of reflection, is not always adequately recognized. We have already mentioned the definition according to which reflection is a state of the mind (*Zustand des Gemüts*) where the conditions through which one arrives at concepts can be discovered. It contains a somewhat veiled reference to the transcendental unity of self-consciousness, as a horizon that makes possible the synthesis of the manifold in the object. This element of *spontaneity* belongs to reason more than to the understanding. In fact, Kant identifies the difference between logical and transcendental reflection in the fact that the cognitive capacity to which they belong is not the same (See: KrV A 263/B 319). As for the former, it pertains to the understanding; for the latter, it pertains to reason. What is meant here with the spontaneity of reflection? It indicates a signification of itself, with no possibility for a rule to be abstracted from it. In other words, the way used by transcendental reflection for building its typical rational structure, as we observed, should be considered as a reflexive signifying of itself. It thus becomes clear not only that transcendental reflection is a spontaneous element that belongs to reason, but also that it fully falls within the task belonging to the rational conduct of the philosopher, as clarified in the Architectonic. This outcome of philosophical criticism goes through the investigation of the different faculties included in the pure synthetic principles. From this, a twofold development of transcendental philosophy emerges. On the one hand, it presents the system of pure concepts and the constitutive principles of knowledge, as required by an ontology directed toward the concepts of substance, causality, and necessity. On the other hand, however, the inquiry into the sources of these concepts and principles is also part of the transcendental philosophy. In this sense, the self-reflexive element of critique is identified with «the negative use of metaphysics» which is greater because «it consists in the prevention of the imperfection» (Kant [1997]: 284).

In the first *Critique*, the crucial point of reflection is built around its relationship with judgment. As we have seen, Kant makes this point in the opening remarks of the Amphiboly. To judge realizes a determination about the object, but to reflect is an appraisal of subjective conditions of a possible judgement. Reflection does not concern the conditions of an objective state of things, and it is not directing attention to the grounds of the truth of judging (KrV A 261/B 317). Reflection is very clearly distinguished from determinative cognitive activity and is presented as an evaluation of whether one is in the right position to be making cognitive determinations about the objects. In other words, we can consider reflection as an attitude of self-determination of thought con-

nected for Kant to the notion of spontaneity. The point is thus about living life in a properly reflective way. Inevitably, after what we have said, we encounter again the cosmic concept of philosophy. It is connected to the idea of philosophy as *theologia rationis humanae* and personified in the ideal model of philosopher. An ideal – Kant states – and not a mere example. In fact, the ideal is the idea not only in a concrete mode, but in the individual one. The idea gives the rule and as such, by being a standard for what is to be realized, it has ontological consistence and practical value. The same goes for the idea of philosophy; it is the idea of a possible science for which there are not yet concrete cases. There is no chance of realizing ideas, for they cannot be presented in concrete manifestations, just as a geometric figure is presented in intuition. The ideal serves rather as an archetype «for the thoroughgoing determination of the copy». There is no other standard for the philosopher's actions than «the conduct of this divine human being» (KrV A 569/B 597), with which we can improve ourselves. Philosophy – indeed: the ideal model of the philosopher – expresses the reflective activity of thinking on his own (*Selbstdenken*), without claiming to reach the standard. To think on his own then means the awareness of reason's finitude: knowledge of its boundaries. The boundary given by being a rational nature, a living life on the verge of placing its own destination beyond itself.

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Notes

- 1 See Desideri [2003]: 27-28.
- 2 M. Merritt has stressed this passage, especially in Merritt [2009]: 986.
- 3 Recently, several scholars have addressed the issue of method in transcendental philosophy, giving particular emphasis to the Architectonics, see Willaschek [2020]: 21-46, and Gava [2023]: 15-64.
- 4 See Ferrarin [2015]: 98-103 and Barale [2009]: 11-38.
- 5 About a recognition on the concept of ontology from the pre-critical period see Rivero [2014]: 139-148.

- 6 For an in-depth discussion of this point, see Lorini [2017]: 188-89.
- 7 See Refl. 2834, Kant [1928]. It is possible to connect this general meaning of reflection to the logical reflection by considering it as one of the acts that make up the process of forming concepts. Concerning some studies that have become classics on the subject, see Liedtke [1966]: 207-16, Reuter [1989]; especially about this point see Malter [1981]: 284-301.
- 8 In addition to this meaning of reflection, we can also see one, also found in the *Corpus* of Kant's logic that refers mainly to the faculty of cognition (*Erkenntniskraft*); on this distinction see Heßbrüggen-Walter, [2004]: 156.
- 9 See Henrich [1989]: 43.
- 10 B. Longuenesse does consider the transcendental reflection presented in the Amphiboly as «an expansion of the meaning of “logical comparison”»; she calls logical comparison in the broad sense a comparison of concepts (and thus a logical comparison), but under sensible conditions; see Longuenesse [1998]: 127; for a different reading see De Boer [2020]: 191-210.
- 11 The primacy of reflection seems to be the thesis supported by Westphal (Westphal [2004]: 47-51; the reading offered by La Rocca seems more convincing to us, see La Rocca [1999]: 160.

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An Apology for Feeling

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Abstract. In what follows I will try to establish the role feeling plays, primarily, in Kant’s worldly conception of philosophy – some remarks will refer to its role in theoretical philosophy as well. I will claim that it is through feeling that we are able to situate ourselves within the world both physical and human. Situating ourselves within the world entails a broadening of our horizon, first and far most geographically and then in thought, both contributing to our moving beyond or overcoming what is private, be that feeling or judgment, that is, moving beyond self-interest. From the bare feeling of existence to the feeling of differentiating the directions in space in the physical world, and, finally, to the feeling of reflection Kant shows how this broadening can and should take place, namely, by broadening our way of thinking.

Keywords. Feeling, broadening, reflection, way of thinking, physical and human world, situating.

Introduction

In *What Does it Mean to Orientate Oneself in Thinking* (Kant [1786]) Kant offers, what seems like, a rough sketch of an ascent from the empirical world to the world of ideas or Reason: first of all, we orientate ourselves in geographical

space, before moving on to geometry or mathematics and finally, we orientate or should orientate ourselves in thought in general. Kant responds here, after Mendelssohn's death, to the well-known *Pantheism controversy* and in particular the strife between Mendelssohn and Jacobi regarding Lessing's alleged Spinozism¹. We need not bother with the historical or philosophical details of the controversy; however Kant's answer presupposes nothing less than the conclusions of the critical philosophy itself, the conclusions of the *Critique of pure Reason*, that is, before all, what is demanded of us is to situate our representations to their appropriate faculty or *topos* (Kant [1781/1787]: 371)². We can thus relate the demand to orientate ourselves with the act of transcendental reflection. Makkreel (2008) has offered an impressive account of Kant's use of geographical metaphors and how these metaphors form a complex mental topology of the faculties and their appropriate *topoi*, establishing thus the possibility of orientation – and the act of transcendental reflection is indispensable as the means by which we orientate ourselves³. What is more, orientation appears to be almost tantamount to the critique itself, showing how the critique, as Kaulbach (1966) already suggests, is a never-ending task that demands not only orientation but constant re-orientation of the subject. Kaulbach (1966) goes so far as to suggest that the demand of orientation is not only a matter of thought but it is a more radical demand that refers to the pragmatic and the human world – a similar point with reference to hermeneutics is made by Makkreel (2008). And what this means is to constantly orientate and reorientate theoretical Reason in view of its interests, and primarily, in view of the pragmatic, that is, the human world (Kaulbach [1966]: 75). Pragmatic Reason, if I may, becomes thus an important supplement and a correction to theory.

What I want however to argue for is that this act of orientation presupposes in many ways feeling⁴. Feeling situates the human being within the world paving thus the way to orientate itself in the physical and the human world – not just thought. Unlike intuition, feeling is not blind (Kant [1781/1787]: 193-194); it already carries significance. It is the subjective ground of differentiation in space, that is geographically, as is the case in the *Orientation* essay of 1786, and, as I will claim, pragmatically or mundanely, that is, in the human world, as is the case in the 1st part of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* or so I will claim. The question I want to ask is what does feeling have to offer to Kant and how can it relate to reflection and judgment?

A preliminary answer is: unable to grasp feeling conceptually, that is unable to determine it beforehand, we need to reflect on it; only then are we in position to articulate judgments based on feeling. These judgments are subjective or at least they do not determine feeling with reference either to knowledge or to morality. But now, feeling, reflection and judgment are equally indeterminate or without concept. Through the reflective use of the power of judgment the mind

is in constant search for a general concept to help comprehend a multiplicity of empirical representations that cannot be determined according to the rules of the understanding – this multiplicity refers to nature as an organic system, beauty and the sublime (Kant, 1790). But this remains to be seen in what follows. For now, it suffices to say that feeling (and sensibility), reflection and judgment appear to be characteristically human.

1. *Feeling: a small genealogy of difference*

Sensation (*Empfindung/sensatio*) occupies a seminal place within Kant's thought. It refers to the «(subjective) modification of the state of the subject» (Kant [1781/1787]: 398-399). Before anything else, feeling is the radical other of the concept, embodying difference, a difference that is and cannot be conceptually grasped nor brought under concepts, not directly at least – even intuition, as an objective perception, is non-conceptual signifying an immediate relation to an object (*ibidem*), a relation that again has to be brought, indirectly, under concepts. Be that as it may, the modification of the subject can refer either to the physical world (sensation) or to the effect brought about by the activity of its faculties (feeling)⁵.

As an objective perception (intuition), sensation (*Empfindung*) anchors our representations to the world of objects or experience (in theory); and as a subjective perception, feeling (*Gefühl*) situates us within the physical and the human world. Feeling may not be blind (as is the case with intuition) but it does need to be cultivated (through the maxims of the healthy human understanding and through ideas), requiring thus guidance. Yet, even the uncultivated or unguided feeling, still retains significance. Unadulterated by interests, be those of self-love or even of Reason itself and its interests, feeling signals not only our individual existence but, what is more, allows us to relate to a common *sense* (emphasis added) that will become, in reflection, a *communal* sense (emphasis added) referring to the human world as such (Kant, [1790]: 173).

In what follows I will first present how feeling or rather our receptivity already situates us in a world beyond, as paradoxical as it may sound, the Ego or the «I». To situate ourselves in a world, be that the physical or the human one, entails already moving beyond ourselves. What we need however is to allow for receptivity and subsequently feeling to come to the fore (unhindered by thought or even reflection, at least at first). What we will find thus is that even in the bare feeling of our existence we can discern ways to move beyond ourselves or at least I will claim so. If we are not to fall prey of our self, a distorted self-interest in our particular existence and nothing else, then we need to move beyond it and to accomplish this we need to see how we are able to situate ourselves within the world, both physical and human.

2. *Don't think; feel*

«The capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations» we read in the *Critique of pure Reason* «through the way in which we are affected by objects is called sensibility» (Kant [1781/1787]: 172). Sensibility is passive, juxtaposed to the spontaneity of the (active) understanding, and it consists in the subject's capacity to being affected not only by objects but, we should add, by itself as well (Kant [1798]: 250). When the subject is affected, it modifies its state (Kant [1781/1787]: 398-399). But modification can refer equally both to the physical (or outer) world and the inner activity of the mind; they both bring a modification to our state. I have on one hand sensations (referring to the empirical world) and the other hand feelings (referring to the activity of the mind). We need thus to supplement Kant's analysis of representation adding, next to the objective, the subjective perception, that is, feeling⁶.

Sensations situate us within the empirical or physical world in a rather straightforward way providing *objective representations of the senses* (Kant [1790]: 91); feelings «*relate solely to the subject*» (*ibidem*), situating us, or so I will claim, within the human world – the way we situate ourselves within the human world however is not as straightforward as is the case with sensations but requires, nay, even demands reflection on our part (a point that I will have to return to later). But before being able to do so, that is, before situating ourselves within the world (physical and human) we feel ourselves or our particular existence, an existence that is «neither an appearance nor a thing in itself (a noumenon) but rather a something that in fact exists and is indicated as an existing thing in the proposition “I think”» (Kant [1781/1787]: 452-453).

In the *Critique of pure Reason* Kant describes the empirical proposition «I think» as follows:

an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., a perception (hence it proves that sensation, which consequently belongs to sensibility, grounds this existential proposition), but it precedes the experience that is to determine the object of perception through the category in regard to time. (*Ibidem*).

This indeterminate empirical intuition is a *sensation*; it thus refers, as a sensation, to the physical world. Yet, in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science (Prolegomena)*, it is qualified as a feeling; it is the «feeling of a particular existent (*Dasein*)» (Kant [1783]: 125). I am not sure if we can assign Kant's incompatible, at first sight, descriptions to a *slip* of the tongue as Yibin Liang suggests claiming that all of Kant's descriptions *rely* ultimately on *sensation* (Forthcoming: 8). In the *Prolegomena* Kant appears to have a clear view of the distinction between a sensation and a feeling where he says that «feeling is merely subjective and must therefore never be attributed

to the object or it is only subjectively valid» (Kant [1783]: 93) and this is again consistent with the relevant passage in the B-Deduction of the *Critique of pure Reason*, where Kant refers to the subjective *feeling* of pressure or weight (Kant [1781/1787]: 252); if a subject feels pressure its feeling is, of course, subjective. What is of course still missing from this account of feeling is reflection⁷.

For the time being however one might wonder: What – if anything – does it mean to feel a particular existence? As a matter of fact, it appears that we feel a lot of things that pertain to the empirical representation of a body – not to phenomena, nor noumena. From the bare feeling of existence to the health of our body (Kant [1798]: 334) and from there to the difference between our left and our right hand, unreflected or bare feeling discloses the representation of a body that is situated in a number of ways within the world. This last point deserves some attention. The connection between body and feeling can be traced back as early as 1768 and Kant's short essay *Concerning the ultimate ground of the differentiation of directions is space*. Kant says there: «Since the distinct feeling of the right and the left side is of such great necessity for judging directions, nature has established an immediate connection between this feeling and the mechanical organization of the human body» (Kant [1768]: 368). The body and feeling become thus the radical difference over and against the concept⁸.

In his criticism against Leibniz and Leibniz's effort to «intellectualize phenomena» (Kant [1781/1787]: 372) or render everything a matter of concepts and conceptual relations, that is, a matter of logic, Kant points to a case, the case of indiscernibles, as an example where conceptual or logical relations will not help us comprehend why two objects, identical in every (conceptual) aspect, are still different⁹. Indiscernibles substantiate Kant's criticism against Leibniz showing that we cannot yield knowledge of the empirical through concepts or logic alone; a further element is required – and this element is feeling in its immediate relation to the body. Although Kant is not yet explicit as to the true ground of feeling evoking two different arguments, one referring to the powers at work in nature, and one referring to the a priori, absolute representation of space, the one the geometer uses, yet, in this last argument, one we can easily discern an idea that will ultimately lead to the introduction of the a priori form of the sensible world in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (Kant [1770]: 373-416) and, subsequently, transcendental idealism in the *Critique of pure Reason*¹⁰. Be that as it may, Kant reintroduces feeling as the subjective ground of differentiation in 1786 and his short essay *What does it mean to orientate oneself in thought?*. This time however there is no mention of a body; only of a faculty of feeling (Kant [1786]: 9).

To be able to discern or rather differentiate the direction of the movement of the stars in the sky, says Kant there, we «also need the feeling of a difference in our own subject, namely, the difference between my right and left hands». Kant calls this a feeling «because these two sides outwardly display no designable

difference in intuition». We can therefore determine already a difference in the position of the objects with reference to our bodies. Kant concludes: «Thus, even with all the objective data of the sky, I orient myself geographically only through a subjective ground of differentiation» (Kant, [1786]: 8). It is worth mentioning that feeling as a subjective ground of differentiation extends beyond geographical spaces to mathematical space as well or space in general (*ibidem*)¹¹.

Already on the subjective level of feeling we find ourselves not only embodied, if I may, but what is more important, as situated among things in the world – all we have to do is *broaden* our geographical notion of orientation, that is the subjective feeling of the difference of my left and my right side, that is my feeling that pertains to my body, to a feeling that allows us to mathematically orientate ourselves in space in general or the physical world. To broaden however one's horizon is to find himself not only situated within the physical world but to a world as «the stage of our experiences» (Kant [1802]: 446), a world that not only includes things but other human beings as well. Broadening thus one's horizon or range means to orientate or rather re-orientate oneself from the particular existence I feel, the «I think», to the world, the physical and human, becoming thus familiar or acquainted (*kennen*) with it (Kant [1802]: 445). It is here or rather in the *Physical Geography* that we start to situate ourselves in the world, before that is we proceed to become part of the human world. *Physical Geography* is thus the *propaedeutic* for becoming acquainted with the world (*ibidem*). In the context of physical geography «we broaden our familiarity with the external world [...]; and, after this, we say of someone that he knows the world, we mean that he knows mankind and nature» (Kant [1802]: 446)¹².

If physical geography allows us to broaden our horizon with reference to the external or the physical world, it is anthropology that allows us to become familiar with human beings:

Contact with people broadens what we become familiar with. Nonetheless, it is necessary to provide a propaedeutic exercise for all experiences of this kind, and this is what *anthropology* does. From it, one gets to become familiar with those things about human beings that are *pragmatic*, rather than speculative. It treats human beings not from a *physiological* point of view, in which the origins of phenomena are identified, but from a *cosmological* point of view. (Kant [1802]: 445)

But if situating ourselves within the physical world is rather straight-forward the same cannot be said about situating ourselves within the human world. Before thus we move on from the physical to the human world, we need to address the dangers of distorting feeling and endangering our place within the world. I am referring to egoism.

3. Reprise: Told you not to think!

In the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic View* Kant describes how «a light dawns upon the child when it starts addressing itself as an “I”; at precisely that moment, the child doesn’t feel or rather it doesn’t just feel itself anymore; it thinks» (Kant [1798]: 240). Addressing however oneself as an «I» distorts the light or the «I», if left *unchecked*, leading thus to egoism. Kant writes: «From the day that the human being begins to speak by means of *I*, he brings his beloved self to light wherever he is permitted to, and egoism progresses unchecked» (*ibidem*).

The egoist, we read in the *Anthropology*, be that logical, moral or aesthetic, proclaims himself as his sole interest, maximizing his self-love beyond any proportion. The egoist is someone who finds it unnecessary either to «test his own judgment against the understanding of others» (this is the logical egoist); or one that «limits all ends to oneself» (this is the moral egoist) or, finally, one «who is satisfied by its own taste and only» (this is the aesthetic egoist) (Kant [1798]: 240-241). In all cases, an egoist will not take into account the judgment of others. What is common in all cases is the prevalence or the priority the egoist places on the *feeling* of self-love – over and against e.g. duty or the moral law (Kant, [1798]: 199).

The remedy is to «regard and conduct oneself as a citizen of the world, without that is considering oneself as the whole world» (Kant [1798]: 240-241). In the same passage Kant speaks of a community of thinking beings describing it as a problem that belongs to metaphysics – not anthropology (*ibidem*). Kant is presumably referring to the «community of rational beings» (Kant [1788]: 82); but what is the case when the issue in question does not refer to a thinking or a rational being but to a way of thinking of a human being.

4. Feeling, the power of judgment and reflection

Feeling acquires its rightful place within the transcendental edifice only in the *Critique of the power of Judgment* – of course Kant has already referred to the moral feeling but it is in the *Critique of the power of Judgment* where for the first time feeling becomes a part of transcendental philosophy in its relation to reflection and judgment. But how can Kant retain its primarily receptive and non-conceptual character while relating it on one hand to reflection – that is an active mental faculty – and on the other to purpose, a concept (Kant [1790]: 67)? The answer lays in reflection: reflecting on feeling leads us to articulate (aesthetic) judgments; but before we articulate a judgment, we already feel «the effect of the free play of our cognitive powers» (Kant [1790]: 122) assigning to this feeling universal validity – Kant calls this effect, *common sense* (*ibidem*). Feeling is now thus reflected, on its way to situating us within the human world.

Common sense signifies the pleasure we feel when the mind is active and this pleasure permeates every aspect of that activity even if it goes undetected (Kant [1790]: 73-74). But pleasure is related to purposiveness; we feel pleasure when we reflect on nature's appropriateness for our faculties, namely, that everything is given «for the sake of reflection» (Kant [1789]: 36) or «of my faculty of cognition» (Kant [1790]: 67). That is, we feel pleasure when we satisfy our need, a need to comprehend nature as purposive:

hence, we are also delighted (strictly speaking, relieved of a need) when we encounter such a systematic unity among merely empirical laws, just as if it were a happy accident which happened to favor our aim, even though we necessarily had to assume that there is such a unity, yet without having been able to gain insight into it and to prove it. (Kant [1790]: 70)

But if we are to account for the pleasure we feel, we need, before all, to reflect on the workings of the mind without an explicit purpose, e.g., nature as a systematic unity or organism as a natural product. In other words, we need to reflect on the workings of the mind without any interest. And it is precisely in this reflection that we secure the a priori principle of the power of judgment in its reflective use, namely, purposiveness (Kant [1790]: 68)¹³.

Disinterestedness disentangles the feeling of pleasure from any interest we may take on the representation of an object, be that a practical or a theoretical or even the subjective interest of agreeableness (Kant [1790]: 94-94) and, we should add, a private or egoistic interest. As an affect the feeling of pleasure discloses the workings of the mind, the interrelatedness of the faculties (Kant [1790]: 122), that is, the play of the understanding and of the imagination, signaling beauty, and the more serious play of Reason and imagination, signaling the sublime. And this play brings about a satisfaction without interest. Pleasure thus:

is not grounded in any inclination of the subject (nor in any other underlying interest), but rather the person making the judgment feels himself completely *free* with regard to the satisfaction that he devotes to the object, he cannot discover as grounds of the satisfaction any private conditions, pertaining to his subject alone, and must therefore regard it as grounded in those that he can also presuppose in everyone else; consequently he must believe himself to have grounds for expecting a similar pleasure of everyone. (Kant [1790]: 96-97)

As the effect of the mind's activity, common sense allows us, besides feeling pleasure in the workings of our mind, to assume a universal voice, namely, in absence of any interest or private conditions, «demand everyone's consent regarding what I find to be beautiful» (Kant [1790]: 99-101). Are we now situated within the human world? The answer is no, not yet at least. Appealing to common sense or the common constitution of our faculties does not situate us

yet within the human world. Although we demand universality and necessity for our claim, still, our self-proclaimed universal voice is rather strange, reminiscent of the voice of the egoist.

We assume a universal voice and demand that all agree with us (Kant [1790]: 98, 101). *Demand* (*Verlassung*) is a rather strong word; what is more, we find ourselves perplexed; almost impatient.

[We] rebuke anyone if they judge otherwise and deny that they have taste requiring, nevertheless that they ought to have it because we could never say that «everyone has his own taste; this would be as much as to say that there is no taste at all», i.e., no aesthetic judgment that could make a rightful claim to the assent of everyone. (Kant [1790]: 98. Modified)

A further element, besides disinterestedness, is needed if we are to claim a universal voice, or rather articulate a judgment of taste and demand consent and it is at this point where the reflective judgment proper takes over.

Kant distinguishes determinate from reflective judgment. The power of judgment is «the faculty for thinking the particular as contained under the universal; if the universal (be that rule, principle or law) is given then judgment determines; if not, it reflects» (Kant [1790]: 57). In other words, a reflective judgment is indeterminate or at least, it is so in its pure workings that an aesthetic judgment discloses. Why is this important? Because even if I demand everyone to agree with me, still I cannot be sure about my claim – there is no determinate rule or concept to determine what beauty is, therefore, I cannot know whether everyone will agree with me¹⁴.

One solicits assent from everyone else because one has a ground for it that is common to all; one could even count on this assent if only one were always sure that the case was correctly subsumed under that ground as the rule of approval. (Kant [1790]: 121-122)

At this point we can move beyond common sense as the effect of the play of our faculties, an effect that we presume common to all, given that we all share a common structure of faculties, and appreciate the uncertainty that the absence of a determinate rule or concept instills within us. If «demanding» requires absolute certainty, Kant's cautious evoking of the *Ought / Should* (*Sollen*) betrays our uncertainty. To be sure; our pleasure is still there, that is, we still feel. What has shifted however is the tone of our voice. We come to realize that we can only request assent because, in the absence of a determinate concept or rule, we cannot *prove* our claim. In other words, there is no apodictic certainty that can accompany a judgment of taste. What is left is to limit the universality of its validity to an exemplary case, put simply, to judge singularly (and thus only *hope* for consent). And this is precisely what allows us to further reflect, moderate our voice and begin to situate ourselves within the human world.

We might still stand fast to our judgment; yet Kant will not tell us anything more. We are like the young poet who if he is to give up his conviction about his poem, that it is beautiful, then he will have to do so with the aid of his own reason. In a rather compassionate passage in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant illustrates this point by attending to what a young poet thinks about his art. It is worth citing it in full:

Hence a young poet does not let himself be dissuaded from his conviction that his poem is beautiful by the judgment of the public nor that of his friends, and, if he does give them a hearing, this is not because he now judges it differently, but rather because, even if (at least in his view) the entire public has a false taste, he nevertheless (even against his judgment) finds cause to accommodate himself to the common delusion in his desire for approval. Only later, when his power of judgment has been made more acute by practice, does he depart from his previous judgment of his own free will, just as he does with those of his judgments that rest entirely on reason. Taste makes claim merely to autonomy. To make the judgments of others into the determining ground of one's own would-be heteronomy. (Kant [1790]: 163)

The young poet, in other words, must come to realize the value (or no-value for that matter) of his art by himself, after years of practicing his judgment without allowing neither the need for approval nor scorn to guide his judgment.

Be that as it may, we are finally on our way of becoming part of the human world or the idea of humanity. We can communicate our feeling, «our inmost self», universally, and become a part of society (Kant [1790]: 228-229). We are learning not only that we are capable to demand a universal voice; nor that we can hope for consent. What we are primarily learning is that we can disagree about taste, that is, that «we all have some sense that it is possible to argue about taste» (Kant [1790]: 214). And with this last sentence we are ready to situate ourselves within culture, the human world proper¹⁵.

5. *Communal sense*

If I can communicate my innermost feeling on the presupposition of a *sensus communis*, that is, an effect of the play of the faculties of the mind, I have to use judgments to express or articulate feeling and this is how I participate in the human world, I articulate judgments (communication and participation constitute the idea of humanity or the sociability of the human being (Kant [1790]: 229). But to participate or articulate judgment I need to moderate my demand and transform it to a simple request, I need, that is, to supplement the *sensus communis* as a feeling of the play of the faculties of the mind with another sense, one that results from reflection proper – I am referring to the *sensus communis* that Kant evokes in §40 of the *Critique of the power of Judgment* (Kant [1790]: 173). The *sensus communis* there does not establish a feeling but rather a sense that

pertains to reflection, allowing us to form a vague idea of abstract notions that pertain to the human world, such as *beauty*, *justice*, *politeness* or even *truth*¹⁶.

The essence of reflection is still at large the same even on this elevated level of the higher cognitive faculties: We are still at a loss, meaning that, there is no determinate concept or rule to determine the content of these notions; we only have a vague sense of their meaning. On this level of reflection however we can find guidance and orientate ourselves beyond our private conditions for judging with the aid of the concrete maxims of the common human understanding. There are three maxims and these are:

1. To think for oneself; 2. To think in the position of everyone else; 3. Always to think in accord with oneself. The first is the maxim of the *unprejudiced* way of thinking, the second of the *broad-minded* way, the third that of the *consistent* way. (Kant [1790]: 173-176)

These are the three maxims that pertain to the communal sense – and not to a sense common to all anymore. Of the three maxims pertaining to the healthy human understanding, it is the 2nd maxim that contributes to the meaning of the communal sense – Kant already describes the communal sense as «a faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (a priori) of everyone else’s way of representing in thought» (*ibidem*); and this is precisely what the 2nd maxim prescribes for judgment. Kant says:

As far as the second maxim of the way of thinking is concerned, we are accustomed to calling someone limited (*narrow-minded*, in contrast to *broad-minded*) whose talents do not suffice for any great employment (especially if it is intensive). But the issue here is not the faculty of cognition, but the *way of thinking* needed to make a purposive use of it, which, however small the scope and degree of a person’s natural endowment may be, nevertheless reveals a man of a *broad-minded way of thinking* if he sets himself apart from the subjective private conditions of the judgment, within which so many others are as if bracketed, and reflects on his own judgment from a *universal standpoint* (which he can only determine by putting himself into the standpoint of others). (Kant [1790]: 175)

First of all, the universal standpoint that I acquire in reflection is indeterminate – there is no determinate rule or concept to guide my judgment. What the above-mentioned maxim offers me is only a guidance or a safeguard against the self-deceit of proclaiming my judgment as objective. In other words, it allows me to reorientate my judgment, from a demand to a request. But, second and perhaps more importantly, reorientation or reflecting on my judgment becomes possible under the presupposition of disagreement. To cite the passage a part of which I referred to earlier in full: «It is easy to see that between these two commonplaces one proposition is missing, which is not, to be sure, a proverb in general circulation, but which nevertheless everyone has some sense of: *It is possible to argue about taste* (but not to dispute)» (Kant [1790]: 214).

We may hope of coming to a mutual agreement regarding a judgment of taste, nevertheless and regardless of realizing this hope or not, regardless even of the suspicion that we are not to realize this hope (but rather that we are to presuppose it as an ideal)¹⁷, regardless of all of the above, it is disagreement that promotes the broadening of our way of thinking or at least, this is how I interpret the 2nd maxim of the healthy human understanding¹⁸. To think from the standpoint of another means thus to appreciate a difference in judgment (why put oneself to a position of another who already agrees with you?). I believe that this is how we situate ourselves within the human world; through disagreement, that is, dissensus and, obviously, a hope of consensus.

Conclusion

What I tried to show with reference to receptivity, both sensation and feeling, reflection and ultimately judgment, is that to situate oneself within the world entails a multi-faceted task of broadening one's horizon.

We can thus imagine a broadening from the «I» to the world with the aid of feeling. The feeling of the «I» allows us to differentiate ourselves as a particular being (*Dasein*) that, however, already finds itself within a world; we already feel the difference in the directions of space with reference to our body, that is, we feel situated in the physical world among things whose place we can already locate with reference to our bodies. What is more, we are receptive of this world of things; not only are we able to locate their place but we also have sensations. In one word, we feel or sense the modification of our state (thus, we already feel the physical world). Becoming thus attentive to receptivity we feel a particular being (our body) and a world (the physical).

At this point lays the danger of isolating this particular being from the world distorting that is feeling. Instead, thus of being situated within the world the «I» runs the risk of proclaiming itself as the world; it runs the risk of becoming self-interested. It is not enough to be attentive to feeling and our receptivity, if we are to remedy for this deformation of the «I»; we need, this time, to reflect on feeling because it is thinking that is responsible for this deformation – not feeling per se. It is through reflection and the aid of the healthy human understanding that we can re-orientate ourselves and find our way back into the world, this time, the human world. And we reflect precisely because everything within the human world is indeterminate.

Thus, even if we possess the map (the system of Reason) and its cardinal signs (Reason's interests), still what we possess is nothing more than an idea or an ideal. These are equally indeterminate, that is, unrealizable as feeling – at least in our world, both physical and human. Nevertheless, even if we might never

secure a determinate rule to determine feeling or the human being for all we know, yet we are expected to pursue the effort. In the meanwhile, we will have learned that we can only disagree with the hope of coming to a consensus, more importantly, we will have found our way within the human world.

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Notes

- 1 For a historical account of the controversy see: Chance, Pasternack [2018]: 195-214.
- 2 This might sound like a bold claim, namely that the critique demands before all transcendental reflection but the demand to delimit the use of our concepts or ideas already presupposes a map, that is, the system of Reason, and a compass, that is, Reason's interests and, obviously, the use of both. Transcendental reflection refers to the use. For this conception of the critique, I rely on the work done by Kaulbach (1966) and Makkreel (2008).
- 3 Kant continually makes use of geographical metaphors; yet geography is not just a simile that Kant uses to map his conception of Reason. Geography is an integral part of his critical project, as Paul Richards says already in 1974. And this has to do with its place as a propaedeutic to becoming acquainted with the world as the *stage of our experiences* (Kant [1802]: 447).
- 4 I am not interested here in feeling or emotion and its significance in Kant's philosophy in general – a significance that I do not doubt. What I am primarily interested is rather feeling as the effect of our interaction with the world and as the self-effect of our own activity, that is feeling as part of receptivity. For an excellent presentation of the multifaceted significance of feeling within Kant's theoretical, practical and aesthetical philosophy see: Sorensen, Williamson (eds.), 2018.
- 5 For an attempt to offer a taxonomy of Kant's use of the relevant terms see Sorensen (2002).
- 6 This is consistent with Kant's efforts to disambiguate the difference between a sensation and a feeling in the *Critique of the power of Judgment* (Kant [1790]: 91).
- 7 Interpreting thus the «I think» primarily as feeling or at the level of an indeterminate empirical intuition that senses and feels, with one word, is receptive, somewhat perplexes Manfred Frank's view that for Kant the «I think» cannot have sensory or emotional states per se. In other words, the equation of the «I think» to the transcendental unity of apperception or self-consciousness is not exclusive (Frank, [2019]: 12-13). As a pre-reflexive feeling the particular existence is a self (*contra* Onof, [2010]: 162), although it is not an appearance nor a noumenon. What is more, far from isolating the self, feeling, or at least so I claim, situates this self within the world without renouncing the particular existence of the «I think». In

- other words, the pre-reflexive refers to the “I” that feels its particular existence or its body, if you like, and the world.
- 8 Angelica Nuzzo characterizes the body as «transcendental embodiment» meaning that the body is the *possibility* of sensibility (Nuzzo [2008]: vii). Her understanding however of the *transcendental* is in tension with Kant’s use that refers to the *transcendental* as «our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible a priori» (Kant [1781/1787]: 6). Although all knowledge does start with experience (as an empirical representation) – and our body is obviously part of *that* experience – experience, however is not for this reason a priori.
 - 9 Kant reintroduces the case of the indiscernibles in his *Inaugural Dissertation* (Kant [1770]: 375) and in the *Prolegomena* (Kant [1783]: 81-82) as well, serving the same purpose, that is justifying the non-conceptual character of intuition.
 - 10 Although it is well beyond the scope of my investigation here, the relation of body and feeling to intuition is not as straight-forward as e.g. Angelica Nuzzo (2008) claims, at least, not as far as the critical and transcendental philosophy is concerned. In 1786 (Kant 1786) Kant is explicit denying that feeling is intuition because he has already introduced intuition as an objective perception, that is cognition (Kant [1781/1787]: 398-399). Feeling refers to orientation while intuition to coordination – direction never enters the discussion about the a priori conditions of the possibility of experience and its objects.
 - 11 It is interesting to try to supplement geographical and mathematical space, that Kant mentions in the 1786 essay of *Orientation* with intuition, as parts contributing to the possibility of an a priori description of the earth as a sphere in space (Kant [1781/1787]: 614).
 - 12 Robert Loudon (2011) describes the relation between geography or the physical world and anthropology or the human world as a *cosmological aim* that we share. He writes: «The cosmological goal is to acquire an overall sense of nature as a systematic and integrated whole, so that we may better find our way in the world and in our interactions with other people» (Loudon [2011]: 142). What I want to stress, in addition, is that receptivity in general, and feeling in particular, already situate us in the world or rather, it is the way we already find ourselves within a world.
 - 13 In this context I would rather translate the term «Zweckmäßigkeit» as «appropriateness». Why? As Kant says, I judge everything as being appropriate for my faculties or for the sake of my faculty of cognition (Kant [1790]: 67). “Purposiveness” already points to a concept beyond appropriateness – something that will of course become explicit in the 2nd part of the *Critique of the power of Judgment*, namely, teleology.
 - 14 Gershon Weiler (1962: 438) offers an impressive genealogy of the meaning of an indeterminate concept referring it ultimately to the «supersensible substratum» that Kant evokes as the resolution to the Antinomy of Taste (Kant [1790]: 215-217). He identifies this as «perhaps the last flight of Kant’s metaphysical impulse». Yet, if we interpret indeterminateness as embedded in reflection, saying simply thus that we lack any determinate rule to exercise our judgment when not determined either in theory or in praxis, then indeterminateness becomes essential in the way we cultivate our way of thinking within the human world, and not a metaphysical impulse.
 - 15 As embedded within the idea of humanity in the *Critique of the power of Judgment* and, primarily, in its relation to feeling, communication becomes integral to reflection and not just an «external criterium for truth» as Katerina Deligiorgi maintains (Deligiorgi [2012]: 83) citing the relevant passage in *The Jäsche Logik* where Kant actually describes “communication” as an *external extension* of cognition and not as an external mark for truth (Kant [1800]: 556).
 - 16 Gershon Weiler, as far as I am aware of, first draws the distinction (Weiler [1962]: 436).
 - 17 Munzel (1998: 209) relates the 3 maxims of the healthy human understanding with an orientation towards the community. But I suspect that what she has in mind is an ideal community or the ethical community and not the human world. Disagreement allows us to situate ourselves within the human world and the public use of reason.
 - 18 Katerina Deligiorgi (2012: 83) argues that disagreement in, what she calls, «its formal aspect alerts us to a possible deficiency in our reasoning» referring to *The Jäsche Logik* (Kant

[1800]: 563). Although I agree with her, I would like to expand Kant's view on disagreement on the transcendental level of the *Critique of the power of Judgment*. To think from the standpoint of others or even under the demand of a universal voice where a determinate rule or concept is missing is to embrace indeterminateness and the possibility of disagreement, as I tried to show.

Subject and World

Aisthesis



Kant and Space as Event

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Abstract. This text aims to highlight the specific practical value of Kantian philosophy starting from its reflection on space. The representation of space determines a reversal of the terms of reference between state jurisdiction and the free will of the subject. The latter is sensitive to any performative instance coming from outside, which represents the very meaning of its passage through historical time as a sentient entity. It is precisely the mastery authorized by the understanding of the abyssal character of one's own existence that opens to a potentially all-encompassing praxis, as freedom to act in the world starting from the imposition of the categorical imperative in the horizon of moral law. The free will of the individual becomes a worldly praxis adhering to the ethical law that identifies the relationship of reciprocal implication between knowledge of man and knowledge of the world.

Keywords. Essence, law, practice, space, understanding.

In this text I would like to outline some themes regarding the relationship between Kant's philosophy and the cosmic idea of space. For Kant it is necessary that the plane of essence precedes that of existence, and this is the core of his answer to the question *What is Enlightenment?* posed by the Lutheran pastor Johann Friedrich Zöllner. Enlightenment represents the exit from the state

of minority from the point of view of considering the subject as a free creator of contents valid for himself, regardless of the recognition of the public horizon to which he refers. The categorical imperative in fact, in the form developed by the thinker from Königsberg, expresses the need for the call to follow the prescription of the intellect which establishes the antinomies, understood as additions of content within the original vision of the world of the subject. The concept of the dimension of a conscience far from the character of ambiguity of the determinism implicit in Nature creates the connection with the reference to God, the source of the questions intrinsic to a pure use of thought. The content of the responsibility of action relegates the pure subject to submission to morality, charging him with holding *with the reins* the pragmatic nucleus of the weak conscience. The relativity of the content of the ratio shapes the implementation of the concept starting from the paradigmatic basis of personality, opening the sphere of duty to the meaning of the presence of transcendental questions by the subject, who sees his intellection grasp the categorical order understood as the architectonics of reason. The objectivity of the thing, pointing to the possibility of expression as a reaction to the foundation of the intelligence of the cosmos, implies the idea of Nature as an opening to the intellection of causality, a rupture of the moral law determined by the foundations of the nullifying action of the awakened conscience, as the cosmic becoming of the history of concepts intrinsic to the modality of the appearance of transcendence. The maxim of morality grasps in the horizon of temporality the rule similar to its insurgence, an expression of the foundation of thought understood as an accident. The knowledge of the subject determines the experience by architecturally constructing the synthesis of the self, emblem of the characteristic of the world understood as a thing in itself opposed to the hylomorphic vision of objectivity. The space of transcendence is open to the instant as a break with the world, a phenomenology of the analysis of the forms of self-love. Truth generates experiences as a crystallization of events within the gradual constitution of the facts of the world, as the generation of the phenomenon that imposes the reference to the experience implicit in the act of thinking. Knowledge of the horizon of the postulates of knowing imposes the rule of the persistence of the cogito understood as a form in itself of the nucleus of the pure intellect, a sensitivity that determines the impulse of reflexivity. The contradiction between phenomena implies access to the stability of the law of the circumstance, which refers to the facticity of the event, the moral law being established once and for all in the quality of consequence of the concrete actions that pertain to individual life. Augustin Berque (2000) states that the relationship between ontology and geography establishes the dichotomy through which the former determines the epistemological form of the latter¹. In clearer terms, it is possible to state that there is no space detectable through mappings that does not have within itself a history that can be investigated from the point of view of its

intrinsic design meaning in becoming. The form of the transcendental essence implies the mathematical configuration of the cosmos from the point of view of the emergence of the ontological nucleus of the world, as the existence of praxis within space. In paragraph §3 of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, Kant outlines the framework of the modifications through which the transcendental interiority of the space inhabited by the subject is exposed to the configuration of the intuitive act of empirical judgment, a representation of individual experience that stands out in the conformation of its determination². The intuitive characteristic of the acting subject shapes the foundation of the aesthetic horizon, outlining intuition as the representation of an individual faculty, the lineament of a sensitivity open to the categorical imperative. The metaphysics of linear time establishes sensitive knowledge as an opening to the external side of transcendence, cognition of reason determined in its representative foundation that links the intrinsic data to the space of the world with the subject identified by the reference to the moral law. The concept of time of sensitivity captures the implicit foundation in the subject that recognizes the core of the practical determination of action, perception understood as an a priori faculty of the pure logical faculties of reason. The transcendental determination of the subjectivity of reason captures the founding nexus of the law inherent in the empirical presupposition as a reflection on the synthesis of the logical relationship in the order of phenomena. The foundation of the transcendental law captures the appearance of the intuition of the object in the profiling of the internal sense, representation of the sensitivity of the content of the knowledge of the logical concept. The determination of the unlimited manifold in itself removes the perception of the extension of bodies from the metaphysical point of view, becoming the necessary condition for the development of the very possibility of the expression of a synthetic judgment. The metaphysical instance in the representation of space permeates the perception of geometric distances, the impenetrability of the body within the rational form of the soul compatible with the discursive concept of general logic. Noumena support the simplicity of concepts from the point of view of the absoluteness of necessity, a universally valid proposition that can only be known a priori, determining the intuition of appearance to the internal sense of the transcendental ideal of a pure science³. The geometric position of appearances delimits the infinity of dimensions from the point of view of an apodictically connoted certainty, open to the enumeration of concepts in the dichotomy between intension and extension, difference of places in the perspective relating to the relationship between space and time. The intension of the concept of infinity is the counterpart of the singularity of spatial universality, which represents an extraneous characteristic of geometric limitation of the analysis assumed as time simultaneous to the horizon of sensation. The metaphysical exposition of space presupposes the latter as a concept that cannot be defined from the point of view of a representation of a

higher degree, its basic characteristic being limited to the giving of a magnitude already determined in itself. External intuition is a sensation that represents the ideality of transcendence, which is an a priori condition of the reality of changes, as Kant reports in paragraph §7 of the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. The German philosopher writes:

[t]ime is certainly something real, namely the real form of inner intuition. It therefore has subjective reality in regard to inner experience, i.e., I really have the representation of time and its determinations in it. It is therefore to be regarded really not as object but as the way of representing myself as object. But if I or another being could intuit myself without this condition of sensibility, then these very determinations, which we now represent to ourselves as alterations, would yield us a cognition in which the representation of time and thus also of alteration would not occur at all. Its empirical reality therefore remains as a condition of all our experiences. Only absolute reality cannot be granted to it according to what has been adduced above. It is nothing except the form of our inner intuition. If one removes the special condition of our sensibility from it, then the concept of time also disappears, and it does not adhere to the objects themselves, rather merely to the subject that intuits them. (Kant [1787]: 182-183)

Real entities are located in different places, and are united in the space of extension of the material object by the infinity of *subconcepts*, which delimit the discursive horizon of sensitive intuition. The expression of transcendence is rooted in the problem of deprivation to which the individual is subjected, who has only himself as a reference, the integrity of the *I think* opposed to the hostility of the world. Reason is impotent in the face of the tendency of reality to postpone the decision regarding the instances produced by the subject, disoriented by the inertia that represents his condition. The inability to orient oneself in the world is understood by Kant as produced by the prejudice of reason that aims at the summit, at the maximum of its own will, clashing with the ordinary postponement that represents the original denial of meaning, blind like the gaze of the mole and the sky closed to the possibility of its shining. The reassuring ordinariness within which historical time passes through the life of man is the sign of the presence of radical evil that is configured as control through the laws promulgated by the state authority of individual nations, which for Kant should unite their legislation within a single promulgation that aims at the union between heaven and earth, the implantation of transcendence in the space of the world. The legitimacy of the modern State is based on the temporal determination of legality understood as legislation aiming at the purposes of human life as they have been shaped and defined over the course of history. In this sense, in *Pragmatic Anthropology*, Kant writes:

[t]he same thing is true of the sensation of hearing when the musician plays a phantasy on the organ with his ten fingers and two feet while, at the same time, he is speaking to someone standing beside him. Within a few seconds, a host of ideas is awakened in his

soul, and every idea requires special judgment as to its appropriateness since a single stroke of the finger, not fitted to the harmony, would immediately be heard as discord. Yet the whole comes out so well that the improvisator must often wish to have preserved in a score many a passage which he has performed in this happy fashion but which he could not have performed so well with real diligence and attention. (Kant [1798]: 7, 135)

The philosophy of Kantian geography is based on the presupposition represented by moral becoming in the horizon of the determination of events thought from the point of view of their moral identification, prescribed by the imperative of the will understood in its purity. Man recognizes space if he settles within it through the act of love interested in the form that nature assumes in a teleological sense, therefore aiming at the finality of objectivity itself. Man understood as a citizen of the world bases his cosmopolitan ideal on the ability to inhabit time virtuously, setting *cosmic* goals to be achieved in the horizon of the search for the good of humanity. Jennifer Mensch (2013) in an important contribution states that the reconduction of the subject to his original place in the world is possible through the knowledge of other entities that have in themselves the character of decision, understood as a characteristic of the contents that shape the individual by imposing an evolution on his behavior⁴. Knowledge of the world is knowledge of the goals that can be pursued by human beings who interact with each other by presupposing shared tasks through which it is possible to contribute to the common good according to one's subjective inclinations. The empirical content of historical facts pertains to the fusion of the concept within the form determined by the founding nucleus of the idea of man as a citizen of the world. The representation of space takes on the role of mediator between the plane of sensitivity and that of the intellect, founding the method of «knowledge of behavior» as a search for an expression adequate to proceed from the analysis of private circumstances through an identification logically linked to the appearance of forms. Temporality passes through places historically placed by the tendency to pacify events, gradually making them acceptable to allow the subject participating in knowledge to imitate through his behavior the immanent determination placed by reason. Empirical geography is the clarification of the purpose that founds the law governing chaos with a delimitation representable by an idea that is beyond question but at the same time present to the eyes of the subject who experiences from within the ideal of the speculative concept of justice. In the *Third Section of Chapter II of Analytic of Concepts* Kant, reasoning on the speculative use of epistemological analysis, reaches the conclusion that the pure concepts of the intellect are in a founding relationship with respect to the world understood in a transcendental sense⁵. The elaboration of concepts is the result of a workshop activity that targets the infinite multiplicity of components that pertain to the human, the different traits that run through the subjective experience emerging as interpretable and recognisable contents. Reason knows

the content of the action from the point of view of the intention that founds the necessity of the internal sense, judgment of the subject that is based on sensation understood as intuition. The origin of knowledge is inherent in the search for the highest good, which obeys the rule of sensitive appearance interpretable as reason constantly given to the human species, foundation of free will in relation to reason. At the moment of indecision, when one must choose between several options, the presence of transcendence is manifested as the logical foundation of the world. The subject's role is to disidentify itself from any form of attribution of personal glory, devoting itself to the investigation of the symbols that narrate the presence of transcendence from the point of view of its character of evidence. The essence of the world is the manifestation of *jouissance* understood as the reduction to infinitesimal parts of its attributes, as a subject that relies on the dialectic of becoming by abandoning itself. The reminiscence of the authentic sense imposed by the apperception of the noumenon requires the definition of a moral law close to the legislation of the State, recognition of the right to adhere to the values of one's time understood as justification of practice, an obligatory track from which it is not possible to deviate. Adherence to the moral law allows the growth of the individual annihilated by history who gradually approaches the legislation of the political foundation, awareness of the objectivity of the task of extinguishing radical evil by working intrinsically to prevent the wearing out of the sense. In paragraph §64 of the *Critique of Judgement* entitled *On the Character Peculiar to Things [Considered] as Natural Purposes* Kant states that the free will of the subject is decisively influenced by the impulses that come from external legislation, understood as motivating contents that modify the ordinary perception of reality⁶. The transcendental method implies the expression of contingency within the horizon of phenomena, a new determination applied to reality founding the interaction between philosophy and individual subjectivity. The substance of evolution cures the subject of the world by determining the modification of the nature of appearance as a response to the solicitations of pure intuition based on a good will, expression of the limitlessness of the flowering of knowledge. As the German philosopher writes:

[i]magination is the faculty of representing an object even without its presence in intuition. Now since all of our intuition is sensible, the imagination, because of the subjective condition under which alone it can give a corresponding intuition to the concepts of understanding, belongs to sensibility; but insofar as its synthesis is still an exercise of spontaneity, which is determinative and not, like sense, merely determinable, and can thus determine the form of sense a priori in accordance with the unity of apperception, the imagination is to that extent a faculty for determining the sensibility a priori, and its synthesis of intuitions, in accordance with the categories, must be the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, which is an effect of the understanding on sensibility and its first application (at the same time the ground of all other applications) to objects of the intuition that is possible for us. (Kant [1787]: 151-152)

The evolution of peoples, recognizable through the analysis of the peculiarity of their somatic traits, tells of the sacrifice and abnegation through which men have carved out a place for themselves in the world, not only from the point of view of the need for survival, but also by allowing subsequent generations to evolve culturally and from a social point of view. Respect for man's dedication represents the degree of evolution of the species, which represents the blossoming of a set of conditions that converge, allowing the human race to fulfill the moral provisions that preside over its development. Werner Stark (2011) states that in Kant there is the theme of the meaning to be given to circumstances from the point of view of the relationship between the way in which they present themselves and the cosmic perspective from which they must necessarily be observed. The sublime expresses the purity of the anguish that grips man when he reflects on the miseries of his existence, the cosmic solitude that finds no other justification in its manifestation. In Kant the precariousness of existence takes on the features of a gamble, of a game aimed at the world and transcendence; precisely because there are no certainties it is necessary to refer to an absence, to a constitutive lack that annihilates the naive individual will.

Marcel Quarfood (2006) believes that Kant's biological teleology expresses the idea that sensations and emotions derive from the biological evolution of the Earth inhabited by man, which in the course of its history has modified the characteristics of human beings through its own geographical phases. The condition of the subject depends on the place it occupies in the world, considered however not from the point of view of its magnanimous originality, but as strictly dependent on the movement of circumstances, which for Kant represent the essence at the same time biological and ontological of reality. The indifference caused by the lack of intentional impulses coming from the outside insinuates in the subject the doubt concerning a conduct of life that from the symbolic point of view would reveal itself to be incorrect, the origin of negative consequences. The intrinsic complexity of the active dynamics of the world is hidden by the apparent scarcity of events that deny the very justification of the appearance of Something opposed to Nothing, as an error of God deprived of the awareness of his nature. Willem McLoud (2018) states in an important study that for Kant, events occur in a determined and predefined order, representing the very substance of reality from the point of view of the permanence of matter⁷. The space of the world weaves the crack in the horizon of asceticism, a formal category of the upheaval of Nature understood as a place where history finds its fulfillment. In Kant, the theme of the inadequacy of the subject within a world that would seem to have no intrinsic purpose is present, determining the appearance of the lack of meaning of its foundation. Criticism applied to geography determines the consideration according to

which the world is self-sufficient from the point of view of the quality of events that occur within places predetermined in their aesthetic connotation. According to Robert B. Loudon (2011), the importance of Kantian philosophy of space lies in the German thinker's explicitation of the need to found a teleology of geography understood as the faculty of determining the relationship between the visible aspect of places and their transcendental function, thus allowing one to orient oneself in thought through the reconduction of the general idea of the world to its essentiality⁸. The fundamental assumption that must animate the subject is the consideration according to which the course of the world obeys a regularity that makes it determined in its harmonious balance, a possibility given to the individual to abandon himself to the flow of events themselves. The interval constituted by the negative experience interrupts the habit of false consciousness allowing the subject to open new roads to transcendence, a subtle boundary of the gaze within the relationship between the *I think* and the world. Béatrice Longuenesse (2023) states that in Kant the very problem of existence is such from the point of view of a cyclical movement that is continually renewed and that sees new and different components added to it, leaving the subject suspended in a condition of absence of references. The right of man that aims at an elevation of Nature goes beyond the empirical consideration of space, leading the metaphysics of historical places back to a description that does not raise the question regarding the conditions of possibility of knowledge itself. The narration of the physical aspects of a people implies attention to the intervention of the metaphysical progress of humanity with respect to the somatic and psychological conditions imposed on man, to what Nature does with him. Creativity is a way of being in the world that is established in place of the normal identity, represented by the permanence of the same limit that accompanies the perception that can be traced back to the identifiability of the *I think*. The ideal of an objectively determined knowledge of the world carries within itself an aporetic foundation deriving from the insufficiency of the demonstration of a truth taken as acquired. What is known of reality is what is not seen and cannot be demonstrated, given the illusory nature of the image that each individual has of the entity. The search for the unknown leads to a further impossibility, which establishes the way of inhabiting the world and his place in it to which man is linked, understood as a citizen of that cosmos towards which he manifests his absence. Alix A. Cohen, in an important text on the relationship between Kant's philosophy and the human sciences, argues that the very possibility of knowledge is strictly dependent on the identity of the subject, on his ability to acquire a determination that allows access to a learning no longer tied to objectively quantifiable cognitive characteristics, but to the specific mode of regulation of categorical determinations with respect to sensitive data (Cohen [2009]: 70-71). The impossibility of jus-

tifying the personal point of view merges with the demands that the world advances, a contrast between the *I think* and the indifferent flow of reality. The appearance implied in the perception of place hides the rule founding the interconnection of the world having as its goal happiness determined from the point of view of the pure use of moral law, transcendental legislation pertaining to a finite intellect such as the human one. The identification of place has to do with the state of mind of the subject which permeates through feeling the representation determined by the thingness of the object, as a difficulty in orienting oneself in a world already formed by empirically shaped events. The foundation of the subject's appearance, indifferent to the passage of time in neutrality, tends to reappropriate its place in the world. A mythical conception of the world is replaced by the rationality of public law, desacralization of the space marked by geographical borders that delimit the historical horizon from the point of view of a war that is perpetually prolonged. It is necessary to return to the origin of the metaphysical identification of space, time in which the traditions of peoples imposed their meaning on the life of man, the fulfillment of the *Copernican revolution*. The imposition of the instant determined by the categorical order of phenomena opens to the understanding of time as possession, as a heritage available to the subject that founds citizenship in the world implicit in the overcoming of the radicality of evil. The time that presides over space opens to a closed system; history is detached from transcendence, does not contemplate it, the philosophy of geography finds itself confined to the timelessness of places unavailable to identification. Europe, which Kant does not name in his text on the Enlightenment, should not be considered a geographically identifiable region of the world, but rather a historical place that arose at a certain moment and is destined to dissolve. History marks the time of communities, geography their peculiar destiny, what happens from the point of view of a relationship with transcendence. The determination of the individual in the world refers to the need to avoid the superfetation of the project substance, difficulty of inhabiting time from the point of view of the correspondence to one's purpose, denial of the categorical nature of the imperative. The conformation of the world obeys the principle of convenience which eliminates the reference to a pure finality, abandonment to the becoming of the moral law which informs events. The positive legislation of the State derives from the mechanical modifications of the circumstances implicit in the conformation of the landscape, a mystery guarded by Nature that language cannot reveal. The failure of solitude finds a direct counterpart within the consideration of the flow of time understood in its being reality, a moment open to the emergence of every possibility that excludes the possibility of prediction. In a pre-critical writing known for the density of its theoretical content, entitled *On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space* (1768), Kant states that

the sensitivity of space is linked to the interior condition of the subject who occupies a place, directly influencing his own actions. The behavior of the individual derives from the history of circumstances that pertain to a given geographical entity, merging with it from an ontological point of view. The discomfort deriving from the precariousness of time prevents the possibility of an individuation, leaving open the question regarding the ontological meaning of space, like expecting something from a calculation of places that is not followed by confirmation. The logic of place infinitely duplicates the dissatisfaction of an inhabited world even before the perception that one has of it, the possibility of organizing oneself to ensure that history proceeds in a different way with respect to its ordinary imposition. The imposition of the circumstance contradicts the character of truth of the world, from the point of view of a will to falsification that precedes the eternity of Being. For Kant the reasons of space derive from the political action that intervenes to extinguish radical evil, trust in reason as a faculty that allows the world to constantly improve. The failure to determine a task that guides the present being within real time is an abjuration of the cosmic character of the categorical imperative that intends the will as an active relationship with respect to the declination of space, narration of places understood from the point of view of their poetic legality. Krausism, a doctrine that takes its name from the neo-Kantian philosopher Karl Krause, is the affirmation of the cosmopolitan character of national states, which in his vision had to associate under a single world government within which the continents represented administered regions. Subjective feeling inspires legislation from the point of view of listening to transcendence, a law founded on the impression of the individual who suffers the tragic foundation of solipsism as a constitution of the *I think*. The dichotomy between the narration of the world and the foundation of events creates subjectivity as a combination of flesh and spirit, the offspring of man from the principle of reason represented by God. Philosophy is the possibility of seeing events happen that are linked to the maxim of human will and that would not occur without it, as the absence of memory of Nature devoid of legislation. Within the horizon of the *Grenze*, understood as a valid a priori protection of the individual elected citizen of the world, it is possible to settle in the intrinsic limit of appearance, as the spirit of human will that founds the intrinsic law of morality in accordance with the presupposition represented by transcendence, understood as a manifestation of the cunning of Nature. In the *General Note on the System of Principles*, within *the Analytic of Principles*⁹, Kant states that the intrinsic limit of human knowledge is determined by the absence of satisfactory references that represent an objective recognition in favor of the subject, who remains suspended within the narrow limitation of the *I think*. Reality that has gone off the rails represented by shared values guarantees the impossibility of adhering

to a task, giving impetus to the ethical duty to experiment with new forms of citizenship of the world. History is recognized as underlying the nihilism represented by submission to a negative ideal of freedom, manifesting itself as an inauthentic narration of radical evil. The world mirrors its own failure with respect to the task of authenticity, raising doubts regarding the positive character of the power of the triumph of Being. A negative history of the inauthentic God, surpassed by other possible powers within the Being dispersed in the anonymity of the lack of appeal with respect to the character of categorical imperative of moral law. In a significant article, Hannah Ginsborg states that Kantian naturalism is founded on the distinction between the world as it appears to the subject and the finalistic representation of space, which hides a motive that the human intellect can only ideally presuppose but not consciously understand. It is necessary to understand that what happens to the subject depends on the identification of his body within space, and not on merits deriving from the spontaneous and casual content of his thought, this deriving only from the matter that composes the form of corporeality. The management of the indifference of time leads back to the scientific nature of research, understanding of a thought that goes beyond the limits of the said, as an attribution of meanings from the point of view of an actualized reason independent of the reference to an origin. The confederation of states at war with each other sees the structure of the union regulated by a world constitution left intact, time of transcendence that stops flowing into the establishment of public law. In conclusion, it can be said that for Kant space represents the determination of the intelligence of History, its fundamental modality of empirical expression.

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Notes

- 1 To learn more about the meaning of the concept of oecumene, see Berque (2000): 157.
- 2 «We can accordingly speak of space, extended beings, and so on, only from the human standpoint. If we depart from the subjective condition under which alone we can acquire outer intuition, namely that through which we may be affected by objects, then the representation of space signifies nothing at all. This predicate is attributed to things only insofar as they appear to us, i.e., are objects of sensibility. The constant form of this receptivity, which we call sensibility, is a necessary condition of all the relations within which objects can be intuited as outside us, and, if one abstracts from these objects, it is a pure intuition, which bears the name of space. Since we cannot make the special conditions of sensibility into conditions of the possibility of things, but only of their appearances, we can well say that space comprehends all things that may appear to us externally, but not all things in themselves, whether they be intuited or not, or by whatever subject they may be intuited. For we cannot judge at all whether the intuitions of other thinking beings are bound to the same conditions that limit our intuition and that are universally valid for us. If we add the limitation of a judgment to the concept of the subject, then the judgment is unconditionally valid» (Kant [1787]: 177).
- 3 For the distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena*, see the *Third Chapter of Analytic of principles* (Kant [1787]: 354-365).
- 4 To explore the theme of the origin of man's place in the world in Kant, see Mensch (2013): 81.
- 5 «We are conscious a priori of the thoroughgoing identity of ourselves with regard to all representations that can ever belong to our cognition, as a necessary condition of the possibility of all representations (since the latter represent something in me only insofar as they belong with all the others to one consciousness, hence they must at least be capable of being connected in it). This principle holds a priori, and can be called the transcendental principle of the unity of all the manifold of our representations (thus also in intuition)» (Kant [1787]: 237).
- 6 «To say that a thing is possible only as a purpose is to say that the causality that gave rise to it must be sought, not in the mechanism of nature, but in a cause whose ability to act is determined by concepts. And seeing that a thing is possible only as a purpose requires that the thing's form could not have arisen according to mere natural laws, laws we can cognize by understanding alone as applied to objects of sense, but requires that even empirical cognition of this form in terms of its cause and effect presupposes concepts of reason. [Therefore] the form of such a thing is, as far as reason is concerned, contingent in terms of all empirical laws. But reason, even if it tries to gain insight only into the conditions attached to the production of a natural product, must always cognize not only the product's form but the form's necessity as well. And yet in that given form it cannot assume that necessity. Hence that very contingency of the thing's form is a basis for regarding the product as if it had come about

through a causality that only reason can have. Such a causality would be the ability to act according to purposes (i.e., a will), and in presenting an object as possible only through such an ability we would be presenting it as possible only as a purpose» (Kant [1790]: 248).

7 For more on this point, see McLoud (2018): 67-74, 78-81.

8 «The kind of empirical knowledge [Kant] is referring to in his anthropology is one that, while experienced-based, emphasizes reflection about the chief tendencies and characteristics of the human species as a whole» (Louden [2011]: 86).

9 «It is very remarkable that we cannot have insight into the possibility of any thing in accordance with the mere categories, but we must always have available an intuition in order for it to display the objective reality of the pure concept of the understanding» (Kant [1787]: 334).

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The Knowledge of the Human Being in Kant's Anthropology: Where Subject and Object cross Paths

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Abstract. Through reconstructing some of the methodologically distinctive features of Kant's anthropology, beyond its pragmatic characterization, the paper aims to provide some keys to situating this discipline with respect to the critical-transcendental project. This analysis outlines a particular kind of normativity connected to anthropological research, a normativity to be understood as a regularity that emerges from the observation of the dominant tendencies of human beings in their relationship with their fellow humans. From this derives a peculiar concept of «comparative universality», which underlies an a posteriori objectivity. This meaning of objectivity, admittedly weaker than that deduced a priori, is nevertheless capable of bringing out the need for concrete conditions—though not sufficient in themselves—for achieving the moralization of humankind, a goal that in Kant's view can only be realized in history by pointing towards a cosmopolitan horizon.

Keywords. Kant, anthropology, objectivity, ethics, teleology

1. Introduction

The present contribution aims primarily to discuss a problem that appears to be pervasively present in Kant's philosophy and more generally

in contemporary philosophical debate, although we will not be able to explore the latter here. The urgency of this question is exemplarily summarized by the intentionally ambiguous nature of the genitive in the quotation chosen for the title «The Knowledge *of* the Human Being» (Kant [1798a]: 231). Indeed, on the one hand, Kant constantly looks at thinking as the human being's characterizing activity, i.e., as the main expression of rationality that is the primary and indispensable point of reference of the philosophical activity. On the other hand, in the anthropological domain the thinking human being becomes a problem to her/himself, since she/he is taken up as the object of philosophical questioning. Kant recognises here the human being as the bearer of an original tension, but at the same time seems to assume this tension implicitly and unproblematically in the various parts of which his properly critical-transcendental thought is composed. Hence one can say—with A. Renaut's effective words—that Kant's anthropology is «nowhere and therefore everywhere» in his philosophy (Renaut [1997]: 57).

Therefore, an attempt will be made to smooth out this apparent contrast by highlighting the structural connection between Kant's critical project and his anthropology and by analysing the peculiar aspects of this complex and often hidden relationship.

Prior to the publication of Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology* in 1997 in volume 25 of the Academy edition, the possibility of any systematic relationship between the critical project and the anthropology had received little attention from interpreters, who tended to regard anthropology as a kind of casuistic collection of descriptions and reflections that are not systematically connected to critical philosophy.

This depended largely on the fact that any attempt to identify a clear epistemic status for anthropology clashed with the wide breadth of the gaze on the world disclosed by the anthropological perspective. In this respect, it seems to us that the methodological contours of this gaze can be effectively clarified if one considers how Kant treats two of the main points of his Copernican revolution when he deals with them on the anthropological plane.

The first element consists in the *normative nature* of reason, which, according to Kant, is the distinguishing feature of human beings (Kant [1798a]: 239). Since its object is the human being, anthropology places reason at the centre of its attention. Nevertheless, anthropological inquiry is a *posteriori*; it starts from the world in which reason displays its own normative nature. Consequently, the distinctive practice of anthropology is an observation targeted to the way in which reason manifests its own regularity in experience, that is, a kind of fundamental observation aimed at the rules of the *way of thinking* [*Denkungsart*].

This leads us to the second element whose anthropological approach helps us to shed light on the nature of this discipline, namely *objectivity*. For while the transcendental investigation delimits the scope of objectivity by means of

the universal laws a priori, in §3 we will see that in the anthropological field the objective validity of the norm must be achieved a posteriori, namely through the actual possibility of sharing its value *in concreto* with other subjects. It thus remains to be seen whether and to what extent this shareability can be linked to transcendental intersubjectivity.

We will try to show that, based on the relationship between normativity and objectivity from an anthropological perspective, we cannot solve the difficulties associated with the architectonic positioning of anthropology in Kant's system, but rather explain the reasons at the core of these difficulties.

2. Observation and Regularity

It is well-known that Kant's introduction of anthropology into the academic program dates to the early 1770s. As a textbook for his anthropological lectures, he used the section on *Empirical Psychology* from Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*.

This suggests an ideal transfer of tasks between psychology and anthropology, which coincides with the overcoming of scholastic metaphysics and which Kant clearly expresses in a lecture from the late 1770s on the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia*, where anthropology is defined as the science of the *empirical* treatment of «thinking nature» (AA 29: 11, 44)¹. In a letter to M. Herz from late 1773, Kant explains the idea underlying his introduction of anthropology in the university by describing it as a «theory of observation [*Beobachtungslehre*]» (AA 10: 146; see also Kant [1764]: 23).

Yet, while the observation that characterises the scholastic *empirical psychology* aims to achieve a truth in the context of a dogmatically understood metaphysics, the goal of Kant's anthropology is practical, and specifically pragmatic, i.e. it attempts to explain the subject's relationships to the world and to other fellow humans starting from the way these relationships can be grasped empirically (Kant [1798a]: 232).

Thus, Kant's clear distinction between his anthropology and traditional psychology relies negatively upon the rejection of the possibility of grasping the essence of the soul claimed by the latter. Furthermore, he positively introduces the feature that shapes his anthropology in an original sense, namely the concept of *character*, which in its deepest sense is understood as a *way of thinking* [*Denkungsart*].

It is indeed well-known that in the *Anthropological Characteristics* Kant defines «character purely and simply» as a «way of thinking [*Denkungsart*]» and distinguishes it as a moral disposition from the «*natural aptitude* or natural predisposition [*Naturanlage*]» and «*temperament* or sensibility [*Sinnesart*]», since the way of thinking does not show «what can be made of the human being», but

«what he is prepared to make of himself» (Kant [1798a]: 384). In a further elaboration of this idea, in the section *On Character as the Way of Thinking*, Kant adds: «But simply to have a character signifies that property of the will by which the subject binds himself to definite practical principles that he has prescribed to himself irrevocably by his own reason» (Kant [1798a]: 389-390).

Thus, if on the one hand the observational method of anthropology does not aim at eternal metaphysical truths, on the other hand it is anything but rhapsodic. On the contrary: Kant's aim is to establish the rules for human behaviour, and to do so he can only follow reason, as the essential ground of human actions. The goal of anthropological observation in the study of the empirical manifestation of character is therefore to identify the modalities that make it possible to trace the subject's behaviour back to firm rules. This both rational and empirical nature of character allows Kant's readers to understand the sense in which the *Characteristic* is to be regarded as the «doctrine of method» of anthropology (Kant [1798a]: 270).

As R. Brandt has aptly remarked, Kant's questioning of the human being does not deal with her/his *essence*, but rather investigates her/him in the dynamic constitution of her/his *existence* (Brandt [2007]: 13).

The normative structure of reason hence does not cease to be the guiding principle of observational investigation, since the observers have no other instruments at their disposal. The core difference with respect to the critical-transcendental investigation is that anthropology is interested in the subjective side of the rules insofar as they are empirically manifested (see e.g. Kant [1797]: 372, [1784-1785a]: 42, [1780ff]: 327; Refl 875, AA 15: 384).

In this respect, the *Anthropology* of 1798 confirms the empirical character of the observation of the inner sense that anthropology is concerned with: «Inner sense is not pure apperception, a consciousness of what the human being *does*, since this belongs to the faculty of thinking. Rather, it is a consciousness of what he *undergoes*, in so far as he is affected by the play of his own thoughts» (Kant [1798a]: 272).

An anthropology that observes the subject based on its faculties and actions as perceived through the inner sense cannot, of course, achieve the universality of the laws derived a priori on a transcendental plane; instead, it is rather characterized by what Kant in the first and third *Critique* defines as the «comparative universality» of the empirical rules obtained inductively (Kant [1781/1787]: 158, [1787]: 137; [1790]: 98).

This special meaning of the concept of *universality* can be claimed *in concreto* as long as it finds no exceptions to its own rule. Nevertheless, it cannot in principle exclude the possibility of exceptions, which the absolute generality of laws a priori can do. This becomes particularly clear in Reflection 4812 (mid-1770s): «Rules *a priori* are laws; *a posteriori* are never without exception» (AA

17: 736). In the published *Anthropology*, such a concept seems to lurk behind Kant's definition of anthropological cognition as «*General knowledge [Generalkenntniß]*»: the rules of this realisation are *general*, but not *universal* (Cf. Kant [1798a]: 232 and Frierson [2003]: 38-39).

The question thus arises as to what kind of objectivity the comparative universality of anthropology can produce, insofar as it is based on an empirically oriented observation of inner sense and aims to recognize the rules of human behaviour that crystallize in the character of the individual.

3. Subjectivity, Objectivity, Nobility

In order to grasp the essential features of the peculiar anthropological objectivity, we need to carefully scrutinize the way Kant considers the *I* since his lectures on metaphysics and anthropology. In the *Lectures on Metaphysics* of the 1770s, he distinguishes between two different meanings of the *I*: *in sensu latiori* and *in sensu stricto*. In the *Introductory Concepts* to the *Psychology of Metaphysik L_I* (mid-1770s), this distinction is characterised as follows: «This *I* is taken in a twofold sense: *I as human being*, and *I as intelligence*. *I as intelligence* am an *Object of inner sense only* [...] This intelligence, which is connected with the body and constitutes a human being, is called *soul*» (Kant [mid-1770s]: 44-45)². The *I as soul* is «determined by the body and stand with it in interaction [*commercio*]» (Kant [mid-1770s]: 45, cf. 73-74).

While the *I as a human being (in sensu latiori)* is exposed to changes that come from outside, the *I in the narrower sense* expresses the consciousness of the self to which all our representations are related (cf. Kant [1775-1776]: 53). This double meaning of the term *I* refers to the claim that we have a double personality, which has been argued since the first course on anthropology. Here Kant establishes the difference between the *I as* «something substantial, simple and persisting», i.e. the soul, and the *I* «as a human being», namely «as alterable» (Kant [1772-1773]: 19), which thus indicates an exposure to external changes: «Every human being has in himself a double personality, as it were, the *I as soul* and the *I as human being*» (Kant [1772-1773]: 19). The latter is the primary object of investigation in anthropology, which therefore considers human beings in terms of both the inner and outer sense.

In this regard, it should again be emphasised that Kant, both in the lectures on anthropology and in the published *Anthropology*, places the treatment of inner sense alongside that of the outer sense, «through which we perceive objects outside of ourselves» (Kant [1775-1776]: 65). It is particularly interesting that here the in-depth study of outer sense consists in analysing and classifying the five senses that humans are endowed with.

Without going into the more subtle or even less clear casuistic distinctions that emerge in the various lecture notes, our study of this topic can principally focus on the published *Anthropology*. Here Kant identifies three senses (touch, sight, and hearing) that are more objective than subjective, «that is, as empirical *intuitions* they contribute more to the *cognition* of the external object than they stir up the consciousness of the affected organ». Taste and smell are instead more subjective than objective, i.e. «the idea obtained from them is more a representation of enjoyment than of cognition of the external object» (Kant [1798a]: 265-266, see also e.g. Kant [1784-1785b]: 370-371).

Kant's insistence on the greater objectivity or subjectivity of one particular group of senses over another introduces a graduation into the distinction between subjective and objective that cannot be found in the transcendental perspective. Yet the anthropological classification relies not only upon degrees of objectivity or subjectivity, but is also characterized by a further, very special parameter, namely that of *nobility*. As one reads in *Friedländer* lecture-ù notes: «The more the human beings can share in them, the nobler are the senses» (Kant [1775-1776]: 68). Once again Kant alludes to graduation, but here he means it in the sense of the most general (though not universal a priori) rules that distinguish the anthropological investigation.

From this point of view, one could argue that the attribute «noble» refers to the possibility of one individual to «easily come to an agreement with others» (Kant [1798a]: 266), which characterises anthropological objectivity. However, the formulations of the lectures in this respect are quite ambiguous and do not allow for the establishment of a firm correspondence between objectivity as nobility in the sense of a posteriori shareability and a priori intersubjectivity in the transcendental sense³.

It is nevertheless meaningful that the topic of comparative universality and the discussion of the five senses return both in the third *Critique* and in the *Anthropology* precisely to show the limitedness of comparative anthropological universality as opposed to the absolute universality that characterizes the transcendental perspective. In the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, Kant comes indeed to characterize this peculiar comparative universality at §7, after having drawn some examples from the five senses, in order to clarify that when speaking of something agreeable we are dealing with a meaning of *subjective* that means irreducibly *personal* (Kant [1790]: 97). The case of what merely pleases, is elucidated through the example of the skilful host, «who knows how to entertain his guests with agreeable things (of enjoyment through all the senses), so that they are all pleased». Therefore, the skilful host can be said to have taste, «but here the universality is understood only comparatively, and in this case there are only general [*generale*] rules (like all empirical rules are), not universal [*universale*] ones, the latter of which the judgment of taste about the beautiful ventures or claims» (Kant [1790]: 98).

This distinction is taken up again in the printed *Anthropology*, in the Annotation to the paragraph *On the feeling for the beautiful, that is, On the partly sensuous, partly intellectual pleasure in reflective intuition, or taste*, again through the example of the convivial situation: «The aesthetic taste of the host shows itself in his skill in choosing with universal validity, something which he cannot bring about through his own sense of taste, because his guests might choose other foods or drinks, each according to his own private sense. Therefore, he sets up his meeting with *variety*, so that everyone will find something that suits his sense, which yields a comparative universal validity» (Kant [1798a]: 338).

Thus, even beyond the subtleties and the sometimes-faltering formulations of the lectures, the anthropological discussion of the five senses gives us an important clue concerning Kant's diverse ways of dealing with objectivity: the projection of the cardinal structures of Kant's transcendental philosophy onto anthropology collides with the limitation that constitutes the essential approach of anthropology, namely an a posteriori observation that allows room for degrees of objectivity. Admittedly, this discipline often ends with the formulation of hypotheses which, like a photographic negative, correspond a posteriori to the results obtained a priori on the transcendental level, but at this latter level universality and necessity are gained, by definition, independently from any empirical component.

Therefore, what marks an insurmountable difference between the two perspectives is the hypothetical and thus quantitative-inductive mode to which anthropology must confine itself, in contrast to the absolutely necessary universality resulting from the deductive approach that characterises critical philosophy.

This means that the objectivity with which anthropology is concerned, the degree of which can be measured, is aimed primarily at determining what an object of observation can be *as such*. Thus, when Kant, in his earliest lectures on anthropology, describes the senses that increase our knowledge as *objective*, he means those senses that allow us to identify as many elements as possible that could *hold as objects* for our cognitive faculty. In this context, *Objektivität* is therefore primarily understood as *Gegenständlichkeit*, i.e. as the property of that which from time-to-time lays before the subject's eyes and can thereby be observed.

4. Anthropology and Morality

The next step consists in broadening the methodological comparison between Kant's anthropological and critical-transcendental approaches to the moral realm.

In this direction, too, character as a *way of thinking* plays a key role, since—the definition of the *way of thinking* made clear—it expresses the self-legislative capacity through which the human being acquires the fullness of the conditions for acting autonomously.

This reminds us of Kant's moral reflection, e.g. at the point in the *Groundwork* where he refers to the empirical part of ethics as a «*practical anthropology*» (Kant [1785a]: 44; see also Kant [1797]: 372). Furthermore, in the same text he claims that «*talents of mind [...], as qualities of temperament, are undoubtedly good and desirable for many purposes, but they can also be extremely evil and harmful if the will which is to make use of these gifts of nature, and whose distinctive constitution is therefore called character, is not good*» (Kant [1785a]: 49).

However, although other passages from the Lectures on Ethics and Anthropology seem to allow this interpretation⁴, R. Brandt warns against identifying pragmatic anthropology itself with the definition of the discipline, which Kant sometimes presents as a kind of integration of his moral philosophy (Brandt [1999]: 14-17).

Among the historical and systematic reasons that support his thesis, Brandt emphasises the notable absence of key anthropological concepts in the moral field and vice versa. In moral philosophy, the relevant passages refer to a *practical*, but never to a *pragmatic* anthropology. Conversely, the words *categorical* and *imperative* do not appear in the lecture notes nor in the printed *Anthropology*. These considerations lead Brandt to conclude that pragmatic anthropology cannot be regarded as the systematically required complementary piece of morality (Brandt [1999]: 16). This is also supported by the separation between the moral and pragmatic realms, which Kant makes clear in the *Groundwork*, insofar as he distinguishes between technical «*rules of skill*», pragmatic «*counsels of prudence*», and moral «*commands (laws) of morality*» (Kant [1785a]: 69).

However, these considerations presuppose a clear idea of what is meant by the adjective *pragmatic*. In this respect, N. Hinske points out that *pragmatic* is the safest meaning associated with anthropology, since Kant insists on contrasting this adjective with many others, such as *speculative*, *theoretical*, *scholastic* and, last but not least, *physiological* (Hinske [1966]: 424). Furthermore, A. Wood refers to the multi-layered meaning of the term *pragmatic*, which on the one hand contrasts with the adjectives *physiological* and *scholastic*, and on the other hand is considered a synonym for *useful* (Wood [2003]: 40-42). *Useful* here includes, in a very broad sense, technical, moral, and prudential knowledge; it is no coincidence that Kant repeatedly refers to anthropology as a doctrine of prudence⁵.

The adjective *pragmatic*, which contains all these elements, is therefore particularly suitable for characterising Kant's anthropology. It is a doctrine which, through empirical observation—which is not uninvolved, but integrated into its context—attempts to look at the human being from the point of view of action. This means looking at the mutual interactions between humans in a worldly context, in search of rules that they give to their own purposeful actions in this domain. Most importantly, these actions are freely determined, and this feature makes it clear that the anthropological perspective, although empirical, is not in opposition to human

freedom: «Lack of knowledge of human beings is the reason that morality and sermons, which are full of admonitions of which we never tire, have little effect. Morality must be combined with knowledge of humanity» (Kant [1775-1776]: 49; see also Kant [1797]: 372; see also Falduto-Klemme [2015]: 25).

The richness and complexity of this framework therefore do not seem to support Brandt's peremptory exclusion of a structural link between anthropology and morality, a link that at the same time does not reduce anthropology to a mere complement to ethics⁶.

At this point, we can draw a preliminary conclusion on the relationship between anthropology and the critical-transcendental project by referring to the famous Reflection 903, in which Kant defines «the egoist of science» as a Cyclops who

still needs an eye that makes him see his object from the point of view of other people. This is the basis of the humanity of the sciences, i.e., the affability of the judgement by which one subordinates himself to the judgement of others [...] The second eye is therefore that of the self-knowledge of human reason, without which we have no rough measure of the greatness of our knowledge. That gives the standard line of measurement. [...] Nor is it enough to know many other sciences, but the self-knowledge of understanding and reason. *Anthropologia transcendentalis*. (Refl. 903, AA 15: 395)

The importance of this reflection resides not so much on the fact that it explicitly connects anthropology with the transcendental—which is undoubtedly interesting, but too isolated in Kant's corpus to form the basis of a well-founded argument—but rather because it places, with unique clarity, the necessary retracing of all human cognition into a broader framework, which is precisely that of the human *latiore sensu*, where alone all cognitions can acquire their sense.

This realm of the human is firstly marked by reason, and this brings us back to the starting point of the paper: since reason is the characterising feature of the human being, the investigation on the nature of the human being, insofar as it is carried out by a human being, can only turn into an investigation of reason on itself.

Reason expresses itself through norms whose objectivity does not consist in a dogmatic apriorism, but in an a priori validity for rational beings, which can also be discovered (even if not deduced) through an a posteriori investigation. And this is precisely the second eye with which anthropology provides every instance of overspecialised knowledge: a constant and fundamental reminder of the need to share, i.e. to socialise, the validity of a judgement with other human beings as representatives of reason.

Of course, the *social* sharing inherent in anthropology has nothing to do with the intersubjectivity through which transcendental objectivity is constituted in the critical sphere. In anthropology, the rational subject is confronted with a multifaceted world, and anthropology—as a theory of observation—aims at grasping the complexity of the dynamics that result from the encounter between the sub-

ject and the world. After having observed these dynamics, the philosopher applying the anthropological method must be able to recognise them, which in Kant's eyes means bringing to light the rules that underlie them.

In the preface to the published *Anthropology* Kant writes that «the expressions “to know the world” and “to have the world” are rather far from each other in their meaning, since one only *understands* the play that one has watched, while the other has *participated* in it» (Kant [1798a]: 232). Commenting on this, H. Holzhey has aptly noted that we humans live in a world that is clearly not just our *place of stay* [*Aufenthaltsort*] but should be understood as a community (Holzhey [1970]: 309). S.B. Kim adds to this that each person has her/his own world [*eigene Welt*] and, depending on what this world looks like, she/he sets her/his own purpose, which she/he must realise by living or playing along with other people (Kim [1994]: 138, see also Jörissen [2002]: 184).

Thus, the anthropological consideration of the human being expresses her/his *being-in-the-world* as a rational individuality capable of moralising her/himself by making her/himself a person, i.e. by making her/his character a good character (Kant [1793a]: 76).

It is therefore necessary to broaden our view of the very world that we have often referred to as a background for the anthropological consideration of the individual. This can help us to better address the central question concerning the nature of the relationship between the anthropological enquiry and the critical-transcendental perspective.

5. *Nature and Providence in History*

It has sometimes been attempted to convey Kant's critical project through the metaphor of a prism, whose sides are represented by the three *Critiques* in their interdependence. What this metaphor does not address, however, is the question of how to define the space that is surrounded by the sides of this prism, namely, the space of human reason. For it must never be forgotten that the three sides are connected both by the triangle at the base and by the triangle at the top. Moving beyond the metaphor: What are the *concrete* approaches to human reason? An abstract consideration of the structures of reason that precedes any application? But only in application can we see these structures, which in itself remains a priori, fully unfolded, so that the question arises as to whether the answer lies in experience, which in this sense should be understood as the place where both the a priori cognitive structures and the practical maxims are translated into action.

The solution to this dilemma is only possible by looking at the human being in the free unfolding of the normativity that characterises her/his reason, which happens on the stage of history, the only place where the manifestation of a norm

and the freedom of this manifestation do not give rise to contradiction. This can be easily demonstrated by examining the two concepts of *nature* and *providence*, which Kant sometimes does not seem to distinguish clearly.

Already in the first lines of the *Idea* of 1784, Kant puts at stake the apparent chaos documented by the human actions that make up history (Kant [1784]: 108). He conceives of these actions as being inscribed in the phenomenal framework onto which reason, as we know from the first *Critique*, projects a teleological order that has the heuristic function of satisfying reason's own need for systematicity (cf. Kant [1781/1787]: 615-616).

Since this teleological system has no constitutive value and refers to the regulative idea of the «highest intelligence» (Kant [1781/1787]: 605-607), Kant does not formulate a hypothesis about the nature of this intelligence: as he writes in the first *Critique*: «it must not matter at all whether you say “God has wisely willed so” or “Nature has wisely so ordered it”» (Kant [1781/1787]: 620).

Although the consideration of teleology is significantly developed in the transition from the first to the third *Critique*, the reasons for favouring the concept of *nature* over *providence* (which is clearly implied in the reference to God) in the study of the mundane order remain almost unchanged. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, indeed, the consideration of the teleological principle internal to nature has an analogical character, i.e. such a principle allows us to consider nature *as if* it had been teleologically designed by a higher intelligence, but without demanding the admission of an actual transcendent causality (cf. e.g. Kant [1790]: 254-255).

If we bear in mind that the *Idea* represents a theoretical-speculative model, then it immediately becomes clear that Kant's conception of the term *nature* in 1784 is to be read precisely in a teleological and regulative sense. This holds for the sense in which human *natural* predispositions [*Naturanlagen*] have to be understood, as well as for the «teleological doctrine of *nature*» (Kant [1784]: 109). Through these expressions Kant means a nature, which «*has willed that the human being should produce everything that goes beyond the mechanical arrangement of his animal existence entirely out of himself, and participate in no other happiness or perfection than that which he has procured for himself free from instinct through his own reason*» (Kant [1784]: 110). As a consequence, philosophical activity itself, as an expression of the human character, i.e. reason, has the duty to promote a speculation that recognises and promotes moralisation as the goal of humanity (Kant [1784]: 118).

The (regulative) idea according to which our freedom *can* unfold in nature allows us, despite contingent limitations, to present as a system what would otherwise appear as a purposeless aggregate of things, namely human actions. At the same time, the problematic nature of history lies precisely in the fact that the objects onto which theoretical reason projects a teleologically orientated order

are not phenomena among others, but those human actions in which a freedom is expressed that is incompatible with any mechanical necessity. Now, it is understandable that here we are not dealing with a nature that is deterministically pointing towards a predetermined goal, but with an order that *can* be rationalised and is thus *potentially* in harmony with the freedom of rational beings.

This becomes particularly clear in the last lines of the *Idea*, where Kant refers to the «consoling prospect», «in which the human species is represented in the remote distance as finally working itself upward toward the condition in which all germs nature has placed in it can be fully developed and its vocation here on earth can be fulfilled» (Kant [1784]: 119). Immediately afterwards, Kant affirms that in this context it would be more correct to speak of providence rather than nature (*ibidem*).

This should not be taken as an *en passant* remark, since Kant repeatedly uses *providence* alongside *nature* or, as here, even states that he prefers the former term to the latter. Nevertheless, the term *nature* is used more frequently than *providence*. Take, for example, the essay *On the Common Saying*:

For only from nature, or rather from *providence* (since supreme wisdom is required for the complete fulfilment of this end), can we expect an outcome that is directed to the whole and from it to the parts, whereas people in their *schemes* set out only from the parts and may well remain with them, and may be able to reach the whole, as something too great for them, in their ideas but not in their influence, especially since, with their mutually adverse schemes, they would hardly unite for it by their own free resolution. (Kant [1793b]: 307)

In this moral context, Kant is not referring to a providence that alludes to an otherworldly dimension, but to the need for the unconditional totality that human beings can only strive for within the regulative horizon that is opened up to them by their own reason, without the powers of their limited understanding allowing them to achieve it. Here, as at the end of the *Idea*, providence is thus configured as nature from the point of view of the human moralisation path, which leads human beings to overcome individual limits in the direction of a ‘*civil constitution*’ and then a ‘*cosmopolitan constitution*’ (*ibidem*).

Providence should therefore always be read in connection with Kant’s regulative conception of nature, but with the crucial difference that in this case it is about the possibility of determining the conditions for the realisation of morality on earth. Such a realisation proceeds from human freedom, which cannot be neglected in favour of an intervention breaking through the natural order.

It is indeed «not in the nature of the human being to relinquish his power by choice», and only «in pressing circumstances», that is, based on the awareness of one’s own powerlessness, «it can be considered an expression not unbefitting the moral wishes and hopes of people», to expect the conditions for the realisation of one’s own moralisation from a providence conceived in this way (Kant [1793b]: 308).

P. Kleingeld suggests that Kant basically uses the term *nature* when he means the order that reason projects onto the phenomenal dimension in its theoretical use, while *providence* denotes the cause of this order, which the moral side of reason must postulate when it implies the conditions for the possibility of moral action in the world. But Kleingeld herself warns against a simplistic division of the areas between the two terms (Kleingeld [2001]: 218)⁷.

As a counterexample, one can refer to the section *On the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace* in the essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*, where Kant employs the term *nature* several times, although he clearly examines the question of progress from a moral and legal point of view (Kant [1795]: 331-337). There is thus an apparent asymmetry whereby *providence* would only occur in the moral realm and not in the theoretical one, and *nature* could be legitimately used in both contexts. Indeed, as previously mentioned, on the one hand it is clear that the regulative sense of teleology projected onto nature by theoretical reason is intended to satisfy the need for systematicity of reason itself, and therefore does not require an actual reliance on the transcendent. On the other hand, Kant argues that the standpoint of the moral agent, insofar as it is based on the noumenal dimension of freedom, must postulate a transcendent cause of the mundane order, thereby alluding to the need to use the concept of providence.

In the texts mentioned above, however, which are concerned with the possibility of a human's moralisation in this world, the reference to this providence is *added* to nature, but providence here does not look away from nature. This results in a conception of providence as a way of understanding nature as a *possible* development of the original human predispositions (Kant [1798a]: 423-424). Lacking proofs for the impossibility of moral progress in the world (Kant [1793b]: 306), it is legitimate and even our duty to work toward promoting the conditions for moralisation based on our own predispositions, i.e. our own *Bestimmung* or, in anthropological terms, our own character as human beings (Kant [1786]: 172-175).

As Kant makes clear in the *Conflict of the Faculties*, individuals have no choice but to follow a «negative wisdom» by making war – the main obstacle to morality – gradually disappear. Here he contends that the hope for a positive human progress can only be expected on the condition of «a wisdom from above (which bears the name of providence if it is invisible to us)» (Kant [1798b]: 308). With this expression he means the voice of supra-individual reason, which implies moving beyond the perspective of the individual towards legal-political institutions, even though, as we shall see, these institutions in turn have an ideally provisional function, whose target is on the achievement of a cosmopolitan society.

In this framework, then, anthropology cannot be the foundation of the prism on whose sides the three faces represented by the *Critiques* are grafted, because its investigation is not rooted in the a priori dimension proper to transcendental

domain. Nor can it descend from above, like a sort of fundamental anthropology that claims to *disclose* the essence of the human being.

Thus, the task pursued by anthropology ultimately consists in providing the overspecialised scholar (the Cyclops) with a second eye, which can now be better identified as a *discipline* in the Kantian sense of the word. Such a *discipline* means a guide for the only possible protagonist of the moralisation path, namely the human *species*. Indeed, while the individual grasps the necessary openness towards this path as a desideratum, in her/his attempt to achieve it, she/he comes up against the limits of her/his own finitude (see Kant [1798a]: 425-429).

6. *Final Remarks: Normativity and Teleology*

At this point we can perhaps recognise a critical reappropriation of anthropology, where the genitive is to be understood in the objective sense: namely, the critical philosophy that reappropriates anthropology without distorting it whatsoever.

This is articulated in two steps. The first is the gradual establishment of the pragmatic orientation in the science of the human being that calls for a cosmopolitan knowledge, which replaces the idea of a world order as a unified background for the knowledge of nature and human being. This closely resembles the meaning of Kant's distinction between *to know the world* and *to have the world*.

As previously mentioned, however, Kant's reflections go far beyond the pragmatic approach of the 1798 text, and the second transition is made possible precisely through criticism. For on the one hand, the results of the critique of reason finally seal an investigation of the human being released from the dogmatic image of a given world order. On the other hand, the critical turn and the project of a philosophy that perceives itself as an architectural science of human's transcendental structures lead to an idea of the totality, in which anthropological research finds a specific place.

This place can be understood precisely as the result of a normative and teleological path. Indeed, since the worldly order holds as a necessary (but still insufficient) scenario for the development of human predispositions, we need the secularised providence described in the previous section. Such a providence enables us to look at history as a process along which cosmopolitan law, lacking the coercive force of state law, can establish itself as a natural tendency of the human species. Here the whole distance between the objectivity of the natural sciences [*Naturwissenschaften*] and that of the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*]-in the Diltheyan sense of the terms-can be aptly assessed. For on the one hand, history, as the quintessential representative of the human sciences, cannot aspire to the absolute objectivity achieved at the level of the natural sciences. But on the other hand, this weakness of the human sciences can be seen as a strength precisely from an anthropological perspective, because it claims that any approach

to the knowledge of natural objects, even the most methodologically rigorous, is unavoidably mediated by human action.

In this way, the necessity of a «history a priori» (Kant [1798b]: 297) can be recognised in the form of the mentioned secularised providence, and conceived of without any contradiction to nature: this gives way to the widening of the horizon of human moralisation. Yet this relies upon the anthropological analysis which lets human action be considered as an expression of that freedom which distinguishes humans from every other animal on earth. Kant emphasises this role of anthropology in the service of «a history of humanity in the whole of its vocation» in his answer to K.L. Reinhold's critique to his review of Herder's *Ideen*. The grounds for a human history, capable of expressing the whole human vocation may «be sought neither in metaphysics nor in the cabinet of natural history specimens», but rather «solely in his [human] actions, which reveal his character» (Kant [1785b]: 134).

In this sense, the anthropological *way of thinking* expresses reason not as something innate that develops independently of our will, but as a predisposition that requires our free choice in order to direct our actions towards rational ends. In other words, anthropology allows us to find sufficient elements in the empirical course of human existence to maintain that our actions *can* be traced back to an a priori normativity, thus fostering a legitimate hope of achieving our ultimate end.

Yet this is not just about a hope that is intended to reassure us. Rather, hope has a deeper meaning in the structure of our reason. Consider the second section of the *Canon of Pure Reason*, devoted to the *Ideal of the highest good as a determining ground of the ultimate end of pure reason*. Here Kant refers to the famous three questions «What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?», and defines the question concerning hope as «simultaneous practical and theoretical» (Kant [1781/1787]: 677). This can be understood in the sense that «all hope concerns happiness» (*ibidem*). However, it could also be read with respect to the relationship between practical-pragmatic law and moral law: the former «advises us what to do if we want to partake of happiness», whereas the latter «commands how we should behave in order even to be worthy of happiness» (*ibidem*).

Such an investigation into the *determining ground of the ultimate end of pure reason*, in which hope plays a central role, is further systematised in the *Architectonic of Pure Reason*. Here Kant contrasts a «scholastic concept» of philosophy, which is incapable of grasping the moral goals of humanity, with his own «cosmopolitan concept [*Weltbegriff*] (*conceptus cosmicus*)», whereby philosophy is understood as «the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason (*teleologia rationis humanae*)» (Kant [1781/1787]: 694-695)⁸. The philosopher who follows the *conceptus cosmicus* is «the legislator of human reason» (Kant [1781/1787]: 695) and, as such, has only «two objects,

nature and freedom» (*ibidem*). According to the *conceptus cosmicus*, systematic philosophy therefore aims «to bring together the theoretical and the practical in the legislation of human reason» (Deligiorgi [2017]: 690), but Kant specifies that such a pattern lies «only in the idea» (Kant [1781/1787]: 695).

As can be seen, philosophy in the *conceptus cosmicus* alludes directly to the role of hope. Indeed, history becomes the natural framework in which the «essential end» can be reached. Consequently, the possibility that nature and freedom can «ultimately» converge in «a single philosophical system» requires an enquiry into the conceivability of the way to attain these ends in history (cf. Kant [1781/1787]: 695).

Certainly, this research employs the tools of anthropology and has history as its own testing ground, but its a posteriori nature does not allow it to prescribe any content. Thus, anthropology can only set the stage for the effective application of the transcendently determined *laws* of reason to the empirical situations in the dimension of the mundane. This step should enable the philosopher to «exhibiting an otherwise planless *aggregate* of human actions, at least in the large, as a *system*» (Kant [1784]: 118).

Here the critical reappropriation of the anthropological perspective is accomplished as a vehicle for the construction of a historical horizon, in which the human being's ultimate purposes can be recognised as *achievable goals* only for humanity as a species. Here, then, the «mechanism of nature» is revealed, which anthropology outlines in its concrete mode of operation by providing reason with tendential *rules* concerning empirical paths, to be incessantly walked, in order for reason to affirm itself in history.

As we mentioned at the end of the previous section, if this goal were reached, what has proven to be necessary based on anthropological observations, namely the external coercion of state law, would also become superfluous, since «all the machines that served as scaffolding must gradually fall away when the edifice of reason is erected» (Refl. 1415, AA 15: 616).

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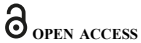
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Notes

- 1 In case the quoted Kantian text is not translated into English, we provide the volume and page indications of the Academy edition.
- 2 See also the passages in which the soul is defined as an «object of inner sense» (e.g. Kant [1781/1787]: 698; *Philosophische Enzyklopädie*, AA 29: 39; Refl 4863, AA 18: 13; Refl 6315, AA 18: 619).
- 3 For a summary of these oscillations see Lorini (2023: 63).
- 4 See, e.g., Kant [1784-1785a]: 42, [1784-1785b]: 345, and *Moral/Mrongovius I*, 27: 1398.
- 5 See e.g. Kant [1775-1776]: 47-48, [1784-1785b]: 344. Cf. Wilson (2016). On the relationship between the *pragmatic* and the doctrine of prudence, see Kant [1781/1787]: 677-678.
- 6 In recent decades, an important reappraisal of the structural relationship between Kant's anthropology and ethics has been proposed by R.B. Louden (e.g. 2000).
- 7 See also Kleingeld (2005: 122-125).
- 8 See also Kant (1789: 300), where the contrast is between philosophy „*in sensu scholastico*” and „*in sensu cosmopolitico*”.



Kant and the Spectre of War

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Abstract. The aim of this paper is to arouse suspicion about the latent meaning and scope of Kant’s essay *Towards a perpetual peace*, regarding his idea of an abstract equality, which can begin to annul *individual* men, different from each other (each differing even from each other, within each other), in the name of an imaginary Man *kath'exochén*: a Free Being, Equal, Subject to the Law. Subject, of course, to a Law that he repeats and recites over and over again: Freedom, Equality, Subjection.

Keywords. peace; war; equality; Kant

Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli
Terentianus Maurus

Who could reject the apothegm proposed as a *motto*, when it comes to *Towards Perpetual Peace*, the Kantian opusculum of 1795? In spite of capitalism and imperialism, in spite of world wars, in spite of the so-called Cold War with its balance of terror and, worse, its bloody renewal in the camps of Ukraine; in spite – and going to the other extreme – of genocides, once tribal and now exercised by a – let us say – theocratically governed democracy; despite all this, we

tell ourselves and repeat to ourselves, like a mantra, that the coercive power, the *Gewalt* concentrated in this text must be formidable, since it has been able to resist and even overcome, overbearing, the very hard trials of two hundred and thirty years of villainy and atrocities¹.

On the other hand, the important thing – it seems – is not whether or not Kant is up to the times, or whether the times are up to Kant (as if it were a matter of bloc politics), but whether we can apply the *heuristic* idea of *common* – and even *communal* – reason in the Kantian sense of public and free debate, overthrowing all sacredness and all majesty (thus also and above all philosophical texts in which it, *reason*, is presented as the guarantor of all truth), in order to prevent the *transcendental* idea of reason from becoming an infallible and valid supreme tribunal for all people, all places and all times.

The problem is that both ideas of “reason” – as free debate and as supreme court – coexist in Kant and make it difficult for us to have a mutually beneficial dialogue with his texts. For if it is true that *habent sua fata libelli*, it is even more true that the full sentence (by Terentianus Maurus, 2nd century AD) reads: *pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli*. If we were to keep only the last part (the well-known part), we would have the content, the timeless meaning of the book that decides its historical fate. On the other hand, the first part of the sentence *relativises* this idea, in accordance with the hermeneutics of reception. So the adage would go something like this: “As books are grasped by the reader, so will be their fate”. It will be necessary then, however difficult it may be, to keep the two points together, in order to escape both *dogmatism* and *relativism*.

On the one hand, it is to some extent true that Kant is close to dogmatism (not dogmatic method!) when it comes to cognitive respect or pure ethics, as the first two *Critiques*, with their corresponding “sciences”, the *Metaphysics of Nature* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, attest. On the other hand, the philosopher wrote both a *Prolegomena* and a *Foundation*, which could be seen as propaedeutic texts, preparing the ground in the empirical (be it physics or customary morality) so that it can then be fertilised by the *ditio*, be it transcendental or metaphysical. But, if this is so, where will we then find the intermediate link?

Between the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the link would be represented – from the transcendental point of view – by the *Critique of Judgement*. In it, the reflective judgement serves as the proto-judgement at the basis of every determining judgement, whether it be a constitutive principle of the experience of the understanding or a categorical imperative of the maxims of the will. But what could be the mediator between the two types of *metaphysics*?

1. From Nature to Morality (in an ascending sense) will be mediated by the *philosophy of history*, whose protagonist is *Cultur*, in continuous evolution, and

whose definition is: «The productive realisation [*Hervorbringung*] of the aptitude of a rational being for any kind of ends in general (thus in the use of his freedom)». With regard to its essential, teleological value, for Kant it is *Culture*: «the ultimate end that one has reason to ascribe to nature in regard of the human species» (Kant [1790a] §83: 431; eng. 299). Now, the fundamental characteristic of Culture is the inequality between men, which engenders (in an expression borrowed from the Augustinian *City of God*) the «splendid misery [*glänzende Elend*]», produced by those who devote themselves to the «less necessary parts» (but for that very reason more worthy and free; [1790a]: 432; eng. 299) of social evolution: science and art.

The point is that this takes place only when – as in Aristotle – a development (read also: an *imbalance*) has been reached, that allows the “Sons of the Master-Warrior” (to use the Hegel of the *Phenomenology*) to devote their *leisure* to such lofty pursuits. Before, at the beginning of history (and of every particular history), there is always *savage*, lawless *violence*. Not without reason, however hidden it may seem at first. For such *human, all too human violence*, is “necessary” to tear men, still considered in *statu nascendi* (that is, as animals) away from their stepmother, Nature (see [1788]: 146; eng. 257). But, on the other hand, it is also necessary for man, when forming collectively a people, to come to disavow (Kant points out long before Freud of *Totem and Taboo*) the supposed common father (thus considering the subjects themselves as *congeniti*). The reason for this double rejection is clear. Indeed, on the side of the “stepmother”, men are subjected to all sorts of hardships, culminating in war. On the side of the people, they are subjected to the despotism of the Autocrat, against whom they will necessarily rebel, if they want to be truly *free* men, because in this pre-civilised state there is still no law (what reigns is, at most, reverential fear: Sacredness plus Majesty, before the one who pretends to be the descendant of the Founding Father). Hence the natural state of men is conflict, war (lawless savages). Incidentally, it was the “natural” sorrows that led them, first, to unite as a People and to invent a common Father: a sovereign from whom the present one would descend.

On the contrary, the *civilised* principle of the (*eschatological*) end of history is... violence as the guarantor of law (it is both significant and suspicious that the German term for “lawless violence” and “coercive power” is one and the same: *die Gewalt*). Speaking still mythically, it can therefore be said that this guarantee rests on the recognition of a *common mother*, as the embodiment of universal reason on earth: the Republic or *natio* (the national state). On the other hand, one can well guess that the true father is “God”. And indeed, at the end of history, “nature” will eventually reveal itself as *Vorsehung*, as is clear from the Kantian equation: «Such a *justification* of nature – or better, of Providence [*Vorsehung*] – is not an unimportant motive for choosing a particular point of view for considering the world» ([1784]: 30; eng. 119). For it is only in the republic that the realm

of ends can be established as, in turn, a true and definitive *res publica* (*respublica noumenon*: see [1798b]: 91; eng. 306). Such would be Kant's confirmation and at the same time transcendental correction – neither immanent (Marx), nor transcendent (Bossuet) – of the two Augustinian cities.

2. From Morality to Nature (descending path) it will be the law that will act as a mediator between the two metaphysical extremes. The problem now lies in the fact that, coming from reason (a factor of unity) and not from nature (a factor of multiplicity), law *ideally* advocates the equality of citizens, subject to the common law represented by the sovereign, whereas culture *factually* establishes, as we have seen, inequality. This is why a *tertium quid* is finally necessary, in which culture and law are knotted in chiasmus. This third (an application of reason which is at the same time a prudent consideration of the natural passions of men, especially of princes) is *politics*. Here too a story is told (Kant tells us): from continuous wars (of extermination, rapine and conquest) as the natural end of Peoples, and then as a means of realisation of States (*la raison d'État*), to positive *peace* (obviously, it must coincide – they are convergent paths – with the development of Culture) in the Republic, *ad intra*, and in a Federation of Republics *ad extra*, tendentially ecumenical. The driving force of this true “arrow of history” would be the so-called *revelatio sub contrario* (so much exploited later by the Romantics). In any case, the evils brought about by the natural tendencies of the princes, on the one hand, and by the natural tendencies of the bourgeoisie (the *Handelsgeist*), on the other, (since both politicians and merchants want to dominate the world) will have to be corrected mutually, according to the demands of Practical Reason.

And finally, in the centre and as the cordial centre of Politics, shines our *libellum*, this guide that leads us – *velis nolis* – *Towards perpetual peace*.

But now that we have reached the *locus naturalis* of our work by means of a certain *regressus transcendentalis*, we might ask, recalling the initial *habent sua fata libelli*, about the “destiny” of the work. For the time being, it is clear that even if this cannot depend solely on the *readers' grasp*, but also on the rational potential (not strictly “logical”, however, but rather *dialogical*) contained in the text in the form of textual incitements, this potential, these incitements are deployed (and are more easily accessible to us) in the two current readings, extremely opposed, of the Kantian opusculum.

One is clearly *condemnatory*, although it does so in an indirect way, i.e. not by focusing on Kant and his work, but on the consequences of it, in a negatively exemplary way. This is Frantz Fanon's (1963) or Edward Said's (1996) reading of European enlightened culture – or ideology? –, which would have covered up its systematic absorption of Third World goods and lives through the “proposal” of its *superior* and emancipatory culture, thus

adding to colonialism an underhand *cultural imperialism*, passing off as *ecumenism* and *the pursuit of perpetual peace* an obvious *Eurocentric* hegemony. The other reading, on the other hand, followed by the majority of Kant's interpreters and by various philosophers and politicians (*ça va sans dire*), is openly laudatory, celebrating Kant's proposal of *enlightened pacifism*. Such is the highly influential position of Ottfried Höffe, for whom: «Kant [...] defends a peace that is as global as ecumenical, a peace that is universal in both temporal and spatial terms» (Höffe [1995]: 15). In this respect, it should be noted that what is relevant in this case is not so much the fact that the former provides abundant reasons to attack, if not directly Kant, then the *Kantian idea of Europe* (see Tully [2002]: 347 ff.), but the surprising fact that the latter (an illustrious “professor of philosophy”, not a “committed intellectual”) feels obliged to *defend* Kant.

What has happened? On the surface at least, what has happened is clearly a rebellion – not very “Kantian” – of experience, of a *damaged* – not to say “badly wounded” – historical present, against the dictates of reason².

What is most striking in this respect, seen from the most pressing current situation, is precisely that the *three definitive articles* (derived from pure reason, which consequently and unappealably demands their fulfilment) seem to have been effectively achieved, at least reasonably (as is *logical*). Let us recall that these famous articles establish the need to:

1° A *republican Constitution*, with its three features: freedom for those who abide by it, as men; subjection under the law, as *subjects*; equality before it, as *citizens* (see Kant [1795]: 349; eng. 322);

2° A *Federation of free peoples*, as a *substitute* for an impossible – and even undesirable, after the experience of the *Terreur – Weltrepublik*, which, if imposed, would oscillate between despotism and anarchy (see [1795]: 354; eng. 325);

3° *The right of hospitality*, as an intermediate element between colonialist interventionism and the “closed commercial state”, which Fichte would advocate five years after the pamphlet (see [1795]: 357; eng. 328).

It is easy to see that the three articles are intended to underpin the three usual areas of law: civil, international (*ius gentium*) and cosmopolitan. And their complete fulfilment should lead to a definitive and *positive* peace, based on equality (derived from the first article), concord (according to the second) and *commercium* (according to the third).

Now, as the very prudent Kant points out, this peace should never be achieved without giving some satisfaction, however precarious, to the six *preliminary articles*, inasmuch as these, taken from experience (in any case, teleologically oriented), must be the *conditio sine qua non* of peace, since it is those articles which establish a *negative peace*; this is why their statements are also negative, whether they are *prohibitive laws* (i.e., mandatory) or *permissive laws* (to be

applied according to the circumstances). Well, it is scandalous that, today as in the past, none of them have been complied with at all, nor are there any rational indications of it. Let us briefly recall these laws:

A) *Prohibitive*

Art. 1° – *Mental reservation* – A peace treaty concluded with the mental reservation of certain motives capable of provoking another war in the future is not to be considered valid (see [1795]: 343; eng. 317). Or, more briefly and classically: *pacta sunt servanda*. In this respect, suffice it to think – *a sensu contrario*, and without being polemical – of the oscillating elections in Iraq (30 January 2005), between US imperialist interests and the obvious “mental reservation” of the religious Shiites, who send their faithful to vote in order to “democratically” sanction a regime that, as in the Iranian Shiite “revolution” (or in the frustrated one in Algeria), would begin by overthrowing the system that has brought it to power.

Art. 5° – *Against interference in internal affairs* – «No state shall interfere by force in the constitution and government of another state» ([1795]: 346; eng. 319). Just a few cases. On the Russian side: the annexation first of Chechnya, the conflicts with Georgia and Ossetia, and the invasion now of Ukraine, with foresee able extension to Moldova and Transnistria (see Duque [2022]). As for the United States, long-standing interventions – probably supported by the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 – in its *backyard* have been numerous: the almost simultaneous occupation of Haiti in 1915 and the Dominican Republic in 1916 (repeated fifty years later), Grenada and Nicaragua; not to mention the Iraqi attempt in 1990 to annex Kuwait, which – through the 2001 attacks – eventually led to the US invasion of Iraq (and Afghanistan) in 2003, thus doubly fulfilling the «bagatelle» or «*peccatillum*» denounced by Kant: «to devouring a *small* state, if a *much larger* one presumably derives from it a greater good for the world» (Kant [1795]: 385; eng. 350), etc. Or, from France: Chad, Ivory Coast, etc., etc.

Art. 6° – *Dishonourable stratagems* – «No state at war with another should allow itself to use hostilities which make mutual confidence in future peace impossible» ([1795]: 346; eng. 320). All the stratagems enumerated by Kant (*percussions, venefici, perduellio*, etc.) and many more that neither he nor his time could have imagined are now commonly employed, thus turning the state of exception into a *normal* state (as Benjamin [1974]: 697 already feared, according to Thesis VIII of *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*).

Against the Geneva Convention, and against the mere sentiment of human dignity, these stratagems have been and continue to be used in times of war: poisoning by Russia, chemical weapons and targeted assassinations by Israel, *kamikazes* by Palestinians, torture and humiliation in Abu Ghraib (Baghdad), and

surely the most shameful: the prisoners held in Guantánamo without trial, without any possibility of defence... and without even being charged with specific charges; and all this, both in a continuous regime of *warfare* or in a precarious state of peace, as a powerful deterrent (remember the Cuban Bay of Pigs landing, the selective interventions in Iran in the Reagan era, the mutual espionage in the Cold War, etc.).

If, therefore, these laws are binding, but are constantly violated in the bloodiest manner, it is difficult to think – even utopically – of the establishment, here on earth and in secular time, of a peace... no longer perpetual, but moderately lasting.

But let us now look at the other laws:

B) *Permissive*

Art. 2° – *Against colonialism and annexation* – «No independently existing state (whether large or small) shall be acquired by another state through inheritance, exchange, purchase or donation» (Kant [1795]: 344; eng. 318). It is true that such acquisition does not take place directly today, but this does not prevent an aggressive industrial, cultural and tourist colonisation from growing and spreading worldwide (just look at the “acquisition” of “our Spanish” Canary or Balearic Islands by the Germans and the English). At the same point, Kant also alludes to the “sale” of subjects by absolutist princes (tacitly pointing to Hanover, who was sending soldiers to America at the time, to fight with the English against the rebels)³.

Today, the sale is free and “voluntary” (at least on the part of the American army that sent its troops to Iraq and Afghanistan to fight terrorist rebels and the *taliben*, so that some soldiers from its *backyard*⁴ – not to speak of mercenaries – might one day hopefully become *cives americani*, as Niall Ferguson enthusiastically sings, arguing that stupendous decorations for bravery (the *Purple Hearts*), and something even more valuable, US citizenship, had already been awarded to many foreign soldiers fighting in Iraq, just as in the old days service in the legions was the path to becoming a *civis romanus* (see Ferguson [2004] and Smith [1997]).

Art. 3° – *Disappearance of armies* – «Standing armies (*miles perpetuus*) shall in time completely disappear» (Kant [1795]: 345; eng. 318). It is true that, in many countries, there is no longer any compulsory military service (recently introduced at that time in Prussia, and then in the new French Republic), and this is because of what Kant pointed out, namely that the arms race leads to an unbearable burden of military expenditure on the part of the manufacturing and merchant class (which makes itself heard in the government, since it is mainly they who bear the burden of taxation). Moreover, Kant makes a “patriotic” exception

on this point (still followed today in Switzerland): the replacement of armies permanently ready for war by regular voluntary military exercises for defence purposes. Today, by contrast, “armed patriots” are successfully replaced by more or less covert mercenaries (although, if the conflict in Ukraine drags on, compulsory military service will surely return to Scandinavia, the Baltic Republics and Germany). Come what may, Kant could not have foreseen that, in time, the arms industry – both for open warfare and for the bellicose preparation for imminent conflicts – would encompass a large part of the manufacturing establishment, with the *big bourgeoisie* being the first to be interested in the continuous state of (preferably external) war, transformed, moreover, into *information warfare*: a technological refinement of what was already announced by Ernst Jünger in *Die totale Mobilmachung* (1930), and later denounced as *the globalisation of the arms industry* by the late Heidegger in his Le Thor Seminars (see Heidegger [1986]: 359).

Incidentally, this same nefarious trade calls into question, without further ado, the following article on perpetual peace:

Art. 4^o – *Against foreign debt* – The state must not contract debts whose purpose is to support its trade (see Kant [1795]: 345; eng. 318). Kant was already lamenting this ingenious stratagem, in his time recently invented by Great Britain. Today, apart from the aforementioned sale of arms to third world countries, we can only recall the bankruptcy of the Argentine Republic twenty years ago (and the one that will probably follow, with the government of Javier Milei, and in general the enormous debts that Latin America has outstanding with the World Bank... and the United States itself with its rival: the People’s Republic of China.

As can be seen, after summarising Kant and outlining current counterexamples, there is no room for much optimism in a world where permissiveness certainly takes precedence over prohibition. One cannot even hope for a gradual improvement of the situation (for even if such an improvement existed until 2022 in the European Union, it was only in a privileged part of the planet, at the expense of the impoverishment of the other nations). Incidentally, it would be all too easy (though not entirely unreasonable) to blame all this on the “malice of man”, or rather on his “foolishness” (*Thorheit*), which, according to Kant, is more characteristic of our species than evil (see [1798a]: 332; eng. 427).

It is true that any “connoisseur” of classical German philosophy, whether more or less adept or influenced by it (as is certainly my case) could argue against all of the above, that experience can *never* invalidate an Idea. In this case, the count of evils and failures cannot and should not call into question something that is a *regulative Idea*: that of the achievement of peace, presented by Kant himself as an “interesting hypothesis” (i.e. one that arouses interest), regardless of whether this Idea has a reference in history or not (i.e. whether it will never be realised).

For, for the philosopher, this Idea constitutes the «final end» of Law (Kant [1797]: 355; eng. 491)⁵ – just as ecumenism constitutes the ultimate end of culture, constituting the geopolitical basis for the establishment of peace. Kant could not have expressed it more solemnly: «Now practical-moral reason pronounces in us its irresistible *veto*: *There must be no war* [*Es soll kein Krieg sein*]». And he goes on saying, in a language oscillating between the language of the categorical imperative and that of the fictionalist *Hinzudenken*: «We must act *as if* [als ob] there were something [i.e. perpetual peace], which perhaps is not, working for that constitution which seems to us most suitable to achieve peace (perhaps the republicanism of all states, in their union)» ([1797]: 354; eng. 491). As the philosopher clearly points out, the establishment of a positive and lasting peace is not something that can be “proved” by experience, nor expected from it, but *is demanded* «a priori *by reason*, from the ideal of a rightful bond of men under public laws» ([1797]: 355; eng. 491). In conclusion, and *a sensu contrario*: no experience, however catastrophic and constant it may be (think, for example, of Auschwitz), will ever annul something that is a rational requirement.

That is fine. The point is that the problem is not this, but the possible *geopolitical perversion* of the fulfilment of the three definitive articles by virtue of the *synthetic demand* (to use Kantian terms), for the political realisation of the “noble” entities of “philosophy of history” presented in those articles. Indeed, it does not require a great effort of imagination to see:

1) that *republicanism*, today, has universal validity – and strength – as a more or less underhanded Democratic Imperialism, strongly contested, moreover, by the so-called Global South;

2) that the *Federation of Free Nation States* is now embodied, not in an almost inert and decaying UN, but in the brand-new European Union, which is still a closed territory *vis-à-vis* non-European outsiders. And the great challenge lies in whether the search for a cultural identity for the new Europe is not already bristling with difficulties at the EU border, as opposed to the hospitable ideal that the United States *once* showed towards *European... immigrants*;

3) that the “right of hospitality” has been extended planetary-wide, thanks to the establishment of a World Free Market, until it has led to *Globalisation*: democratic *ad intra*, but by dint of exercising a burdensome neo-colonisation *ad extra*, more or less disguised through “allied” puppet governments, against the “rogue states” or a new “civilising” and *multipolar Imperialism*, led by China.

To put it in Kantian terms, it is clear that today, over the entire face of the earth, the *Handelsgeist* has been imposed by degree or by force, either under the threat of arms (*hard power*) or by “cultural” penetration through the mass media (*soft power*) – terms popularised by Nye in his very illuminating work (see Nye [2003]).

Indeed, there seems to have been a *geopolitical* irruption of the First Article into the Second, and certainly in a direction unsuspected by Kant, namely: the suspicion is growing that the Republicanism of the New Empire (already in decline) is not only the *condition* and defensive bastion of the possibility of the European Union, but that it is also carrying out the dirty work (proper to the Powers of Modernity) that allows the Federation's interior (proper to Postmodernity) to remain peaceful and prosperous... until now. For it would be precisely the bellicose American "shield" that would allow Europeans to be politely democratic and progressive, pretending to settle everything by means of conventions and treaties. Such is Robert Kagan's somewhat ageing thesis, whose accusation of cynicism directed at the major European powers cannot be on the spot dismissed: «Europe's rejection of power politics and its devaluing of military force as a tool of international relations have depended on the presence of American military forces on European soil» (Kagan [2003]: 73).

Europe's new Kantian order could only flourish under the umbrella of American power, exercised according to the rules of the old Hobbesian order. And then, it would have been America's own power that made it possible for Europeans to think that power itself no longer mattered. If we now follow Kagan, «the fact that U.S. military power has solved the European problem, especially the "German problem", allows Europeans today, and Germans in particular, to believe that American military power, and the "strategic culture" that has created and sustained it, is outmoded and dangerous» ([2003]: 73). In short, as it turns out, Europe would be, for the American analyst (and subsequently, for Donald Trump himself), both ungrateful and opportunist. The indirect exhortation is of course clear: if we want to remain free and democratic *ad intra*, then enough of the mushy stuff, we need to "get our hands dirty" *ad extra*, both in funding and in military aid, which is what the Empire "selflessly" does.

Be that as it may, Kagan picks up a distinction with which we can perhaps enter into the *bad conscience* of the Kantian opuscle, when delving into its intricacies:

«Among themselves, Europeans may "operate on the basis of laws and open cooperative security" [Robert Cooper *dixit*]. But when dealing with the world outside Europe, "we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary"» ([2003]: 74)⁶. This frank confession, contrary of course to any *Kantian* attitude and way of being (not to speak of "thinking") – in short, this brutal allusion to pre-emptive war, and above all to deception, is nevertheless highly illuminating, for it may lead us to suspect that, precisely in the *cosmopolitan* (or *geopolitical*, in current terms) respect, it is not the fulfilment of the provisional articles that lends a guarantee and offers a geohistorical (empirical, in short) basis to the definitive articles (remember: those expressing rational and lawful principles), but precisely their

non-compliance. Let us try to think about this true *katastrophé*, or “inversion”, of the normative plane, and let us venture the following causal concatenation: if Republicanism, the Federation of Free States and Globalisation have imposed themselves on a planetary scale, it is because they are the result of a globalisation of the world:

- because covenants are not honoured, or are entered into with the mental reservation of transgressing them at the first opportunity (reverse side of art. 1°);
- because states (especially those in the so-called Global South, formerly Third World) are now dependent on both multinational industries and the International Monetary Fund (with almost total loss of sovereignty: reverse side of art. 2° and art. 4°);
- because standing armies, whether national, international or mercenary, are progressively increasing in effectiveness (i.e. destructive potential), just as the arms budget in the United States is growing out of all proportion to the point of threatening the economic bankruptcy of the country itself (contrary to art. 3°);
- because the United States now, like UK and, until very recently, France (in the Sahel or Côte d’Ivoire) sets up and removes governments at will, an interventionism now carried out militarily by Russia, and economically and industrially by China (against Kant’s art. 5°);
- and because all sorts of dishonourable stratagems are used to maintain the dominance of the *New World Order* in all areas, according to the obscene slogan: *Wrong or Right, my Country* (reverse side of art. 6°).

In my opinion, it is difficult to ignore the obvious fact⁷ of this perverse teleological causality (which we can summarise as follows: *the systematic non-compliance with the preliminary articles makes possible and encourages the establishment and consolidation of the content of the three definitive articles*), which inverts and disrupts the whole delicate Kantian *machinery* in favour of peace. However, what is relevant now is to ask (leaving aside the *explicit* good intentions of Kant’s pamphlet) whether from this and other texts of his one can glean – without making a twisted and malicious reading of them – some convictions or suggestions (rather than clearly articulated conceptions) that might support even to some extent this perversion (again, surely without Kant’s express awareness of it). In the end, this suspicion can only be supported by the philosopher’s own indication – genuinely *hermeneutic* –, according to which the interpreter can understand a classical text, if not *better*, as Kant says instead (see Kant [1790b]: 187), but at least *in such a way* that its reading is relevant to illuminate – and criticise, if necessary – a present which, in order to ideologically consolidate a supposedly “democratic” predominance, relies more or less tacitly on a writing that is considered to be little less than the *Charta magna* of modern political philosophy.

For my part, I will try to show that, in fact, at least in a latent form, there are convictions in Kant that have developed in a sinister, but not entirely unexpected, way. And I believe that a true homage to the memory of the philosopher can consist precisely in bringing to light some of the shadowy aspects of his mentality.

In the first place, I will argue that the three basic features of *republicanism*: freedom, subjection to law and equality, cease to present the character of *evidence* that Kantian (and in general, liberal or social-democratic) exegesis has conferred on them; and this, from the moment we *specify* the nuances that accompany such august terms. First of all, the idea of *freedom* set out in the First Definitive Article is based – I believe – on a purely logical idea (and moreover a *logical-formal* one, or if you like: *analytical*, insofar as it is deduced from the mere principle of non-contradiction) of *legal* freedom (with the negative consequences this has for the identity of individuals and groups). And as for the other two features: subjection to a single and homogeneous source of law, as well as equality before the law, I believe that they derive from a schematism as universal and vacuous as it is abstract, which can then be *manipulated* ideologically, as we shall see.

Now, on this First Definitive Article (that of the Constitution or republican *Verfassung*) rest the next two (Free Federation and Cosmopolitanism), so that the suspicions that fall on it cannot fail to extend to the following ones. This close relationship has been defended by Kant himself in Thesis VIII of his *Idee*⁸. But – and this point is fundamental – in order to achieve the advent of this republican constitution (internal and external), it is absolutely necessary, according to Kant's own repeated confession, to ward off the *spectre of war*, in turn, both internal (civil war) and external (international). And if this is so, it seems difficult to escape the conclusion that Republicanism and war (even if the latter is seen as a mere imminent possibility and thus as an *Abschreckungsmanöver*) *belong together*. For, in the present state of affairs (on a *pragmatic – sensu kantiano –*, and not merely empirical, level), it may well be that the possibility of a civil war is prevented by the unanimous cry of the citizens themselves (*Es soll unter uns kein Krieg mehr sein!*); but on the down side, in the international sphere, as Kant himself admits: «War cannot be seen in any other way than as a *modus ius suum persequendi* (*pacem parare bello*), and must be conducted until mutual confidence in the state of peace is possible» ([1797]: 601). That such a war is not peculiar to backward peoples or to ages happily overcome, but corresponds to “civilised” nations, is something patent from the continuation of this Kantian *Reflection*. War is permissible, he says, «only in so far as its conduct can coexist with an effective inclination towards the attainment of future peace» ([1797]: 601).

As is well known, the guiding idea in Kantian philosophy is that of *revelatio sub contrario* (which will influence later romanticism, especially Friedrich Schlegel), namely, that it is only through continuous wars, through the loss of dignity of people and countries, through the destruction of all kinds caused by

war conflicts and, *last but not least*, in view of the losses in the sphere of trade and *commerce*: only through continuous wars, through the loss of dignity of people and countries, through the destruction of all kinds caused by war conflicts and, *last but not least*, in view of the losses in the field of trade, only after these hardly repairable damages can the Princes of Europe (for it is to them that Kant addresses himself in *Towards Perpetual Peace*, as Fichte had done two years earlier) come to establish lasting treaties of peace. However, theoretically (and what is valid in theory must be valid in practice for Kant), as has already been hinted at, the problem lies in the fact that, from the side of historical evolution, culture (after all, secretly directed by the “stepmother” nature) demands inequality and thus war, while from the timeless side of law (directly derived from the moral law) what is demanded is equality and thus perpetual peace (as the ultimate end of the species). How can this disparity between the historical-political (pragmatic) and the legal and moral (practical) level be resolved?

In my opinion, the Kantian stratagem recall the adage: *The worse, the better*. What else is there to think of this so un-Kantian, unheard-of *praise of war*: «At the stage of culture where humankind still stand, war is an indispensable means of bringing culture still further; and it is only after a (God knows when) completed culture, that an everlasting peace would be healthy for us, peace which, in turn, would be possible only by means of it [i.e., of the completed culture]» (Kant [1786]: 121; eng. 173ff.). To the extension and fulfilment of culture, by the extension of war, then? Can Kantian words be read calmly after the two World Wars, or rather: after the two *European Civil Wars*? Moreover, in §83 of the third *Critique*, we can find an anthropological – if not even “theological” – justification of war that seems clearly in praise of it. Kant says that, given the three fundamental (which I would call *anthropogenic*) passions, namely the lust for honour, dominion and riches (*Ehrsucht, Herrschsucht, Habsucht*), war is irremediable on the part of those who hold coercive power (*Gewalt*), i.e. the Princes.

However, far from being a sign of the incurable malice of men (or more precisely: *apart* from being superficially the product of men’s “unbridled passions”), war is: «a deeply hidden, and perhaps intentional, effort of supreme wisdom if not to establish, then at least to prepare the conjunction of legality with the freedom of states, and thus the unity of a morally grounded system». Incidentally, note that here Kant is no longer speaking of “Nature” (the promoter of Culture, as we know), but directly of the *oberste Weisheit*, i.e. of God himself. And more: Kant adds to the point that, despite the misfortunes it brings about, war «is nevertheless a further motive (even if the hope for a peaceful state, proper to the happiness of peoples, is receding further and further away) for developing all those talents which serve for culture to their highest degree» ([1790a]: 433; eng. 300). Further proof that neither the *Ruhestand* (unless that is not the “true” peace) nor the happiness of the people is of much interest to Kant. For it is evident to him

that culture, guided by Nature (or by Divine Wisdom, which is now becoming indiscernible from the former?), is not intended to make men happy, but to make them *better*. And for this purpose it hardens them in war. Until they can do no more, and give up their natural existence... or (I add, on my own account) perish in a total war, in this dangerous “experiment” that Wisdom is carrying out at the expense of concrete men (let us say: of the man “in the street”).

According to Kantian texts themselves, there is of course no half-measures. Either there will always be – in history – war, or, when there is finally perpetual peace (remember that *ewig* means rather “eternal”), it will happen... at the end of history, at the end of time. For the intervals between wars are nothing but the continuation of the conflict in other ways. In this, Kant is absolutely Hobbesian⁹. *Mutatis mutandis*, and in today’s terms: the *perpetual* wars of and in history point to eternal peace in post-history. Today, if we were to follow Kagan, this implication would have become spatial, *geopolitical*: US military intervention in Europe – first in the Balkans and now in Ukraine, and beyond: in Afghanistan, Iraq, and tomorrow in Iran – would be precisely what would allow internal peace within the European Union, as long as the latter contributes to the prolongation and expansion of wars – now *proxies* – with financing and armaments... largely bought from the Empire.

But is it not contradictory that war drives culture, on the one hand, and that it is precisely culture that ultimately puts an end to war, on the other? For Kant, it seems not: because Nature (the hidden motor of culture) is inwardly “animated” by Providence (the personification of the moral law), so that its *Vollendung* (that of nature and that of culture), its end or *télos*, will also be its end (*tò éschaton*).

Perfect circularity: what was already *rationaly* inscribed *ab initio* will be *historically* fulfilled in the end. And in the end, finally, everything will be *artificial*. Everything, the work of man (thank God, and at the expense of Nature): remember that, for Kant, the *natural* state of the individual (and of States) is the state of war, and that peace is an *artificial* construct erected for a double and antithetical motive: out of fear of war... of extinction (as seen in the *Hängeschild* of the Dutch tavern, with whose description the pamphlet begins), and out of obedience to the unconditional imperative of law.

But how is it possible to understand such a paradoxical ending? Let us see. At least, the philosopher’s general thesis on the pragmatic (geopolitical) level is clear: the differences between men, sharpened by culture, are evidently *a matter of passion*, for they are due to Nature (the “stepmother”, or *Stifmutter* of men), not to reason. But – and this is the *punctum fluxionis*, on which everything depends – reason needs passion and its consequences: conflict and war; it needs differences, *as dominated and excluded*, to have in whom to command and what to unify – just as the understanding needs multiplicity, since the categories are nothing but *functions of unification of the multiple*, themselves subjected to the

transcendental subject, which in turn is nothing but a *synthesising unity*. In general: order is nothing but the dynamic, always active subjection – *repugnantia realis* – of disorder. Without resisting and overcoming *Macht* (natural, lawless savagery) there could be no *Gewalt* (coercive power, subordinate to law). On another level, this principle of *domination* (of *Überwindung*, not of *Aufhebung*) had already been clearly formulated in the pre-critical period, by treating *repugnantia realis* as a real “conflict” (*Widerstreit*), and not as a logical “contradiction” (*Widerspruch*): «In this case, – says Kant – rest [*Ruhe*: remember the *Ruhestand*] occurs, not because the motive forces are lacking, but because they are acting against each other» (Kant [1763]: 199; eng. 236).

Applying this universal principle to our subject matter, perpetual peace – or at least its possibility, already established at least regulatively, *hic et nunc*, by the hegemonic Power – would then consist in the subjection (or, taking things to the extreme, in the submission and subjugation) of the lurking tendencies to disorder, *again and again*, by the New World Order, *again and again* triumphant, for the time being. The differential passions would thus be something like Goethe’s Mephistopheles: a poor devil who, from this perspective, seems to be part of a parody drawn from a philosophy that to the great poet seemed mechanical: reading Kant, Goethe said, would be like entering a *loom*. And indeed, Mephistopheles is the spirit that always denies, but only so that the affirmative light of the Eternal Feminine and of Supreme Love may shine upon that shadow.

In both cases, however, in Goethe and in Kant, it is *domination* that is important. *Peace is the perpetual internalisation of war* (incidentally, the late Schelling went down this road: not *Aufhebung*, but *Überwindung* of evil: in this sense, evil is as necessary for good as war is for peace). But even if the blessed peace were to be achieved (and among the countries of the European Union, at least, it seems to have been achieved so far), the war would then return, is already returning, forever vanquished, like a “spectre” (*revenant*, as the French call it).

We would have annulled the differences between men (Kant speaks of religious confessions and languages) and thus begun to annul *individual* men, different from each other (each differing even from each other, within each other), in the name of Humanity, of *kath'exochén* Man: a Free Being, Equal, Subject to the Law. Subject, of course, to a Law that he repeats and recites over and over again, ingurgitating itself in a Talmudic manner: Freedom, Equality, Subjection. Pure circuit. *Circulus in probando*. Such is the (bad) dream of humanism, for which perhaps that philosopher from Königsberg, who thought he was rationally *cherishing the dream of peace*, is in some way responsible. A beautiful oxymoron, with disturbing consequences.

Today and always. *The Rest is Silence*.

(Translated by Tobia Frazzica)

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Notes

- 1 Recall that, in Kant, *Gewalt* (if illegitimate, «violence»; otherwise: «coercive power») is a power (*Macht*) so powerful – the redundancy is forced – that it can overcome the resistance of that what, in its turn, possesses power (see Kant [1790a] §28: 260; eng. 143).
- 2 Höffe speaks of «moralisch gebotene Utopie» (Höffe [1995]: 15).
- 3 At the same time, Friedrich Hölderlin composed a first draft (*Erster Entwurf*: ca. 1796) of his ode *Der Tod fürs Vaterland*: «O Schlacht fürs Vaterland, / Flammendes blutendes Morgenrot / Des Deutschen, der, wie die Sonn, erwacht // Der nun nimmer zögert, der nun / Länger das Kind nicht ist / Denn die sich Väter ihm nannten, / Diebe sind sie, / Die den Deutschen das Kind / Aus der Wiege gestohlen / Und das fromme Herz des Kinds betrogen, // Wie ein zahmes Tier, zum Dienste gebraucht» (Hölderlin [1992]: 624): «Oh, battle for the fatherland, / flaming and bloody dawn / of the German who, like the sun, awakens! // The German, who will never doubt anymore; who now / has long ceased to be a child [or a son], / though the Fathers so called him, / they are thieves, / who robbed the Germans of the child from the cradle [i.e. from its *Heimat*, or homeland], / and deceived the pious heart of the child // as if it were a domesticated animal, placed at their service». – The poet's accusation is direct and unequivocal: in order to clean up his finances, Grand Duke Karl Eugen of Württemberg, the Father of the Fatherland, ordered successive forced levies (*Zwangsaushebungen*) of his young subjects (his "sons", now transformed by Hölderlin into citizens: *enfants de la patrie*), "rented" as it were (*Miet- bzw. Subsidieregiment*) to the Dutch East India Company, which the Dutch assigned to the *Kapregiment* (1786-1808) at the Cape of Good Hope to fight the British, and then sent to the Java Islands (the *Zuckerinseln*, cited by Kant in *Zum ewigen Frieden*). Of the 3.200 soldiers recruited, barely 100 of them returned to their homeland (see Egle [2024]).

- 4 Today, thanks to so-called *proxy wars*, the issue is now more refined, as in the Sahel, where the Ukrainian Timur group fights against the Russian Wagner Group (now whitewashed as an official army corps); or, in the case of the US, sending funding and sophisticated weaponry via NATO to Ukraine, or directly and on its own behalf to Benjamin Netanyahu's Israel, thus tacitly supporting the "special military intervention" in Gaza.
- 5 See the entire *Beschluß zum 3. Absch.: Das Weltbürgerrecht*: «Man kann sagen, daß diese allgemeine und fortdauernde Friedensstiftung nicht bloß einen Theil, sondern den ganzen Endweck der Rechtslehre innerhalb den Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft ausmache».
- 6 On the British diplomat quoted by Kagan, see Cooper (2004).
- 7 Obviously without alluding to Kant, and with an exaggeration sometimes bordering on caricature, Michael Hardt and Toni Negri nevertheless offer – if necessary – such a wealth of facts (not to mention misdeeds) in this respect, that – leaving aside, I insist, Negri's basic thesis – it would be difficult to lead an impartial reader to conclusions other than those mentioned here (see Hardt-Negri [2001]). There is already a sequel (2004), just as voluminous (and just as aggressive): *Multitude*.
- 8 «Man kann die Geschichte der Menschengattung im Großen als die Vollziehung eines verborgenen Plans der Natur ansehen, um eine innerlich- und zu diesem Zwecke auch äußerlich-vollkommene Staatsverfassung zu Stande zu bringen» (Kant [1784]: 27; eng. 116).
- 9 «The nature of war consists not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is peace» (See (Hobbes [1909]: 96). Moreover, Hobbes offers a peaceful, *civil* (never better said) way out of the *status naturalis* between men, but not between states.

Varia

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Feeling Data: New Perspectives for the Aesthetic Experience

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Abstract. The production of unprecedented amounts of data across all sectors of society stands out as the defining feature of the present age. Thanks to an all-reaching net of pervasive technologies, it is now possible to draw out data from every entity or event on the planet. Artistic practice provides a suitable stage for the attempt to isolate specific expressive and signifying features out of the indistinct mass of data flowing through the digital realm. This article focuses on a relatively under-explored strand of research, where technology interacts with abstract data in order to extract their “aesthetic sense”. Such an expression addresses the peculiar dynamics enabling art to move beyond the purely informative function of data, towards a different goal – designing experiences that turn the audience into perceptive participants, engaged in the otherwise imperceptible events and relations that are recorded and communicated by data. This kind of aesthetic experience presents interesting implications for philosophical enquiry. Through expressive means that are constantly reshaped by the interaction with digital technologies, contemporary art provides fertile ground for a philosophy of events and relations. This framework is analysed in the present essay by comparing the perspective of three philosophers: Alfred N. Whitehead, Gilbert Simondon, and Gilles Deleuze.

Keywords. Data, digital art, events, relations, interactivity.

There is a togetherness of the component elements in individual experience. This “togetherness” has that special peculiar meaning of “togetherness in experience”. It is a togetherness of its own kind, explicable by reference to nothing else.

A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*

1. *Cleopatra's needle*

In his influential work *The Concept of Nature*, Alfred North Whitehead introduces the notions of *object* and *event* through an unusual and evocative example: Cleopatra's Needle, the well-known obelisk transported from Egypt to London in 1878 and erected in the area that is known today as Victoria Embankment, overlooking the Thames. Should we attempt to examine its nature, argues Whitehead, we would hardly be inclined to consider it as an event rather than an object. Indeed, its monumental immobility seems to shield it from any change, giving it an almost timeless appearance. However, is this really the case? A physicist, for instance, might object that such an imposing stability is in fact underpinned by an invisible dance of electrons; that every day, its constitutive pink granite loses some molecules and aggregates others; that its surface changes when covered with soot or when reacting with London's acid fog. From this standpoint, any reality that on a macroscopic level we judge to be always identical to itself, actually turns out to be made up of a set of *events* in flux. The word *object*, then, is merely the term we habitually use to indicate the lasting and concretely recognisable “thickness” that these events acquire in their reciprocal relating. So, he concludes, «we all know that if we go to the Embankment near Charing Cross we shall observe an event having the character which we recognise as Cleopatra's Needle. Things which we thus recognise I call objects. An object is situated in those events or in that stream of events of which it expresses the character» (Whitehead [1920]: 169).

Today, it would not be difficult to turn a passer-by's distracted gaze at Cleopatra's Needle into a conscious perception of its ever-changing nature, as intended by Whitehead. It would suffice, for instance, to apply a system of sensors to the monument, regularly recording its oscillations; to verify if and whether these micro-alterations are caused by natural agents (e.g. wind speed, the Thames' flow) or by strictly human factors (e.g. traffic in the adjacent streets); or to monitor, finally, the link between surface deterioration and the concentration of pollutants in the atmosphere. In fact, the absolutely unprecedented character of contemporary reality, pervaded by digital technologies and extremely widespread computer networks, is determined by the production of a huge amount of *data*¹. Sensing and geo-localising devices, together with interactive screens, smartphones, smart watches, social media, and all sorts of

applications are capable of extracting information from every single presence in the ecosystem, as well as from the events occurring in it. Human beings, biological organisms, climate phenomena, rivers, oceans, urban spaces: these are all potential producers of data, which are in turn analysed by artificial intelligence programs deputed to identify trends and correlations from which to deduce probabilities and make forecasts².

The progressive intertwining of computer technologies with the fabric of everyday life, to the point of becoming completely enmeshed, was first prospected in the early 1990s by US computer scientist Mark Weiser. He foresaw the possibility for computers to emerge out of their “electronic shell” and innervate their surroundings, transforming everyday objects (e.g. household appliances) into sensors capable of detecting, processing and transmitting information³. *Embodied virtuality* is the expression employed by Weiser to define the new model of ubiquitous computing, differentiating it from *virtual reality*. Projecting users, by means of prosthetic tools, into artificial universes where the external reality and its inhabitants cease to exist, the latter cuts off «desks, offices, other people not wearing goggles and bodysuits, weather, trees, walks, chance encounters and, in general, the infinite richness of the universe» (Weiser [1991]: 94). On the contrary, the potential of embodied virtuality lies precisely in increasing interactions between real-world agents, thus reversing the «centripetal forces that conventional personal computers have introduced into life and the workplace» (Weiser [1991]: 104). The purpose of computation, here conceived of as a force that imperceptibly pervades our small everyday universe, is therefore to enrich the experience of the real world.

In the wake of Weiser’s prediction, an article published in 1999 in *Business Week* by journalist Neil Gross speculated that, by the end 21st century, the entire planet would become enveloped in a kind of «electronic skin»⁴, made up of millions of sensing instruments designed to observe people and their behaviour, infrastructures and natural phenomena. Such a scenario is already occurring daily in urban spaces, criss-crossed by a wide range of automated and interconnected sensors wedged in the skeletons of buildings, attached to vehicles, embedded in smartphones, that track and monitor almost every available parameter – from air quality to traffic flows, from seismic activity to rain-fall, from radioactivity concentration to fine dust levels. This data collection can be broken down to minuscule scale, as in the case of the so-called “smart dust”, a system of microscopic sensors connected by wireless networks that can disperse and camouflage within the environment⁵. Thus, the virtual dimension collapses. Computation abandons the desk and spills out onto the street, forming the backbone of future “sentient” cities, that can monitor the conditions of the environment and of human behaviour within it, directly impacting on the organisation of life in the public space.

Recalling the incisive snapshot offered by artists Salvatore Iaconesi and Oriana Persico,

Data, information, and knowledge are ubiquitous. They are in the shapes of buildings, in streets, and in urban furniture; in the forms of the paths chosen by city dwellers to traverse spaces and places; in signs, symbols, images, and icons; in colours; in the smells and sound we feel while we are in the city; in the skyline; in objects which are near, and in those we see at the horizon; in the memories which we associate to places, objects, and contexts; and in those memories which other people described to us, as we remember them, in precise ways, or not (Iaconesi, Persico [2017]: 30-31).

These considerations induce us to cast a renewed look upon Cleopatra's Needle, the starting point of this discussion. Along the Embankment, a pulsating cloud of data thickens at every moment, embodying the flow of events that, according to Whitehead, shapes the "life" of the obelisk. It is precisely in this regard that a key issue arises, deserving further examination: how can the multiplicity of data and information be transformed into articulated and meaningful structures, through which the invisible flow captured by computation becomes perceivable?

To observe such a process at work, this article suggests turning our attention to the field of contemporary art, increasingly characterised by practices involving data and ubiquitous computing. To this end, Whitehead's conceptual categories will form useful analytical tools to interpret the aesthetic experience enabled by a specific employment of data. Eventually, the discussion will highlight a particularly fruitful outcome of the relationship between *art* and *philosophy*. Through contact with artistic practices, philosophy widens its own categories, expanding their meaning; in doing so, it provides art theory with distinctive frameworks that, nevertheless, do not purport to restrict the meaning of artworks within rigid conceptual boundaries.

2. *Art facing the challenge of data*

The attempt to derive expressive and meaningful characteristics from the heterogeneous mass of data that imperceptibly flows through the digital stream is chiefly observable in the realm of *art*. Data, in fact, provide the raw material feeding the creative process behind artistic practices that are currently developing in contact with new media, interactive technologies and the web. On a general level, this process entails the development of a code which regulates the interaction between an input and an output – i.e. defining the procedures according to which certain stimuli are processed by a computer system and transformed into audio-visual material. Artists can now draw on the most disparate data to construct a repertoire of inputs, and then connect them through potentially infi-

nite combinations by means of algorithms. The resulting works possess the feature of spontaneous evolution, while the viewer experience may in turn acquire unexpected, random and ever-new traits.

Data processing plays an especially significant role in those emerging art forms that rely on artificial intelligence as a means of production. These are based on the synergetic cooperation between a human agent and a computational agent that influence each other – competing, so to speak, for the very authorship of the work. Artists feed data to the artificial intelligence without being able to predict the resulting output; they then make subsequent interventions, in a reciprocal interaction that constitutes the very meaning of the work⁶. Currently, the primary tool for producing such artworks is the Generative Adversarial Network (GAN), a machine learning method that trains computers to generate realistic images autonomously, based on the competition between two neural networks. The first, known as the *discriminator*, is trained using a repertoire of data from the real world (*training set*), which may include, for example, images, sounds or texts; the latter, known as the *generator*, must produce data that resemble as closely as possible those which are used to train the discriminator, so as to “trick” it into believing that they too are real.

Data visualization is another rapidly-expanding phenomenon in the fields of art and design⁷. This technique visualises data by means of diagrams, infographics, cognitive maps and interactive animations. Generally consisting of nodes interconnected by lines, such representations aim to communicate in a concise and visually appealing manner the relationships existing between large volumes of data. In doing so, they prove to be an effective application of the well-known “systemic framework”, conceived of as the counterpart to the reductionist approach that is typical of classical science. The latter, considering analysis an indispensable requirement of evidence, prescribes a movement from complexity to simplicity, from totality to individual parts; the systemic model, on the contrary, conceives of individual parts only in terms of their reciprocal interactions. It is based on what is known as “organisation” – that is, phenomena that cannot be resolved into local events, dynamic interactions that surface among the parts when they are isolated or when they are embedded in some configuration.

Leaving aside these two trends, this essay is chiefly focused on a third and different strand in the widespread use of data in artistic practices. It is possible to identify a further research area, relatively neglected by both specialised critics and the art market, where the sophisticated and somewhat innovative employment of technology aims to draw out of the abstractness of data what might be termed its *aesthetic sense*. Such a term conveys the attempt, clearly visible within certain artistic practices, to go beyond the mere representative and informative function of data, in order to devise experiences that make the public sensitive to and engaged in the events and relationships that the data itself records and dis-

plays. Such an approach is eloquently exemplified by the artistic production of Thijs Biersteker, whose two recent projects – *Econtinuum* (2021) and *Econario* (2022) – both dedicated to the plant world and, more precisely, to the environmental cause, will now be examined in more detail⁸.

One of the most noteworthy findings of plant neurobiology concerns the ability of higher plants to receive signals from their environment, process the information obtained and devise solutions for their survival. Such a discovery challenges the common view of plants as passive entities, raising them instead to the level of organisms capable of calculation and choice, learning and memory. The activity of collecting and processing environmental information takes place in the roots, whose apexes explore the soil in search of nutrients, acting as sophisticated sense organs capable of recording multiple parameters and reacting accordingly. The information gathered by the roots is transmitted not only to the rest of the organism, but also to neighbouring plants, through the emission of chemical signals. These, in turn, enable plants to modify their growth strategy so as to better adapt to the needs imposed by the environment⁹. This phenomenon is precisely illustrated by *Econtinuum*. The installation features two roots, created with 3D printers out of transparent recycled plastic, hanging from the ceiling of a dark room. The “sculpture” is equipped with an artificial intelligence system that, by means of sensors, detects and monitors a series of parameters within the room: carbon dioxide, humidity, volatile organic compounds (i.e. substances with a low boiling point that evaporate from solids or liquids used in industrial processes), temperature and pressure. Responding to the collected data, the artificial intelligence generates light pulses that display how the roots cooperate by exchanging information, sending electrical warning signals and mutually sharing nutrients. What is more, they invite the visitor to take part in their “conversation”. Whenever someone approaches the roots, they react to their presence and movements, integrating human behaviour into their ongoing “electrochemical conversation”. As a result, visitors experience a powerful symbiotic relationship with nature, as well as the possibility of an ecosystem based on shared knowledge.

This sharing of knowledge becomes, in *Econario*, the basis for a true act of political ecology. A robotic plant is equipped with a self-propelled mechanical structure that simulates phases of growth or withering by folding inward or outward. These metamorphoses reflect the likely impact of current socio-political decisions on the state of biodiversity over the next thirty years. The artificial plant’s movements are determined by data from the Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII), developed by the Natural History Museum in London. Such index calculates the impact of human activities on the survival of tens of thousands of ecological communities comprising both animals and plants, that are monitored through a database covering more than one hundred countries. If the index indicates a high level in the preservation of biodiversity, *Econario* achieves peak

expansion, unfolding its structure until it reaches monumental dimensions. If, on the other hand, the forecast is negative, the robotic plant gradually reduces its height, thus reflecting environmental collapse. Designed to be itinerant, the artwork mirrors the specific biodiversity data of the country where it is temporarily exhibited. For example, if placed in a country where no measures are taken to reduce fossil fuel consumption, *Econario* will quickly “wither away”, foretelling the occurrence of an ominous scenario by 2050. Its very presence, therefore, holds both *existential* and *political* relevance: by emotionally involving visitors in the fate of a robotic plant, it simultaneously raises collective awareness regarding local politics, potentially mobilising public opinion.

No longer simply, or exclusively, an object to be contemplated, Biersteker’s installations are instead presented as a *network of presently-occurring events*. Far from being fixed and stable, the relational framework that generates the artworks is intrinsically dynamic, caught as it is in an incessant process of transition, activated by elements that are constantly integrating or emerging unplanned within the structure. Neither the development nor the outcomes of such a process are ever entirely predictable. In fact, while the general scheme is under the artist’s control, its evolution in a specific sense depends on the concrete contribution of all parties involved, which is all the more decisive the greater the degree of variability allowed by the technical system. What such an employment of data and computation captures is, essentially, the unfolding of a vital process, or, more broadly, a *fragment of becoming* presently taking place. In translating a series of logical contents, normally confined by their abstractness below the threshold of feeling, into concretely perceptible forms, artistic practice seeks to turn this becoming into a participatory event. It is precisely thus that the dimension of art emerges as a privileged field for that particular experience of reality described by Whitehead through the example of Cleopatra’s Needle: an experience that we will now explore from a philosophical standpoint.

3. *Events, individuations, haecceities*

The ultimate assumption to be elaborated in the course of this enquiry is that the ultimate facts of nature, in terms of which all physical and biological explanation must be expressed, are events connected by their spatio-temporal relations, and that these relations are in the main reducible to the property of events that they can contain (or extend over) other events which are parts of them (Whitehead [1919]: 4).

“Event” and “relation” are the two concepts grounding Whitehead’s philosophical reflection: everything that exists must be interpreted as something that happens

and such happening is determined in turn as a process of interaction. However, this interaction, instead of stemming from the terms it links, is the original operation through which the individual terms emerge.

Whitehead's position is articulated in contrast with Aristotelian substantialism, credited with positing the concept of an underlying, permanent subject-substratum upon which mutations flow continuously, thus reducing *becoming* to a predicate of substance, i.e. a mere alteration of states. Such a fallacy, in turn, is thought to have derived from the undue hypostatisation of an *ens rationis*. In sensory perception, in fact, nature manifests itself not so much as the sum of distinct individualities, but rather as a complex of entities that stand in reciprocal relation. The supposed independence of each entity from the whole is nothing more than the result of an abstraction of thought, which in its proceeding cannot help but refer to individual entities. The problem arises when the procedure of translating sense perception into rational knowledge is mistaken for a fundamental character of nature. In contrast with such an approach, which postulates a concretely-existing substratum underneath anything that can be perceived through the senses – «the red of the rose and the smell of the jasmine and the noise of cannon» (Whitehead [1920]: 21) –, Whitehead argues that «if we are to look for substance anywhere, I should find it in events which are in some sense the ultimate substance of nature» (Whitehead [1920]: 19).

And yet events, in their uniqueness and unrepeatability, cannot be grasped in isolation: it is impossible to break down the incessant flow of nature into individual moments to be contemplated. Therefore, the components of our habitual experience are interpreted, instead, as single objects. Despite being considered by common sense as independent substances, each endowed with an immutable identity, these are rather the manifestation of subterranean interactions between events. Such events are defined by Whitehead as «the field of two-termed relation» (Whitehead [1920]: 75). The ability to encompass and permeate each other is, in fact, a distinctive feature of events; they become involved in a process of reciprocal shaping, to the point that, for instance, «the duration which is all nature during a certain minute extends over the duration which is all nature during the 30th second of that minute» (Whitehead [1920]: 58). Whenever such interaction generates a relatively stable, and thus clearly identifiable structure, we then call it an object. Consequently, «objects are entities recognised as appertaining to events» and «events are named after the objects involved in them and according to how they are involved» (Whitehead [1919]: 81)¹⁰. Going back to the case of Cleopatra's Needle, the object will thus coincide with the unitary entity, devoid of becoming, always identical to itself; whereas the event will result from the relation of all those elements that determine its very occurrence and permanence.

Were we to compare Whitehead's ideas with other similar positions, it would not be out of place to refer to the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon and, in particu-

lar, to his concept of *individuation*. Through this concept, in fact, independently from Whitehead and nevertheless with surprising analogies, Simondon has tried to explain the constitutive function of relation. In opposition to the classic paradigm of ontology, according to which individuals with their properties come before relations, Simondon's thesis, instead, attributes to relations the very potential to generate individuals¹¹.

The concept of individuation is not Simondon's own invention. The term already belonged to the vocabulary of philosophy in the Middle Ages, when it was used with regards to the problem of the constitution of individuality starting from a common essence existing independently of concrete individuals. Instead of moving from an *already-individuated* individual to then retrace the conditions of his singularity, i.e. of his being intrinsically one and distinct from others, Simondon's proceeds from the very emergence of the individual, i.e. his *ontogenesis*. This implies questioning any privilege accorded to the individual when understood as substance, and shifting the attention towards the system of reality where his genesis takes place. The idea that the individual, far from being presupposed, corresponds to the process of his constitution raises a further problem, concerning the relationship between *being* and *becoming*. Here Simondon essentially mirrors Whitehead's perspective: does becoming imply a stable reality upon which mutations fluctuate or, on the contrary, does each entity coincide with its own coming-into- and remaining-in-being, that is, with its individuation? And if so, how does this process take place?

To answer these questions, we need to take a quick look at the dimension from which, according to Simondon, the individual acquires his existence: i.e. the *pre-individual*. In illustrating its main features, he creates a montage out of terms and concepts belonging to fields of knowledge that are fairly distant from philosophy. *Potential energy, metastable equilibrium, disparity, supersaturation*: these are the conditions for the genesis of the individual. They allude to an original incompatibility rich with potential, standing as a premise for individuation. Such a stage of incompatibility is constituted by forces in reciprocal tension, by extreme terms incapable of interaction, which are mediated by the individual at the moment of its emergence. Individuation is thus the resolution taking place within a system of potentials, corresponding in turn to the *interactive communication* between initially incompatible orders of magnitude. In this perspective, «what is generally considered as *relation* due to the improper hypothesis of the substantialization of individual reality is in fact a dimension of individuation through which the individual becomes» (Simondon [2020]: 10). No longer a mere connection between well-distinguished elements, relation comes now to warrant their very individual existence, by acting as «*constitutive, energetic and structural condition that is extended in the existence of constituted beings*» (Simondon [2020]: 76).

To summarise, according to Whitehead, every entity exists only during its occurrence and nothing exists beyond such occurring. In the same way, for Simondon the individual coincides with his formation, and exists for as long as this process lasts; all that remains afterwards is «a result that will begin to degrade and not a veritable individual» (Simondon [2020]:49). Moreover, Whitehead interprets becoming as generated by the mutual relations between events; similarly, Simondon describes individuation as a relational event, i.e. the occurrence of a relationship between dissimilar terms, dimensions and levels of reality. For both Whitehead and Simondon, the relationship is no longer an inessential category, a non-defining property of an autonomous and perfectly subsistent substance; rather, it comes to establish the conditions and mode of existence of substantial individualities¹².

Following in Simondon's footsteps, all the while resonating with Whitehead's thought, Gilles Deleuze would later argue that the act of connecting heterogeneous dimensions can produce «a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name *ecceity* for it» (Deleuze, Guattari [1987]: 261)¹³. The concept of *haecceity* is first formulated in the philosophy of Duns Scotus as a principle of individuation of substance, deputed to make individuals different from each other. While referring to Scotus's position, Deleuze nevertheless declares that he is interested in a different meaning of the concept of haecceity, one resulting from the incorrect French transcription of the Latin *haecceitas*. He observes in this regard: «This is sometimes written “ecceity”, deriving the world from *ecce*, “here is”. This is an error since Duns Scotus created the word and the concept from *haec*, “this thing”. But it is a fruitful error because it suggests a mode of individuation that is distinct from that of a thing or a subject» (Deleuze, Guattari [1987]: 540-541)¹⁴.

Individuation by haecceity captures a becoming-in-progress. The protagonists of this becoming, however, are not persons, things or substances, but «relations of movement and rest, of speed and slowness, between unformed, or relatively unformed, elements, molecules or particles borne away by fluxes» (Deleuze, Parnet [2007]: 92). «An hour, a day, a season, a climate, one or several years – a degree of heat, an intensity, very different intensities which combine» (Deleuze, Parnet [2007]: 92) possess perfect individuality, of a kind not to be confused with that of a substance or a subject. Rather, these occurrences are equivalent to those variables of different orders which, in a manner entirely analogous to Simondon's pre-individual potentialities, acquire consistency and individuality only through mutual interaction: «a degree, an intensity, is an individual, a *Haecceity* that enters into composition with other degrees, other intensities, to form another individual» (Deleuze, Guattari [1987]: 253). It may happen, for instance, that «a degree of heat can combine with an intensity of white, as in certain white skies of a hot sum-

mer» (Deleuze, Guattari [1987]: 261). Now, the point is not to counterpose momentary and ephemeral individualities with others endowed with a specific duration; on the contrary, in Deleuze's perspective, individuals themselves are inseparable from the whole they are part of, thus ceasing to be subjects «to become events, in assemblages that are inseparable from an hour, a season, an atmosphere, an air, a life» (Deleuze, Guattari [1987]: 262). Factors such as «climate, wind, season, hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them» (Deleuze, Guattari [1987]: 263). Space-time coordinates do not therefore act as mere background for individuals, but rather join them to form shared *dimensions of multiplicity*. These are produced by the interaction between completely heterogeneous terms, which, unlike determined entities – i.e. endowed with a stable and permanent essence, with the predicates that qualify it and the relations inherent to it – achieve their individuation only within the concatenation they become part of.

4. *Sensitive to data*

«Whether your Needle change or be permanent» Whitehead observes, «all you mean by stating that it is situated on the Charing Cross Embankment, is that amid the structures of events you know of a certain continuous limited stream of events, such that any chunk of that stream, during an hour, or any day, or any second, has the character of being the situation of Cleopatra's Needle» (Whitehead [1920]: 167). In a similar vein, Deleuze states that «a season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject» (Deleuze, Guattari [1987]: 261). Applying such premises to the current ever-shifting panorama of digital art, we can identify a particular line of research that specifically aims to intercept the same *continuous flow of events* in the moment it acquires thickness, by capturing the concatenation of micro-phenomena – haecceities, degrees of power, intensity, accidents – that feed the process of individuation¹⁵.

As previously illustrated, such phenomena can now be recorded thanks to the capillary network of technologies spread throughout the ecosystem, and subsequently translated into data. By integrating an unrelated and heterogeneous multiplicity of data, each potentially representing a fragment of the world, and giving them concrete shape out of lights, colours, sounds, tactile features, artistic practices aim to render *perceptible* the *imperceptible* “becoming” encapsulated by data. Moreover, by virtue of its interactive character, they also offer viewers the possibility of personally taking part in this becoming, influencing – through their own direct intervention or through the generation of data – the very evo-

lution of the work, to the point of modifying its outcome in a way that is not entirely predictable.

The interactive dynamic thus develops by weaving unexpected relationships between entities that are in themselves dissimilar and extraneous to one another: not only people or things, but also, as previously exemplified, plants, animals, museums, institutions, factors both atmospheric – e.g. the concentration of carbon dioxide inside a room, the temperature at a certain time of day – and environmental – e.g. the flourishing or perishing of an ecological community. In doing so, the artwork configures itself both as an *object* and as an *event*; it stands as a system that *individuates*¹⁶, i.e. it exists and evolves thanks to the multiple relationships that take place within and throughout it. Thus, it foreshadows an increasingly plural and dislocated type of interactivity, where each component, through the mediation of data, is the bearer of a difference that generates meaning.

As a result, through expressive means that are constantly redefined by the interaction with digital technologies, art can engender and develop the same understanding of *events* and *relations* that has been examined so far. Essentially, this type of art becomes *awareness of a relationship*; it captures and reproduces the fundamental relational structures tying together the entities of the world. Furthermore, art expresses these interrelations as the core feature of experience. In doing so, it proves that it is entirely misleading to put the knowledge of things-as-unrelated before the knowledge of their reciprocal relations. In fact, our first and most immediate experience is not of objects, but rather of relations between objects; relations that, in turn, are to be understood not in a static or abstract sense, but rather as the very event of “entering into a relationship”. The contemporary field of artistic production displays the emergence of a new way of experiencing the constitutive relationality of things. The translation of data into *forms of feeling* opens up our concrete experience to the web of organically connected events that constitute the ultimate substance of reality. In other words, it allows us to perceive the relationship linking the “event” that we are with other events that are simultaneous with us, in the very moment of their occurrence: such as here and now, on the Victoria Embankment, under Cleopatra’s Needle.

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Notes

- 1 In computer science, the term *data* is used to refer to any information acquired, processed, stored or released by a computer in the form of a sequence of bits. For a history of the term's multiple meanings, from its Latin origins to the present day, see Rosenberg [2018].
- 2 For an introductory approach to the technological process of *datafication*, see Mayer-Schönberger, Cuckier [2013].
- 3 Such is the principle behind the so-called *Internet of Things*, an expression used in computer science to refer to a vast collection of objects equipped with sensors and software that enable them to interact, with minimal human intervention, by collecting and exchanging data via wireless networks. For a more in-depth discussion of the framework of *ubiquitous computing*, i.e. the integration of the ability to process information in classes of objects not usually counted within the scope of technology, see Greenfield [2016].
- 4 See Gross [1999].
- 5 See Gabrys [2010; 2016].
- 6 With regards to this topic, the lines of the debate have been drawn by Miller [2019]. A rigorous and thorough introduction to the relationship between aesthetics, digital art and the latest developments in artificial intelligence is also offered by Barale [2020, 2021], analyzing numerous case studies of artworks based on the interaction between human and artificial intelligence.
- 7 For a more in-depth analysis, see Lima [2011].
- 8 Thijs Biersteker's work is renowned for its fluid mixture of data, sensors, plants, and artificial intelligence. He creates interactive and immersive art installations, often described as *eco* or *awareness art*, with the aim of making visible the unseen impact of humans on the planet. Topics like climate change, air pollution, ocean plastic pollution, and biodiversity loss are thus converted into tangible experiences offering an unsettling insight into the ecological challenges ahead.
- 9 For a detailed explanation of the issues briefly mentioned here, see Baluška, Mancuso, Volkmann [2006].
- 10 In a 1956-1957 note on Whitehead's concept of nature, Merleau-Ponty summarises the notion of object as follows: «The object is the focal property to which we can relate the variations subjected to a field of forces. [...] The object is only an abbreviated way to note that there has been an ensemble of relationships» (Merleau-Ponty [1995]: 158).
- 11 "Realism of relations" is the expression used by Simondon to describe the traits of his ontology, aimed at demonstrating the priority of relational processes over the individual entities involved. In this regard, see Barthélémy [2005: 99-104; 2008: 9-34; 2014].
- 12 The primacy of process and relation was further explored by Whitehead in *Process and Reality*, through the concept of "actual entity". Refuting the notion of substance as an immutable subject of change, Whitehead in fact states that «how an actual entity *becomes* constitutes what that actual entity *is*», so that «its "being" is constituted by its "becoming"» (Whitehead [1978]: 23); Furthermore, challenging the Aristotelian tenet that substance is neither predicated of a subject nor present in a subject, he argues that every actual entity is related to the others or, even more radically, that «every actual entity *is* present in other actual entities» (Whitehead [1978]: 50).
- 13 For more details on the concept of haecceity in Deleuze's philosophy, see Sauvagnargues' analysis of *Heccéité* in Sasso, Villani [2003]. A further examination is offered by Zourabichvili [1998].
- 14 This quotation reveals an implicit reference to Simondon. It was Simondon, in fact, who first made such a spelling "mistake" and who also conceived of individuation not in a narrow sense, i.e. relating to substance alone, but more generally as the becoming of being. See Simondon [2005]: 55-66.
- 15 Anne Sauvagnargues reflects thus upon the potential implications of the "individuation by haecceity" paradigm developed by Deleuze on the realm of aesthetics: «Haecceity – which

does not define a class of individuals or of preformed beings, but which captures becomings as they are happening – already implies a new philosophy of image-individuation. For its most direct and explosive consequence consists, with regards to the philosophy of art, in the movement from representation, from reproduction, in short, from all of the old ontologies of the image that separate and superimpose model and copy, to a philosophy of becoming, of individuation, and of metamorphosis» (Sauvagnargues [2016]: 50-51).

- 16 In his complementary doctoral thesis, dedicated to the modes of existence of technical objects [2017], Simondon calls for a re-thinking of the technical object from a *processual* perspective. The technical object, according to Simondon, supports the principles of the ontology of individuation and, in turn, this ontology grounds the existence of technical objects. In the case of the ontology of individuation, what is at stake is the issue of shifting the focus from the individual to the process of individuation. As for the philosophy of technology, the key issue is defining the technical object not on the basis its individuality (i.e. from the fixity of its structure for a predefined use), but rather on the basis of its *genesis*, interpreting technical reality according to the *temporal* sense of its *evolution*. Technical objects thus appear as processes of individuation.

Aisthesis



Ethics of Cognitive Distance in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

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Abstract. In the past few decades, there has been a flood of investigations into Beckett's most celebrated play *Waiting for Godot*. The play has been explored in terms of the way the protagonists endure affliction, and absurdity. These readings, one way or another, have mostly highlighted the protagonists' fruitless search for human values and meaning. In contrast with these accounts, this paper aims to focus on the interconnection between the concept of cognitive distance and ethics to show how the two protagonists in the play, despite lack of meaning, portray rewarding overtones of ethical relation to the Other. This ethical distance helps them establish not only an ethical relationship with one another, but also an ethical interaction with alterity in general. Drawing on what the philosopher, Emmanuel Lévinas, conceives of the concept of distance in his ethical Same-Other relation, this paper concludes that Beckett's couple can also be portrayed as figures with a valuable Same-Other relation regardless of predominant anguish and absurdity in their lives.

Keywords, Beckett, ethics of distance, Lévinas, same-other relation.

1. Introduction

In the past few decades, there has been a flood of investigations into Beckett's most celebrated

play *Waiting for Godot*. The play has been constantly explored in terms of the way characters endure affliction, emptiness, and absurdity. It is generally conceded that Beckettian figures eventually lack direction and that they represent «the universal plight of man, unprotected by earlier cultural assurances or belief systems» (Levy [2002]: 222). Martin Esslin, the major precursor of Beckett studies, mainly speaks of the profound existential anguish as the elemental feature of *Waiting for Godot*. Similar to Esslin's line of thought, though from a different perspective, contemporary commentators regard the protagonists as starving infants who feel the void between them and the «primary maternal object», that is, Godot (Keller [2002]: 134) or as figures for whom «life is simultaneously utterly wretched and wretchedly brief» (Zeifman [2011]: 50). These readings in general characterize Beckett's dramatic figures as beings who burden an enormous measure of anxiety, suffering, and meaninglessness. On the other hand, there are very few commentators who have argued for the positive message this play ultimately implies regardless of its bleak dramatic features. For instance, David Kleinberg-Levin interprets Beckett's account of human stories in general as an account that takes us into the very depths of suffering, yet evokes «the longing for a finer humanity, keeping alive the promise of happiness» (Kleinberg-Levin [2015]: 7). Michael Y. Bennett in his *Reassessing the Theatre of The Absurd* highlights the parabolic feature of the play asserting «now that visiting Godot may be far-fetched for them, they realize that their lives are meaningful because of their relationship» (Bennett [2011]: 51). Unlike many scholars, Bennett draws our attention to the significance of renewal of humanity as a result of the unintelligibility of the world. It seems undeniable that the term absurdity starkly occupies the background of the play, and this term has consequently occupied the foreground of many Beckett studies to a certain degree; nevertheless, does that by necessity indicate pointlessness of their type of relation with the world and other characters? There is, one should note, a distinction between what the absurd world can ultimately offer us and how we ultimately shape our relation to the absurd world. In case of the former, one may respond that, in the end, the absurd world cannot offer anything meaningful and objectively valuable to Beckett's couple. However, in case of the latter, the way they shape their relation to the world, for the most part, comes from their own outlook on alterity, which benefits both the type and quality of the protagonists' relation to the Other. It is this ethical relation that rescues Beckett's dyad, Vladimir and Estragon, from the dominant shadow of «plight of man» in the absurd world, and yet has not undergone much critical scrutiny. This paper aims to argue that *Waiting for Godot* portrays powerful overtones of ethical relation to the Other on the basis of distance, a relation which will be referred to as ethical distance throughout the paper. To this end, it is shown that how the concept of distance between Self (Same) and the Other, despite the negative connotation of the term distance *prima facie*, ac-

tually helps the protagonists establish not only an ethical relationship with one another, but also an ethical interaction with alterity in general. Moreover, the type of distance that will be examined here initially characterizes distance within human cognition. Put simply, the use of the term distance here does not suggest physical distance; rather, distance here means cognitive distance, that is, when Self is cognizant of the fact that there is a distance between oneself and other entities, and this awareness basically must occur within the human subject's mind. In this respect, we draw on Emmanuel Lévinas's view on the concept of distance at the heart of his ethical approach to the Same-Other relation (relation with the world and other human beings). The paper shows how Lévinas's concept of distance and Beckett's dramatic approach to the same concept in *Waiting for Godot* present an ethically similar frame of reference. The significance of Lévinas's ethical theory is that it centers on the relation of Self to the Other. Also, in Beckett's drama, we observe that «rather than staging individual alienation, Beckett acknowledges a profound interaction between self and other» (McMullen [2007]: 458). It is indeed worth noting that the type of Same-Other relation in both Lévinas and Beckett's ethical framework defies any prescriptive reading. Beckett refuses any attribution of normative prescription to his dramatic works. Lévinas's ethical distance does not aim to enact particular ethical norms or laws either. Marc C. Santos (2011), in favor of Lévinas's ethical views, argues that «in Lévinas, one will not find moral laws, commandments to be followed, [...] because any such ontological structure necessarily contradicts the absolute Law of responsibility» (Santos [2011]: 775). In fact, Lévinas's approach to his ethics of the Other reveals that he aims to draw one's attention to the incomprehensible nature of the Other to begin with, not how to define specific moral patterns. For Lévinas, this incomprehensibility is metaphysical as he brings to the fore the idea that «the true life is absent. But we are in the world». Metaphysics as specified by Lévinas is turned toward the «elsewhere» or the «other» (Lévinas [1979]: 33). Also, Beckett and Lévinas's ethical approach to the same-other relation are both phenomenological in the sense they explore the issue of Self's encounter with the Other and how things seem to be but may not be comprehensible. On this account, Lévinas's ethical view on the relation of self to the other seems to correspond well with Beckett's vision of self and the other.

This paper sets out to explicate the conception of distance based on Lévinas's account of the term at the core of his ethics of responsibility for the Other. Then, what is considered the Lévinasian Same-Other independent relationship within distance is examined in terms of Vladimir and Estragon's relationship with one another and their interaction with the world. This type of analysis offers a novel apprehension of how the concept of distance has immediate bearing on the protagonists' responses to the other and how the concept of distance pertains to the subsequent feature of a healthy relationship within independence. As Lévinasian

approach suggests, and we shall discuss it later, proper ethical distance brings independence for the other. Prior to moving on to elaborating on the concept of (cognitive) distance and its ethical outcome and independence in the Same-Other relation, it is important to know that Lévinas basically provides an extremely comprehensive account of Same-Other relation for which he employs a wide range of interrelated key concepts like responsibility, desire, distance, sensibility, proximity among others. However, the Lévinasian concepts that receive primary focus in this paper are concept of desire and distance as two prerequisites for Lévinas's ethical framework in general. It is therefore essential to initiate, in some detail, the discussion by showing how desire presupposes cognitive distance in his ethical theory. It is then concluded that from Lévinasian ethical point of view, Beckett's couple can be portrayed as figures with a valuable Same-Other relation.

2. Desire and cognitive distance in Lévinas

Lévinas's concept of desire at the beginning of his book *Totality and Infinity* provides an essential paradigm for his theory of the Other. Primarily, Lévinas emphasizes a type of metaphysical desire that cannot be satisfied like worldly desires for the latter only bear «resemblances to metaphysical desire» (Lévinas [1961]: 34). In other words, worldly desires only produce the illusion of satisfaction (they are attainable) whereas metaphysical desire only deepens rather than becomes fulfilled. Why does metaphysical desire deepen rather than become fulfilled as Lévinas posits? It seems that because the nature of metaphysical desire originates from alterity, it cannot possibly turn into the Same. The Same can only represent alterity from their point of view and not what the essence of the latter in actuality is. For Lévinas, «beyond any possible negation there will always remain an irreducible 'there is' (il y a), even if nothingness is precisely all that there is» (Weller [2006]: 5). This irreducible there is always appears to us within a distance between Self (Same) and what is outside-of-self: *autrui* (the Other). In this regard, James Mensch says that «the closing of the gap between the desire and the desired does not occur» (Mensch [2015]: 38). Mensch points out how the content of the desired in Lévinas's theoretical framework escapes thematization and how Lévinas perceives representation to be a means of totalization that ultimately dissolves the other into the same. The unattainable nature of metaphysical desire causes the Same to feel unable to represent what is not I. Here, the concept of metaphysical desire gives rise to a type of relation between the same and the other that is indicative of cognitive distance rather than physical distance. Cognitive distance should be regarded as the type of distance that the Same feels between themselves and the Other (e.g. the metaphysical desire) not in the physical world but in the Same's mental process of acquiring

knowledge and understanding through thoughts and experience. At this point, Lévinas proposes, a relationship is established between the same and the other that positively feeds on what is desired and yet cannot be obtained. Lévinas calls it «a relationship whose positivity comes from remoteness» (Lévinas [1961]: 34). He basically perceives the I to be in a state of *pouvoir* (sway) that cannot cross the distance that the alterity of the other inherently bears (Lévinas [1961]: 38). In line with this viewpoint, Jacob Meskin calls attention to the fact that for Lévinas the subjectivity of the individual cannot have grounds without alterity which functions as the presupposition of this relationship. Meskin suggests that the core of one's identity is in a sense «inhabited by» or «animated by» another person (Meskin [2000]: 85). Although the alterity of the other is housed by the I's singular identity, this proximity still cannot make the ethical cognitive distance between the same and the other disappear. One major characteristic of this type of distance or remoteness in the same-other relationship is independence. This means while the I depends on the alterity of the other, it at the same time acknowledges the distant or independent nature of the other. It is a relationship which Lévinas calls «a relationship within independence» (Lévinas [1961]: 104). It is through the cognitive distance that the same approaches alterity and demonstrates ethical distance in their interaction with the other.

3. *Desire and cognitive distance in Beckett's Waiting for Godot*

In *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett clearly draws out his two protagonists, Vladimir and Estragon in a puzzled state of being. They repeatedly appear willing to abandon their hope and not to. Vladimir's opening line "nothing to be done" often-times gives place to his hope to actually do something.

VLADIMIR. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. (He broods, musing on the struggle. Turning to Estragon.). (Beckett [1954]: 3)

Vladimir's words here suggest that there must be a desire (the term will be discussed in the next paragraph) vital to his deeds that prompts him to resume the struggle against all odds. This combination of desire and hope noticeably proceeds as the dyad keeps waiting. On another occasion, when he enquires about Estragon's well-being after the previous night's beatings, Vladimir expresses sympathy with the anguish of man even though people often grow insensitive when suffering is repeated mechanically and then refuses to «lose [...] heart now» cheerfully (Beckett [1954]: 5). Notwithstanding adversities, the idea of helplessness of man is not absolute for him and does not impel him to yield to total absurdity. Whether his sense of gloom is for Estragon's miserable state (when

he is beaten by some unknown men) or it takes a more universal form for humanity, it depicts Vladimir's striving to maintain hope and revolt against desperation.

Hope and desire in *Waiting for Godot* are correlative. Although desire precedes hope in general, hope is not equivalent to desire or to an expectation of a favourable outcome (what one desires). In fact, hope is a vital coping resource that suggests the possibility of a favourable outcome (Lazarus [1999]: 675). Vladimir's remark that he has not tried everything immediately draws attention to two major aspects of hope, one is the possibility of a desired outcome and the other is the «denial» of the impossibility of it (Lazarus [1999]: 675). Vladimir indirectly denies his own earlier statement «nothing to be done», which corresponds to his belief that it is still possible for a favorable outcome. Also, if human struggle is to be resumed, in the case of Vladimir, his hope is «pragmatically rational» in the sense that it promises sufficient self-efficacy through which one can assert one's own agency for «direction and control» (Pettit [2004]: 160) regardless of what one can eventually achieve. In the play, the concept of hope follows the concept of desire, but nonetheless what they specifically desire is neither clear to the couple themselves nor to the audience. Despite the indeterminacy of their desire, the type of their desire is significant in that it can hardly be reduced to worldly desire. Vladimir and Estragon's type of desire to a great degree revokes Lévinas's statement that «metaphysical desire is “not like the bread I eat, the land in which I dwell» (Lévinas [1961]: 33). In Lévinas's account, the same can possess these realities and satisfy himself, thereby reabsorbing the alterity of the entities into his own identity. This way, the same becomes a possessor whether through material things like bread and land or through thinking like thematizing entities. For instance, when Pozzo asks them what they are doing on his land of which he claims to be the owner, Vladimir says that they do not intend any harm (any possession) and Estragon continues to reassure him that they mean well (only waiting in his land). Also, at the moment of departure in act I, Pozzo believes the pair to have been «onest fellows» and «civil» to him and offers to return their kindness to which Vladimir, while stopping Estragon's immature request to be given ten francs, responds determinedly that «we are not beggars!» (Beckett [1954]: 33). Moreover, if we base the argument on what can be observed from their physical and materialistic status (their old age, shabby clothes, homelessness, little amount of rotten carrot) in life, we readily discover that Vladimir and Estragon can be regarded less as possessors than seekers. Lévinas in his *Time and The Other* describes the nature of this seeking:

The seeking of the caress constitutes its essence by the fact that the caress does not know what it seeks. This 'not knowing', this fundamental disorder, is the essential. It is like a game with something slipping away, a game absolutely without project or plan, not with what can become ours or us, but with something other, always other, always inaccessible, and always still to come (Lévinas [1979]: 89).

Similarly, for Vladimir and Estragon, ultimate meaning they look for would be found in the shape of a non-materialistic life rather than worldly pursuits, otherwise they would have been in possession of at least adequate number of belongings at that age. It distinctly seems to be the case because when we find Estragon in act I asking Vladimir «what exactly did we ask him [Godot] for?» (Beckett [1954]: 26), both Vladimir and Estragon respond «nothing very definite» or «a kind of prayer». The way they describe their request can be an indication of two significant points. One is that they treat the content of their desire with uncertainty (A kind of), which recalls Lévinas's view that the individual who has metaphysical desire does not know what it seeks and the other is that the word prayer normally transcends the physical world and is basically sought in the realm of metaphysics. Their desire therefore hardly embodies the greed with which the Same assimilates the Other. Assimilation is characteristic of a need while metaphysical desire brings about «an uncharted future before me» (Lévinas [1961]: 117) just as Vladimir and Estragon depict their future of waiting for Godot with uncertainty. Although the absurdity of the world might have been one reason for the emergence of a metaphysical desire, what has caused their type of desire is not the focus of the discussion here. Rather, the focus is on the current state of their desire against absurdity which aligns with Lévinas's perspective of metaphysical desire.

Vladimir and Estragon's intentions as couched in their dialogues seem to convince one that their type of desire is highly unlikely expected to be fulfilled. This therefore demonstrates the remoteness of the other and that the two protagonists give us the impression that they understand the remoteness of alterity. For we find them unable to thematize their own desire as human beings and whether Godot's offer can be any source of mental comfort and closure of despair. In this respect, Graver proposes that «what it is like and what it means to exist in a state of radical unknowingness» is what features Beckett's dramatic approach to human existence (Graver [2004]: 22). The distance they feel, due to their state of unknowingness, from the alterity of the world is explicitly depicted in their temporal and spatial encounter with alterity as well:

ESTRAGON. We came here yesterday.
VLADIMIR. Ah no, there you're mistaken.
ESTRAGON. What did we do yesterday?
VLADIMIR. What did we do yesterday? [...]
ESTRAGON. In my opinion we were here.
VLADIMIR. (looking round). You recognize the place?
ESTRAGON. I didn't say that. [...]
ESTRAGON. You're sure it was this evening?
VLADIMIR. What?
ESTRAGON. That we were to wait.

VLADIMIR. He said Saturday. (Pause.) I think. [...]

ESTRAGON. (very insidious). But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? (Pause.) Or Monday? (Pause.) Or Friday? (Beckett [1954]: 18)

Their confusion over conceptualizing what exactly they were doing yesterday, what day it was or if they were in the same place as they are now prevent them from drawing conclusions. Estragon feels weary when Vladimir keeps asking him, «You don't remember any fact? any circumstances?». His replies to Vladimir usually are: «How would I know? In another compartment. There is no lack of void» (Beckett [1954]: 135). When cognition does not or cannot ascertain obvious perception of such concepts as time and space, it seems to hint how themes and concepts that define their surroundings are absent from their cognition of the world. An uncertain mind tends to reduce or even eliminate the process of thematization because thematization requires a sufficient degree of certainty to thematize to begin with. Although Beckett's men physically appear to be bound in the cyclic loop of temporality and spatiality which never seem to end, they to a great degree appear cognitively unbound from the two concepts. Peculiar to Beckett's drama is the fundamental concept of uncertainty that here, from Lévinasian ethical perspective, seems to benefit the two men. Although certainty should not be regarded as negative per se, it potentially causes human mind to totalize and therefore dominate alterity on the basis of the type of knowledge he accounts as certain on a subjective rational ground. Throughout history, the illusion of epistemic certainty has given rise to myriads of wars, colonization, and exploitation. Basically, in epistemology, there must be certainty in what one claims to be rational knowledge. Regarding the problematic nature of certainty, Jason Stanley argues:

knowledge requires epistemic certainty, and being epistemologically certain of a proposition requires having independent evidence that logically entails that proposition. Since we do not have such evidence for external world propositions, we do not know external propositions. (Stanley [2008]: 35)

The fact that Vladimir and Estragon cannot thematize with certainty what the arrival of Godot will bring to their lives can be in fact an indication of their rationality. What if Godot's offer could not salvage the two tramps? On what logical evidence should they be expected to base their knowledge of what Godot can do for them? Such an attitude toward what is and remains outside-of-self, thus, positively affects not only their approach to the world as the unknown Other, but also the dyad's relationship with each other. The two old tramps entitle the other to his own distance and independence. The same-other interaction in fact is «not the disappearance of distance, not a bringing together» (Lévinas [1961]: 34). Throughout the play, Vladimir and Estragon demonstrate a significant degree of

dependency on one another to survive the absurdity and anguish of what befalls them. Nevertheless, they keep their relationship with the Other at a level of ethical distance or independence insofar as the Other does not feel forced to stay or leave or has to reduce his radically distinct alterity to obeying the Same.

In the opening of both acts, when they first encounter after a stint of Estragon's absence, Vladimir expresses his preference for his friend's presence by expressing his joy with such statements as «So there you are again», «I'm glad to see you back», «I thought you were gone forever», «together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this», «Come here till I embrace you». These scenes seem to be a portrayal of Vladimir's dependence on the presence of Estragon. If dependence is defined as a «need for contact, approval, and attention» (Sroufe et al. [1983]: 1626), then Vladimir's sense of cheer at sight of his friend for the most part seems to be suggestive of his need for contact. On another occasion, Vladimir again reveals his dependence on Estragon's otherness as a source of contact and comfort:

VLADIMIR. Gogo!... Gogo!... GOGO! Estragon wakes with a start.

ESTRAGON. (restored to the horror of his situation). I was asleep! (Despairingly.)
Why will you never let me sleep?

VLADIMIR. I felt lonely.

ESTRAGON. I had a dream.

VLADIMIR. Don't tell me! [...]

ESTRAGON. (gesture toward the universe). This one is enough for you? (Silence.)

It's not nice of you, Didi. Who am I to tell my private nightmares to if
I can't tell them to you?

VLADIMIR. Let them remain private. You know I can't bear that. (Beckett [1954]: 20)

While Vladimir's type of dependence can be basically regarded as a need to communicate the anxiety of waiting with the other, Estragon depends on Vladimir in a more physical sense. For instance, he is the one who usually needs to be fed (Vladimir gives him a carrot) or in act II, during Vladimir's singing softly, Estragon falls asleep for whom Vladimir takes off his coat and lays it across Estragon's shoulders and he himself then starts to pace up the stage and swing his arms to keep himself warm. When Estragon wakes with a start, Vladimir runs to him and puts his arms around him as a gesture of comfort and affection. On mysterious occasions, Estragon is beaten by certain men when he sleeps alone in the ditch to which Vladimir's response is quite fatherly supportive:

VLADIMIR. No but I do. It's because you don't know how to defend yourself. I
Wouldn't have let them beat you.

ESTRAGON. You couldn't have stopped them.

VLADIMIR. Why not?

ESTRAGON. There was ten of them.

VLADIMIR. No, I mean before they beat you. I would have stopped you from
whatever it was you were doing.

ESTRAGON. I wasn't doing anything.

VLADIMIR. Then why did they beat you?

ESTRAGON. Ah no, Gogo, the truth is there are things that escape you that don't escape me, you must feel it yourself. (Beckett [1954]: 116-117)

Despite their dependence on one another, there is hardly an imposition of assimilation in the sense of absorbing the alterity of the other into the same. In several comical scenes, Estragon's response to his relationship with Vladimir fluctuates between pairing and parting. On the one hand, he feels that this relationship might not get anywhere and as a consequence suggests separation, feeling that they «are not made for the same road» (Beckett [1954]: 47). On the other hand, he shows dependence on Vladimir: «Stay with me!», «You let me go» (Beckett [1954]: 114). Also, when Vladimir states that not even once did he wake up the night before (without Estragon), Estragon remarks that Vladimir perhaps is better off if he (Estragon) is not around. Estragon's emotional response to this external stimulus (Vladimir's peaceful night without him) is then with shock «Happy?». Although it is always Estragon who suggests parting as the Same, he finds it hard to leave and continue without Vladimir as the other. Andrea L. Yates holds that Didi and Gogo without each other «would be looking at a mirror with no reflection» (Yates [2004]: 439). She emphasises that it is such reflection that substantiates their existence. Whether this intersubjective relationship between the two tramps proceeds or dissolves is not certain. However, one certain thing is the amount of freedom and independence the Other essentially possesses to finally decide to stay or part without feeling dominated or controlled:

VLADIMIR: (without anger). It's not certain.

ESTRAGON: No, nothing is certain.

Vladimir slowly crosses the stage and sits down beside Estragon.

VLADIMIR: We can still part, if you think it would be better.

ESTRAGON: It's not worthwhile now.

Silence.

VLADIMIR: No, it's not worthwhile now. (Beckett [1954]: 109)

In either case, Vladimir as the Same does not restrict Estragon's independence or the other way around and that is when this type of distance between the same and the other gives their relationship an ethical shape of independence. If Estragon as the Other does not leave, it is not because he feels restricted, dominated or even compelled by Vladimir, but because he is uncertain of his own parting decision or cannot leave, for he knows Vladimir has always been a support. The relationship between Vladimir and Estragon thus seems less a burdensome connection or an egoistic benefit than a preference to see the other around as a source of mental comfort. Bennett perceives the two's interaction as a productive precinct to pursue meaning. He asserts «now that visiting Godot may be far-fetched

for them, they realise that their lives are meaningful because of their relationship» (Bennett [2011]: 51). Despite their dependence on one another, they are already conscious of the independence they have established their relationship on. This ethical view that «the same and the other at the same time maintain themselves in relationship and absolve [Lévinas's emphasis] themselves from this relation, remain absolutely separated» (Lévinas [1961]: 102) seems to properly depict Beckett's two main figures. Of course, it must be emphasized here that Lévinas suggests a relationship within independence and not totally independent.

4. Conclusion

Beckett's most outstanding achievement, to concur with Lawrence Graver, is how he dramatizes the foundation of human condition: «the state of "being there"» (Graver [2004]: 11). She correctly argues that *Waiting for Godot* is to a great degree a play about relationships with its typical separating and coming back together. However, to add an important additional point to Graver's argument, one should say that although their primary goal is to keep their state of being there to ultimately meet Godot, it is the ethical quality of «being there» in relation to the other through cognitive distance that seems to make their state of being there valuable. By restructuring the concept of ethical distance between the same-other relation, we observe that although the failure and misfortune of Beckett's despondent men evoke our deepest sympathy, they remind us that cognitive distance from what there is and always remains outside-of-self in actuality can bring about an ethical relationship with the Other. In this respect, in both Lévinas's philosophical theory and Beckett's dramatic discourse, the ultimate indeterminacy in the Same's subjective cognition and definition of alterity from which cognitive distance emerges is foregrounded. Cognitive distance is shown to play a pivotal role in the precinct of ethics as it safeguards the exteriority of the other from the Same's tendency to totalize what is not I.

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Thriving Together: Enhancing Quality of Life through Biodiversity Conservation

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Abstract. The article deals with biodiversity by showing the origin of the concept and the impact it had in international policies and public debate. In the second part, it investigates the concept of quality of life by reconstructing the philosophical debate that gave rise to the subjective, objective and hybrid theories that seek a synthesis between the previous two. The article concludes by describing the University of Florence’s “Percepisco” project coordinated by Andrea Coppi and Matteo Galletti that shows a concrete case of excellent synergy between quality of life and biodiversity protection.

Keywords. Biodiversity, well-being, quality of life, ecology.

1. *Biodiversity*

Since its appearance, the term biodiversity has rapidly imposed itself within the ecological reflections committed to acknowledging and fighting against the environmental catastrophe affecting the entire planet. In recent years, the word biodiversity has finally reached the general public, becoming familiar to public debate. As Marcello Buiatti pointed out back in 2007: «the

term ‘biodiversity’ has become familiar to many, you hear it often on television, you read about it in newspapers and magazines, you talk about it in the most diverse circles» (Buiatti [2007]: 6).

Until a few decades ago, however, the name biodiversity did not exist at all. As Sahotra Sarkar recalls (Sarkar [2002]: 131-155), the first to use the term was Walter G. Rosen during the National Forum held in Washington between September 21 and 24, 1986, under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences and the Smithsonian Institution. At the Forum, which «featured more than 60 leading biologists, economists, agricultural experts, philosophers, representatives of assistance and lending agencies, and other professionals» (Wilson [1988]: V), the expression “biodiversity” was used by Rosen as nothing more than a shorthand for “biological diversity”. Before long, however, the term took hold and became the title of the forum’s proceedings edited by Edward Osborne Wilson in 1988 (Wilson [1988]).

This is the reason why Wilson is usually considered the father of biodiversity, although the interdisciplinary nature of the concept has many sources and has been defined in different ways (for instance Reid, Miller [1989]¹; Fiedler, Jain [1992]²; Wilson [2001]³). Still, they all agree that biodiversity is the exuberance and richness with which life propagates itself in harmony with the Earth; which means, to phrase it more rigorously, that biodiversity is not only the variability of the living organisms present in the ecosystems that contain them, but it also implies the delicate balance with ecosystems. Biodiversity is, in fact, the resulting balance of three levels of difference: biological diversity within a species, among different species, and across ecosystems.

Beyond the discrepancies between definitions that followed the appearance of the concept, what is crucial to emphasize is that, along with the foundation of the U.S. Society for Conservation Biology in 1985, which «marked the formation of a new interdisciplinary field dedicated to the conservation of biological diversity» (Sarkar [2002]: 131) and the publication of Michael E. Soulé’s “manifesto” for the new discipline titled *What Is Conservation Biology?* in one of the US widest biological readership journals in the 1980’s “Bioscience” (Soulé [1985]: 727-734), the forum created a positive synergy that renewed the landscape of environmental studies. As Sarkar pointed out, «a sociologically synergistic interaction between the use of “biodiversity” and the growth of conservation biology as a discipline occurred and it led to the re-configuration of environmental studies that we see today: biodiversity conservation has emerged as the central focus of environmental concern» (Sarkar [2002]: 131).

If «in 1988, *biodiversity* did not appear as a keyword in *Biological Abstracts*, and *biological diversity* appeared once, in 1993, *biodiversity* appeared 72 times, and *biological diversity* 19 times» (Takacs [1996]: 39). Within a few years, four journals with the word biodiversity in the title came up: «*Canadian Biodiversity*,

appeared in 1991; a second, *Tropical Biodiversity*, appeared in 1992; *Biodiversity Letters* and *Global Biodiversity* followed in 1993 (Sarkar [2002]: 132). All of this demonstrates an immediate interest in the topic which crossed the boundaries of academic debate. Indeed, during the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (UNCED) of 1992 the first *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) was signed. With the Convention, the signatory countries committed themselves to pursuing three common goals: «the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding» (CBD, article 1: objectives) namely a fair use of the planet's natural and genetic resources useful to protect biodiversity and promote sustainable development.

Attended by 172 governments, 108 heads of state and 2,400 representatives of nongovernmental organizations, the UNCED (also known as *Rio de Janeiro Conference*) was an unprecedented event in terms of media impact and relative policy-making choices. In addition to the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, the UNCED drafted important documents such as the “*Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests*” and the “*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*”, which pioneered the Kyoto Protocol namely the first international treaty committing industrialized countries to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases responsible for global warming. 191 countries have ratified the Protocol with the significant and paradigmatic absence of the United States, which also did not ratify the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. Along with the Vatican City, the United States is *de facto* the only country that makes it impossible to consider the convention a global agreement.

The estimates given on the drastic reduction in biodiversity are, however, staggering. According to the *International Union for Conservation of Nature* (IUCN) *Red List*, more than 46 thousand species are threatened with extinction (that is still 28% of all assessed species).⁴ The most alarming fact, in any case, is not just the number of animal and plant species facing extinction but the drastically increasing trend of this lost: «recent extinction rates are up to two orders of magnitude higher than the background extinction rate and future extinction rates are projected to be at least as high as current rates and likely one or two orders of magnitude higher» (Proença, Pereira [2013]: 173). This trend led many scholars to argue that we are experiencing the sixth “mass extinction”⁵. Ceballos and his research team, for instance, which purposely adopted «extremely conservative assumptions whether human activities are causing a mass extinction» to «minimize the evidence of an incipient mass extinction», showed that «the average

rate of vertebrate species loss over the last century is up to 100 times higher than the background rate» (Ceballos et al. [2015]). According to Ceballos' assessments «the number of species that have gone extinct in the last century would have taken, depending on the vertebrate taxon, between 800 and 10,000 years to disappear. These estimates reveal an exceptionally rapid loss of biodiversity over the last few centuries, indicating that a sixth mass extinction is already under way» (Ceballos et al. [2015]).

Given that there are essentially four causes of the drastic reduction in biodiversity – namely land consumption and habitat fragmentation, pollution of air, water and soil, exponential consumption of natural resources, and the arrival of invasive exotic species – and that all four causes can be traced back to the activities of human beings, it is evident that it is precisely its neo-capitalist economic model that is destroying the planet. It is no coincidence that Jeff Tollefson begins his important article published in *Nature* in 2019 by stating that “up to one million plant and animal species face extinction, many within decades, *due to human activities*” (Tollefson [2019] *italics mine*). These data are not fanciful but come from a United Nations-backed panel called the *Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (IPBES) whose «analysis distils findings from nearly 15,000 studies and government reports, integrating information from the natural and social sciences, indigenous peoples and traditional farming communities» (Tollefson [2019]). We are talking about the major international appraisal of biodiversity in recent years, attended, in fact, by the representatives of 132 governments.

As Tollefson reports, the results are anything but encouraging: about 75% of land and 66% of ocean areas have been «significantly altered» by people while the exploitation of plants and animals through harvesting, logging, hunting, and fishing and pollution threatens the balance on which biodiversity stands. This is the reason why, according to the IPBES experts «without “transformative changes” to the world’s economic, social and political systems to address this crisis» (Tollefson [2019]) there is no future for the planet. Biodiversity will continue to decrease, making planet Earth increasingly «scorched», to use Jonathan Crary’s accurate definition (Crary [2022]).

The neoliberal confidence in progress devoted to perpetual and blind expansion is coming to terms with a scorched planet that reveals how the economic model on which capitalism has built its foundations is no longer sustainable. As IPBES chair Robert Watson states, «we are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide» (Tollefson [2019]). What is being destroyed in fact is not only the environment that feeds and harbors us but the quality of people’s lives. In this sense, it becomes essential to reflect on what we mean by “quality of life” to understand the vital and essential bond we have with nature in general and biodiversity in particular.

2. Quality of life

Quality of life is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses the overall “well-being” of individuals, communities, environments, and societies at large. It extends beyond merely favorable living conditions to include the quality of habitats, work environments, and social settings. This holistic view makes quality of life a cross-cutting and multidisciplinary topic, drawing significant interest from a wide range of fields including philosophy, economics, political science, urban planning, sociology, biology, and medicine (Diener et al., [1999]; Cummins, [2000]). Each discipline offers insights that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how quality of life can be measured and enhanced. For instance, economists may investigate how factors like income and employment rates shape overall well-being (Sen [2001]). Political scientists explore the effects of governance, policy decisions, and civic engagement on life quality (Putnam [2000]). Urban planners assess how city design, accessibility, and infrastructure enhance livability (Gehl [2010]). Sociologists focus on the social dynamics that foster or hinder community well-being, addressing issues such as inequality and social cohesion (Wilkinson, Pickett [2009]). Meanwhile, researchers in psycho-biology and medicine delve into the health-related determinants of quality of life, highlighting the significance of physical health, mental wellness, and access to healthcare services (Ruggeri [2013]).

Within the philosophical debate, two opposite macro-perspectives can be acknowledged: the objective theories and the subjective theories of quality of life (Parfit [1984]). According to the first one, quality of life can be measured by certain universal criteria, indicators or goods that exist independently of individual opinions or feelings. These criteria often include tangible factors such as income, education, health status, and access to basic needs like food and shelter. Proponents of this view argue that there are objective standards for evaluating well-being across different societies and cultures. An example of objective theory can be John Rawls’ «primary social goods» as it appears in the first edition of *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls [1971]: 90-95). Other perspectives appear decisively more nuanced such as Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach, which emphasizes measurable factors like education and health as essential components of well-being, but refuses to give «one pre-determined canonical list of capabilities chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning» (Sen [2005]: 158). According to Sen «to have such a fixed list, emanating entirely from pure theory, is to deny the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why» (Sen [2005]: 158). This does not prevent Sen from thinking of certain capabilities⁶ but it does not lead him to hypostatize and universalize a certain number of them.⁷ Unlike Sen,⁸ who gave «a lot of examples but never made a list of central capabilities» (Nussbaum [2000]: 5), Nussbaum outlined a

list of ten central human capabilities⁹ that, according to her, should be universally valued since they are the «bare minimum of what respect for human dignity requires» (Nussbaum [2000]: 5).¹⁰

In contrast with universal claims on what is, or is supposed to be good, or at least create the condition for something good to happen, subjective theories emphasize the importance of individual perspectives as primary in assessing quality of life. With different nuances, these perspectives suggest that quality of life is closely tied to personal preferences, desires, and emotional well-being. Instead of relying on external standards or universal criteria, they focus on individual experiences and self-reported assessments of well-being. This approach often acknowledges the historical and geographical stimuli affirming that quality of life can vary greatly from person to person, influenced by circumstances, cultural backgrounds, and personal values. However, at the heart of subjective theories is the idea that what matters is irreducible to universal standards and, therefore, the quality of life should be based on how individuals perceive and evaluate their lives.

Following Parfit's distinctions it is common to ascribe not only hedonism to subjective theories but also «desire-fulfillment theories, [which] developed to address the theoretical problems of hedonism» (Schramme [2017]: 161) to the same category.¹¹ However, some believe that this is not a correct demarcation since hedonism «has both subjective and objective version» (Bognar [2005]: 569). In this sense, some authors feel the necessity to further problematize the issue by adding further demarcations (Schramme [2017]). Without going into detail, which would take us away from our purposes, what is interesting to point out is that even within subjective theories there is a debate that makes some perspectives appear more nuanced than others. This, combined with the fact that it is difficult to argue for a theory that is completely subjective or objective without being exposed to easy criticism has led to the development of so-called hybrid theories.

Acknowledging that «well-being is in part a matter of the objective value of elements of the subject's life, but also in part a matter of her subjective evaluation of those elements» (Woodard [2016]: 161) hybrid theories establish a theoretical holistic landscape that allows for more fluid and less hypostatized movement within two rigidly distinct dimensions. Moreover, recognizing the importance of subjective perception without abandoning the possibility of working out a shared context of objective livability and well-being, hybrid theories enable important ethical reflections on the ecosystem and the need to protect the delicate balance that, as we have seen, is essential to maintaining biodiversity, and consequently, to the well-being of all.

In this sense, it is interesting that the framework developed by the *Quality of Life Expert Group of the European Commission* (Eurostat [2017]) adopted a hybrid system to assess quality of life affirming that «quality of life is a broader

concept than economic production and living standards. It includes the full range of factors that influences what we value in living, reaching beyond its material side» (Eurostat [2017]: 8). Although material conditions are fundamental to an individual's well-being they are inadequate to assess the quality of life in its complexity. «Life satisfaction, affects, meaning, and purpose of life», are indeed key dimensions to evaluate the «overall experience of life» (Eurostat [2017]: 19). The institutional relevance and authoritativeness of the European Commission report marks an important step forward in the collaboration between experts and policymakers useful for the development of living conditions that are sustainable and increase the quality of life in a broader sense.

3. *Percepisco*

The University of Florence's "Percepisco" project coordinated by Andrea Coppi and Matteo Galletti embraced a hybrid conceptualization of quality of life and used the report developed by the *Quality of Life Expert Group of the European Commission* (Eurostat [2017]) as a framework to think about the relation between biodiversity and quality of life. The project aimed to evaluate from an empirical point of view the effect that urban green spaces characterized by a different level of plant diversity may have on the well-being and health of the users. If in fact it has been already widely documented how urban green spaces play an important role in increasing wellbeing from an objective and subjective point of view, there are not many studies that pose a specific interest between biodiversity and the quality of life. To show this correlation, the research unit adopted an interdisciplinary approach that combined philosophical investigation on well-being and quality of life with computer science and botanical/environmental research.

Through the sentiment analysis of online reviews left by users on Florentine city parks characterized by different levels of biodiversity, the project aimed to assess the degree of affection of park users. The data analysis showed that the user's perception of the specific biodiversity was absent or in any case not detected in a sufficient range of linguistic descriptors and/or explicit references. Nevertheless, the relation between well-being and pleasure arising from the surrounding beauty emerged clearly. The research unit decided then to specify the aesthetical category of beauty.¹² Indeed, it has been noticed that pleasure-related-to-beauty can lead to two different kinds of psychological reactions which enriched/complicated a pure aesthetic contemplation. Through a sufficient number of linguistic descriptors, it was possible to show that beauty generates not only a contemplative pleasure but also an "activating" and a "relaxing" pleasure. While the former enacts the subject's will to actively interact with the surround-

ing space in the form of walking, exploring, jogging, running and playing sport in general, the latter places the subject in a situation of calm reception of the surrounding atmosphere. Besides the general contemplation of beauty and its capacity to produce pleasure and then well-being, it has been possible to acknowledge that the subject reaction to pleasure-related-to-beauty is often linked with a subject's drive to actively interact with the environment or to let itself passively immersed in it.

In this way, "Percepisco" project showed a significant relation between different level of plant diversity and "activating/relaxing" pleasure by providing a solid empirical basis useful for policymakers engaged in the promotion and development of urban green areas that increase the quality of life in accordance with the protection of biodiversity.

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Notes

- 1 «Biodiversity is the variety of the world’s organisms, including their genetic diversity and the assemblages they form. It is the blanket term for the natural biological wealth that undergirds human life and well-being. The breadth of the concept reflects the interrelatedness of genes, species and ecosystems» (Reid, Miller [1989]: 3).

- 2 «Full range of variety and variability within and among living organisms, their associations, and habitat-oriented ecological complexes. Term encompasses ecosystem, species, and landscape as well as intraspecific (genetic) levels of diversity» (Fiedler, Jain [1992]: 484)
- 3 «The variety of organisms considered at all levels, from genetic variants belonging to the same species through arrays of species to arrays of genera, families, and still higher taxonomic levels; includes the variety of ecosystems, which comprise both the communities of organisms within particular habitats and the physical conditions under which they live» (Wilson [2001]: 682).
- 4 For the source: <https://www.iucnredlist.org> (2024, December 4).
- 5 Also called “Anthropocene extinction”. Since its appearance, the term Anthropocene has undergone major developments, criticisms, and insights that have altered its temporal extension by pointing out different aspects of human’s impact on nature. In this sense, terms have been coined such as “Capitalocene,” which emphasizes the influence of capitalism on the ecological crisis (Moore [2016]), “Plantationocene,” which highlights the historical legacy of slavery and colonial plantations (Haraway, Tsing [2019]), and “Chthulucene,” which focuses on the coexistence of humans and nonhumans (Haraway [2016]).
- 6 «I have, of course, discussed various lists of capabilities that would seem to demand attention in theories of justice and more generally in social assessment, such as the freedom to be well nourished, to live disease-free lives, to be able to move around, to be educated, to participate in public life, and so on» (Sen [2005]: 158). By the same token, Sen argues that «poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes» (Sen [2001]: 87).
- 7 «My scepticism is about fixing a cemented list of capabilities that is seen as being absolutely complete (nothing could be added to it) and totally fixed (it could not respond to public reasoning and to the formation of social values). I am a great believer in theory, and certainly accept that a good theory of evaluation and assessment has to bring out the relevance of what we are free to do and free to be (the capabilities in general), as opposed to the material goods we have and the commodities we can command. But I must also argue that pure theory cannot ‘freeze’ a list of capabilities for all societies for all time to come, irrespective of what the citizens come to understand and value. That would be not only a denial of the reach of democracy, but also a misunderstanding of what pure theory can do, completely divorced from the particular social reality that any particular society faces» (Sen [2001]: 87).
- 8 For a discussion of differences between Sen and Nussbaum’s approach, see Crocker (1992a).
- 9 (Nussbaum [2000]: 78-80). The list appears, with some minor modifications, also in Nussbaum (2011: 33-34).
- 10 For an accurate reconstruction of Nussbaum’s ethical thought, see Abbate (2024).
- 11 For a more detailed discussion along these lines, see Heathwood (2014), Heathwood (2016).
- 12 For an in-depth discussion of the relationship between aesthetics and environment, see Portera (2018).

Note e recensioni

La filosofia davanti al massacro degli animali, «aut aut», 401/2024, a cura di Massimo Filippi e Giovanni Leghissa, 200 pp., ISBN 9788842834120.

(di Teresa Masini)

Può davvero, il Discorso, *sentire* l'animale? Può farsi sangue, carne, per percepirne il battito cardiaco, respiro per fiutarne la pelle di tremante mortalità? Può farsi specchio dove accogliere il suo sguardo, per la prima e ultima volta? Il Discorso può parlare, quello è certo, l'Animale, e così ha sempre fatto, attraverso classificazioni, sistemi e dispositivi di rappresentazione del mondo per differenziare, separare, rinchiudere l'altro non umano, così che solo un «referente assente» (cfr. Adams 1990) – un soggetto muto, impersonale – rimanga sul campo di battaglia desertificato da quella parola. Il Discorso, ancora, rinnega e allontana l'animalità come un figlio ripudiato che, però, non si riesce a smettere di cercare.

La filosofia davanti al massacro degli animali, il volume monografico di aut aut, a cura di Massimo Filippi e Giovanni Leghissa, si appropria di questa ricerca inconclusa, esplorando e facendo divampare le voci e i desideri che disegnano sottotraccia il percorso all'indietro di un sentire che, prima o poi, tornerà a farsi corpo, a mostrarsi, a praticare. Edita da Il Saggiatore, aut aut è una rivista di filosofia e cultura, ed è proprio a partire dall'apparente contrasto e dalla divergenza di logiche tra il pensiero e l'animalità che, in questo volume, gli autori e le autrici ospitati, nomi di riferimento nel campo antispecista, provano a farsi spazio tra le pagine e tra le discipline, perturbando un campo di saperi che è stato sempre, prevalentemente, dell'umano per l'umano. Soprattutto dalla sistematizzazione dei *Critical Animal Studies* nei tardi anni '90, l'antispecismo, di quel "Discorso" proprio della filosofia occidentale, cerca di mettere in luce l'altra faccia del prisma, quella meno luminosa, che non ha ancora fatto i conti col fatto che non possiamo non pensare, non discutere, il *massacro degli animali*. Come chiosa Filippi a introduzione della miscellanea, oggi il pensiero filosofico non può più evitare di affrontare il sistema di sfruttamento e di messa a morte degli animali non umani, relegandola a una questione "morale". La questione animale è politica, e lo è ancora di più nel contesto attuale dell'industrializzazione della carne, la cui matrice capitalistica promuove un utilizzo reiterato del corpo animale, prima e dopo la sua morte. È un sistema che tocca, continua Filippi, primi fra tutti – in quanto corpi animali – noi, «il modo in cui pensiamo noi stessi, il nostro essere nel mondo e le nostre relazioni sociali intra- e interspecifiche» incarnate. I corpi, nelle teorie e prassi antispeciste, sono i mandanti e i destinatari di questa messa a morte senza fine: sono i corpi che mangiamo, che dissezioniamo, che incateniamo, che ingravidiamo... Sono i corpi che loro e noi abbiamo, in una vulnerabilità e una precarietà che non ci sono – o, almeno, non dovrebbero esserci – sconosciute, ad essere argomento principale della realtà quotidiana di un sistema intensivo di sfruttamento. Un approccio somatico, di stampo neomaterialista, è infatti parte

della scrittura degli articoli del volume. Decostruire il concetto di specie necessita prima di tutto il farsi carico del dispositivo materiale su cui viene impressa, come un ferro marchiatore sulla carne, l'idea di specie, a dividere i viventi tra corpi che contano e corpi che non contano affatto (cfr. Filippi, Reggi 2015). Lavorando sulle soglie e sulle porosità di questo campo di conoscenza, gli autori e le autrici del volume individuano e connettono in maniera magistrale i punti caldi e quelli ciechi delle filosofie di quegli uomini che hanno iniziato per primi a proporre riflessioni non tanto su chi siano gli animali per noi, ma su chi siamo noi davanti agli animali, e su chi potremmo diventare. A partire dalle proposizioni lanciate dai filosofi classici che più hanno contribuito alla naturalizzazione del dominio umano sugli animali (si vedano i testi di Massimo Filippi, Marco Maurizi, Bianca Nogara Notarianni e Carlo Salzani), alle filosofie materialiste più indisciplinate, che colgono nello sfruttamento degli animali le implicazioni teoriche della storia (Angela Balzano, Antonia Anna Ferrante, Federica Timeto); dall'individuazione dell'intersezionalità della questione animale nei testi di Elisa Bosisio e Chiara Stefanoni, passando poi per gli utilissimi attraversamenti storico-teorici di Leghissa e Rivera per arrivare ai contributi di nuove traiettorie sulla corporeità (Dario Cecchi, Gioele Cima e Valentina Gaudiano), gli articoli di questo numero esplorano le forme di oppressione condivise, ma anche la vivibilità e le possibili fioriture collettive secondo un quadro di liberazione totale, facendo emergere e attingendo da quegli scritti ciò che José Esteban Muñoz chiamava il "non-più-conscio", i baluginii passati di una collettività futura (le tracce, avrebbe detto Derrida) che spingono lo sguardo oltre la certezza epistemologica, verso qualcosa che è denso e là per sorgere (cfr. Muñoz 2009). Questa tensione allo sconfinamento, all'interferenza, alla risonanza tra punti e mondi apparentemente lontani di questi scritti, è parte costitutiva di un campo di forze affettivo capace di far crollare ogni nozione cristallizzata dell'umano, depotenziando i suoi dispositivi di animalizzazione, per cercare, in un dialogo risonante, alternative alle logiche di potere e agli squilibri relazionali all'interno della società tutta, umana e più-che-umana.

La filosofia davanti al massacro degli animali è un volume necessario e importante nel campo sempre aperto degli studi critici sugli animali, ma anche in quello ripetutamente ed eternamente da schiudere della filosofia. Il numero di aut aut riesce infatti a inserire l'animalità, intesa come animale infestante, eternamente "fuori luogo", nello spazio che più gli è avverso, come etica alternativa che riconosca che non solo il discorso ha effetti materiali, ma che il regno materiale – animale – è già sempre impregnato di effetti discorsivi (si veda Alaimo 2016). L'animale, accolto nel pensiero, attiva contraddizioni in grado di mettere in crisi il sistema di oppressione e di sfruttamento, di smentirne le logiche, di "auto-buggarlo", ma anche di agire una messa in questione dell'intero esistente, in un'opera decostruttiva del concetto universale di specie, portando luce sulle dinamiche di animalizzazione che colpiscono i soggetti minorizzati, animali o

umani che siano. Il volume monografico di aut aut è, quindi, una chiamata politica capace di prendersi carico – senza sconfinare in utopie essenzialiste – del peso di un presente che non è più abbastanza, che ha bisogno di *discorso vivo* su un futuro multispecie e antispecista denso di possibilità, e ne ha bisogno adesso.

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Jonathan Gray, *Dislike-Minded: Media, Audiences, and the Dynamics of Taste*, NYU Press, 272 pp., ISBN 9781479809981.

(by Gabriel Thomas Tugendstein)

Whereas Tolstoy famously wrote that «Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way» ([1877]: 1), contemporary media studies suggest a twisted paraphrase: unhappy audiences are all alike, while every happy audience is happy in its own way. At least that is the claim of Jonathan Gray, who sees this as a mistake that he spends most of his 2021 *Dislike-Minded: Media, Audiences, and the Dynamics of Taste* attempting to rectify. If liking a piece of media can manifest in many ways and perform many social functions, he argues, so too can disliking a piece of media.

Take the 2019 film adaptation of *Cats*. Critics colorfully savaged the movie, claiming that, for instance, it would «prompt even the dark god Cthulhu to emit an impressed eldritch shriek of “nehehehehehe”» (@kylebuchanan [2019]). Surely this judgment is not reducible to simplistic attitudes of snubbing or displeasure, as if it were equivalent to, “watching *Cats* is not fun and you’d be better off avoiding it,” which is what many analyses imply.

By contrast, Gray attempts to carve out space for an attitude of dislike – or rather, attitudes, seeing as though there are a multitude – that sees them as neither a straightforward rejection nor subset of fandom. Early on, he writes that fandom and dislike travel «part of their textual road together, diverging at a key point. Fan studies has mapped out part of that road with skill, but my task here is to map the divergent path» ([2021]: 11). The book is structured around 216 interviews. Cushioned by moments of theoretical excavation, interview quotations function as its foundation.

The first chapter is preoccupied with justifying the book's goal, showing why exactly disliking certain media is a legitimate object of study, despite the implications of previous research. Though he is careful to hedge against the notion that discussing dislike is altogether novel, it is hard not to read this as part of a fairly insular conflict. While it may be true that positive fandom gets more exposure in media studies research, and that structural (i.e., “like” buttons without “dislike” buttons on social media platforms) and social (i.e., “respectability politics”) foreground positivity, the suggestion that negative reactions to media are somehow lost in the shuffle reads as disingenuous or out-of-touch. However undertheorized dislike is within the academy, it is no more dismissed than any other form of aesthetic judgment within popular culture.

Luckily, Gray doesn't spend too much time on self-justification, moving on to a less argumentative, more exploratory investigation of dislike. Because of this, *Dislike-Minded* does not read as out-of-touch. It is attuned to the complex, deeply human nature of disliking a musical artist, television show, or movie. This is achieved in part due to the idiosyncrasy of the interviews. Spanning a diversity of subjects, the interviews are culled from five separate studies, three of which were not explicitly about disliking media. This lends a messiness to the data – more the gradual elucidation of a multi-faceted culture à la ethnography than direct answers to established questions. And while a lesser researcher might dismiss certain interviewee's assertions as frivolous, Gray is largely successful at maintaining an empathetic, restrained perspective. The attempt is not to prove a theory, such that interviewees' responses are merely code for some established type, but to sketch a framework of inquiry in which those types are fluid interpretative tools.

The sketch itself is extremely fruitful. It becomes apparent that the act of disliking a piece of media has tentacles in a variety of social processes:

Dislike can perform who one is or who one thinks one should be; dislike is a response to feeling forced to engage; dislike identifies texts that represent larger pains and grievances; dislike can be a yearning for something the text is not offering; dislike can be a letdown from something once loved; dislike can fight back against annoyances; dislike can be joyful and laughing even while pained; dislike can be aestheticized; or dislike can be a combination of any of these (Gray [2021]: 212).

The third and fourth of these – disliking a piece of media as a representation of a diseased media landscape and disliking a piece of media as a failure to fulfill promise – are the subjects of Chapter 2. It is an immensely interesting chapter, digging into reasons why, for instance, feminist viewers may reserve more dislike for milquetoast, superficially progressive female-led television shows than shows that overtly follow sexist tropes.

Yet I will spend the rest of my review on the first of these – dislike as a performance of identity. This is the most well-trodden territory in the literature, thanks to the long shadow of Pierre Bourdieu. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), Bourdieu posited an interpretation of aesthetic taste as a means of enacting and calcifying social hegemony. Running alongside the economy of material goods, there is an economy of *cultural capital*, which one acquires by, to put it roughly, liking and disliking the “correct” cultural products. To dislike a piece of media, then, is to express one’s superior cultural capital as compared to those who like that piece of media. By trashing the *Cats* film, one performs the identity of a certain cultural elite – the type of person who prefers the historically-informed drama of director Tom Hooper’s earlier *The King’s Speech* to the celebrity-inundated camp of *Cats*.

Gray finds Bourdieu’s framework useful, but suggests that it is incomplete. For instance, he joins a large camp of theorists in expanding the analysis to matter of race and gender, not just class. One’s dislike of a film may be an expression of being a certain racialized or gendered subject. Moreover, he is sensitive to “silent performances”, or ways in which one might muzzle a negative impression either for social benefit or out of a principled disdain for active dislike, and how these in turn interact with the economy of cultural capital. Such expansions are welcome, especially his insightful analysis of a series of interviews carried out in Malawi. However, it can feel as though important regions of the discussion are left untouched.

For one, Gray largely maintains fealty to what Daniel Silver (2021) calls “the Logic of the Like”. This logic reduces aesthetic judgments to flattened “likes” and “dislikes” – potentially with stock reasons undergirding them – and uses these judgments to define clusters. Silver associates this with Bourdieu and contrasts it with the work of John Dewey (e.g. Dewey [2005]), for whom forming an aesthetic judgment was predicated on having an aesthetic *experience*, which is self-contained and irreducible; two negative aesthetic judgments cannot necessarily be equated. To this we can add frameworks in which texts function as implied subjects, such as friends (e.g. Booth [1988]; Cohen [1998]). Disliking a text *qua* an irreducibly phenomenological experience and disliking a text *qua* an implied subject are quite distinct from disliking a text *qua* an aspect of one’s cultural environment, which Gray’s analysis rarely wavers from.

Even within the Logic of the Like, there are nuances that anyone building on Gray's work ought to give more airtime to. For example, Paul Dimaggio ([1982], [1992]) has shown how accessibility barriers underpin objects' cultural capital. The inaccessibility of a cultural product is of a piece with its cultural cachet. With the rise of digital and streaming media, traditional barriers have been broken down. Any analysis of taste-as-performance must reckon with the fact that this performance is unmoored from tangible obstacles. That is, because *everyone* has access to *all* types of media, expressing cultural capital by disliking a certain type of media cannot be underpinned, as it historically has, by the fact that so-called undesirables also have access to it. Perhaps that leads us to engage more with proposals that replace highbrow taste with "omnivory" (a wide variety of traditionally highbrow and lowbrow tastes) (Peterson [1992], [1997]) or *method* of consumption (e.g., listening to music on vinyl as opposed to streaming) (Webster [2019]) as markers of cultural capital.

In sum, *Dislike-Minded* is an eminently entertaining book, delivered in an astute, empathetic voice. It is telling that my central critiques take the form of "tell me more". Some readers may find its broad, frequently non-committal perspective unfocused; yet I'm inclined to view its openness as a strength. Gray's work is sure to enrich conversations across a wide array of disciplines.

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