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## Kant on moral self-determination and self-knowledge<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

To appreciate Kant's philosophy is to appreciate the concept of «*a rational cognition from concepts*»<sup>1</sup>. It means to appreciate a conception of philosophy that aims to vindicate those claims to universal validity we lay by our judgements about the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. Those of us who appreciate Kantian philosophy are disappointed by all reductionist strategies where only *one* ground of justified judgement is acknowledged. In the same way, we dissociate ourselves from those theories whose conceptual structures are merely self-referential. What is most important to us gets lost in both cases, that is knowledge of ourselves and of the world in its whole complexity. However, understanding Kant's philosophy itself is not least complicated by the fact that Kant constantly revises it. Although this revision can usually be described less dramatically as development and unfolding, the reader is confronted with the problem of how to identify the reasons and circumstances, why Kant, at a particular moment of his career, surprised his readers with new conceptual distinctions, strategies and projects.

In past scholarship, these revisions were sometimes explained with Kant's supposed genius, claiming that he must have realized himself which aspects of his philosophy cannot stand up before the court of reason. Although there might be some truth in this, we nowadays cannot deny the importance external criticism had for Kant. Kant does not take the reasonable critics to be mere grumbler, but, quite the contrary, he (at least sometimes) takes them seriously as contributors to the project of the critique of reason. Without their critical objections and enquiries, Kant wouldn't have seen the occasion to write just those texts we today still have an occasion to reflect on.<sup>2</sup> Thus, clarifying what kinds of problems Kant's philosophy was dealing with requires to take its development into consideration. However, this history of development does not aim at historicizing the project of "*a rational cognition from concepts*". Quite the contrary. It aims to understand the very systematic core of this project. As readers of

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Kant's texts, we hope to find those treasures of rationality still buried underneath the layers of dust a centuries-long and sometimes fatiguing reception of Kant has left.

Exactly this is the reason why I will address today Kant's claim, often discussed in literature, that «the 'I think' [...] is an empirical proposition» and «contains within itself the proposition 'I exist'». <sup>3</sup> I will discuss this “existential proposition”, as Kant calls it, <sup>4</sup> from the same perspective Kant himself discussed it in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This perspective is that of a subject that refers to itself in the act of thinking in order to cognize itself. Kant is convinced that self-knowledge [“*Selbsterkenntniß*”] <sup>5</sup> has to be conceived as an act of self-determination, that is performed in thinking. What is specific to his 1787 conception is that Kant here seeks to integrate in an interdisciplinary way theoretical and practical self-knowledge. Kant maintains that we can determine our existence, of which we are conscious in the act of the “I think”, not only as an object of inner sense as appearance, but also by means of the “causality through freedom” as an intelligence existing in the noumenal world. How does Kant explain our determination as noumenal beings from a practical point of view? In the 1787 edition of the *Critique*, at the end of the section dedicated to the “Paralogisms of pure reason”, Kant states that in “certain laws of the pure employment of reason” we have «the occasion for presupposing ourselves to be legislative fully *a priori* in regard to our own existence, and as determining this existence». <sup>6</sup> What has Kant in mind? He claims that our «consciousness of the moral law [...] reveals» to us «an admirable faculty», namely our spontaneity. <sup>7</sup> By means of the faculty of spontaneity, Kant argues, we are able to determine our existence given purely intellectually from a practical point of view on the basis of those logical functions by which we also determine the objects of the natural world. Because Kant refers in this passage to the doctrine of the fact of pure practical reason and to the doctrine of the categories of freedom, explained in the *Critique of practical reason* that was published at the end of 1787 <sup>8</sup>, the existence proposition ‘I think’ seems to be the hinge between the two doctrinal parts of Kant's philosophy, namely between his theoretical and his practical philosophy. It is as if critical philosophy's most important strategies converge in the “I think”.

In what follows, I will examine some of these strategies that constitute a common ground of Kant's critical philosophy more closely. I am particularly interested in determining the relationship between nature and freedom, and especially in the cluster of problems that were essential to Kant in 1787, not least because they figured into the preparatory work for the

*Critique of the Power of Judgement*.<sup>9</sup> What are the consequences for the concept of nature if the human being acquires self-knowledge as an appearance and, through the spontaneity of pure practical reason, as a noumenale subject? How is it possible, on the one hand, to conceive nature according to causal mechanisms, and on the other hand as a place where we are in a position to do what we morally ought to do, that is to act in accordance with those ends, through which we realize ourselves in the world as rational beings? To put it differently: How does Kant incorporate the idea of the purposiveness of nature into his conception of self-knowledge? How can we represent ourselves in a natural world as rational beings that act according to the law of freedom? If, according to Kant, the categorical imperative requests us to act according to maxims, that are qualified for universal legislation, this is a precise expression of the precarious self-relation in question: to will in such a way that we ourselves, as human beings, act on a law of freedom that necessarily determines our rational willing as pure intelligible subjects. Only in our willing are we capable of a form of self-determination, which leads to knowledge of our real nature [*Wesenserkenntnis*] contrary to knowledge in the realm of the appearances.

My paper is divided into *three* sections. First, I will outline the status of practical self-knowledge in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and discuss three criticisms put forward by one of the most important reviewers of Kant's writings, the theologian and pastor Hermann Andreas Pistorius<sup>10</sup>, to whom Kant reacted both in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Based on the concept of spontaneity, I will then try to gradually explain the meaning of the existential proposition "I think", as far as required for our problem. I will conclude with an objection to Kant's understanding of the existential proposition that is based in his very own means: If I do exist as an intelligent being in the noumenal world, why doesn't that amount to a proof of my eternal existence, too?

Before beginning to discuss Kant's conception of practical self-knowledge in the *Groundwork*, let me point out what I will not consider in this paper. *First*, I will not talk about the analytic and the synthetic model of rational self-knowledge Kant holds during the 1770s.<sup>11</sup> The analytic model he introduces in his anthropology lectures in the winter term 1772/73 for the first time, amount to the claim that we can know ourselves as substances through the mere analysis of the representation "I". The synthetic model is familiar from rational psychology, and Kant refutes it not until the publication of the first *Critique*. According to the synthetic model we can cognize ourselves as an immaterial substance or soul

by applying the syllogistic method to the “I”. *Second*, I will neither address specific issues from empirical psychological nor from anthropology, that is those kinds of knowledge that are in particular subject to the conditions of our receptivity. I will not be concerned with these specific determinations of our self, but I will rather concentrate on the basic model of thinking, willing and knowing these determinations are based on, namely Kant’s conception of the existential proposition “I think”. For this reason, I will *thirdly* neither address issues of moral motivation<sup>12</sup>, conscience, moral feelings and character, which are located at the intersection between intelligible and empirical self-determination.

## **2. Self-knowledge in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals***

I begin my reflections on Kant's conception of self-knowledge with the section of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* entitled “On the extreme boundary of all practical philosophy”<sup>13</sup>. This section is directly relevant to our problem, because in it Kant determines the relation between nature and freedom from the perspective of a subject that cognizes itself as an intelligence and as sensible nature at the same time. Kant first describes the task of speculative philosophy based on the question of how it is possible that the human being can act according to the rational idea of freedom, if, at the same time, he must conceive of himself as a “part of nature”. Speculative philosophy is supposed to show that «we think the human being in a different sense and relation when we call him free and when we hold him, as a part of nature, to be subject to its laws, and to show that both not only *can* very well coexist but also must be thought as *necessarily united* in the same subject».<sup>14</sup> To ensure this speculative philosophy has to resolve the dialectical contradiction it gets caught in when reflecting on nature and freedom. If the two perspectives were incompatible, also practical reason could not be rescued, since practical reason raises the «rightful claim»<sup>15</sup> that it is free and not subordinate to natural causality. According to Kant, this claim is justified in turn because we can explain one and the same action «at the same time»<sup>16</sup> through two different types of causality, thanks to our double citizenship in the intelligible and phenomenal world. Kant establishes this double citizenship on the basis of our self-consciousness. That the human being «must represent and think of himself in this twofold way, however, rests as regards the first on consciousness of himself as an object affected through the senses and, as regards the second on consciousness of himself as intelligence, that is, as independent of sensible impressions in the use of reason (hence as belonging to the world of understanding)».<sup>17</sup> As «intelligence» I think of myself as a «freely operating cause», as the «proper self», and I act «in accordance with principles of an intelligible world».<sup>18</sup>

My awareness that I exist as an intelligence and as a phaenomenon in the sensible world at the same time does not in itself imply that I *should* act according to the moral law. Why *ought* I to act «in accordance with principles of an intelligible world», if I could also submit myself to the laws of the sensible world? Kant answers the question in two steps. In his first step he refers to the causal relation between the two worlds: «But because *the world of understanding contains the ground of the world of sense and so too of its laws*, and is therefore immediately lawgiving with respect to my will (which belongs wholly to the world of understanding) and must accordingly also be thought as such, it follows that I shall cognize myself as intelligence, though on the other side as a being belonging to the world of sense, as nevertheless subject to the law of the world of understanding, that is, of reason, which contains in the idea of freedom the law of the world of understanding, and thus cognize myself as subject to the autonomy of the will; consequently the laws of the world of understanding must be regarded as imperatives for me, and actions in conformity with these as duties».<sup>19</sup> As intelligence, I am the cause of the laws of the sensible world. No doubt, Kant here thinks of the form my maxim has when I determine myself to act out of respect for the moral law. We are the lawgivers of our sensible nature because and insofar as the form of our maxims is causally grounded in pure practical reason and its formal constitution. The form of nature is identical with the form of the supersensible world, and vice versa. If this were different, we would not even presume a will for ourselves, «which lets nothing be put to his account that belongs merely to its desire and inclinations».<sup>20</sup> As «rational natural beings» we cognize ourselves as «determinable» by our reason to actions in the world.<sup>21</sup>

Referring to the nature of our “proper self” does not render Kant’s argument complete. In a second step, he needs to answer the question why I *should* care about my “proper self” and the demands of pure practical reason after all? Kant completes his argument rather surprisingly with the concept of interest.<sup>22</sup> He claims that what «arose from our proper self» interests us; «*but what belongs to mere appearance is necessarily subordinated by reason to the constitution of the thing in itself*».<sup>23</sup> What seems surprising to the modern reader of Kant is that reason itself does the work of subordinating one world under the other. Reason itself expresses what I would like to call the “principle of self-appropriation” of pure reason. It is based on Kant’s conviction, deeply rooted in Stoic philosophy<sup>24</sup>, that reason itself demands us to act in nature according to reason’s own law. Formally speaking, there is no difference between reason and nature when we act according to the principles of reason. Put differently: We ought to act in such a way that our willing as human beings does not contradict our necessary willing as pure rational beings. But why does pure reason will this

way? Why do we, as human beings, take an interest in performing our actions as responsible authors? Kant maintains that there is no answer to these questions. Rational interest is a *factum brutum* of our existence as rational and sensible beings. There is no way to justify it on non-rational grounds.

Regardless of how we evaluate this conception of a subject that in the consciousness of its spontaneity and receptivity conceives of himself as free and at the same time determined by natural causality, this conception has been harshly criticised by Kant's contemporaries. The probably three most important objections against the theory of the *Groundwork* that help us understand the motivation behind Kant's 1787 position, can be traced back to Pistorius' writings on Kant:

*First:* What is the status of «our individual existence»<sup>25</sup> if we know ourselves as an object in the empirical world only as appearance? In his answer to this question, Pistorius draws a connection to the problem of idealism: «Now, it is certainly so uncertain and problematic, whether a subject, whose modifications are our representations and thought, really exists on his own, as it is uncertain and problematic, whether objects correspond to our external sensations».<sup>26</sup> According to Pistorius, the Kantian I is “completely empty” and cannot serve as grounds for any particular conclusion.

*Second:* If freedom designates our capacity to initiate a state of affairs by ourselves although it cannot be determined in time, where does the concept of freedom come from? How are alterations that do not happen in time possible at all? Pistorius writes: «Where does it [that is the concept of freedom (H.K.)] alone acquire this objective validity from, so that it can be applied to the rational world, so that what it indicates, namely transcendental freedom, can be predicated as a property of the *things in themselves* or of the members of this world, completely unknown to us?»<sup>27</sup>

And, finally, *third:* If, according to Kant, we cannot cognize the intelligible world as a matter of principle, how can we then justify that the human being, as rational being, «is a part of the rational world, a thing in itself?».<sup>28</sup> Pistorius is certain: there is no such justification.

How does Kant react to Pistorius' objections, according to which he has converted our empirical existence into mere semblance or illusion [Schein]<sup>29</sup>, has not provided any evidence for the validity of the concept of freedom and has not demonstrated that we know ourselves as things in themselves? Kant tries to find a weakness in Pistorius' argumentation of such a kind, that detecting it adds to the strength of Kant's own position. And Kant makes a find. Like in the *Prolegomena* where he tried to refute Hume with a *tu-quoque*-argument<sup>30</sup>, he rebuts Pistorius' objections by referring to assumptions Pistorius himself does not call into question.

According to Kant, Pistorius is correct: the I is indeed an “empty representation”, but that is exactly why it can be determined as appearance and as thing in itself at the same time.<sup>31</sup> Pistorius is also correct in that our freedom cannot be proved directly.<sup>32</sup> However, since Pistorius does not dispute that there are necessarily valid moral obligations, he must also admit that pure reason is active and lawgiving. Like the understanding affects inner sense and produces a combination of the given manifold<sup>33</sup>, pure reason affects our free power of choice in giving the moral law.<sup>34</sup> And if Pistorius admits that pure reason is active in determining our willing, he must also accept that, from a practical point of view, we can cognize ourselves as beings that are not subject to the conditions of space and time. Even though Kant does not mention the name of Pistorius, neither in the first nor in the second *Critique*, he is no doubt the primary addressee of Kant's explanations concerning the concept of theoretical and practical self-knowledge.

### **3. Self-consciousness and self-knowledge in 1787**

Let us now examine the existential proposition “I think” more closely. How does Kant arrive from the act of thinking at the existence of a thinker? First, it has to be remembered that Kant defines understanding as the faculty of the “spontaneity of concepts”.<sup>35</sup> His project of a critical foundation and justification of metaphysics as a science would fail without the concept of the spontaneity of our thinking. For Kant's main idea that enables him to overcome modern dogmatism and scepticism at the same time consists in inquiring into the actions of the subject that render our experience possible.<sup>36</sup> These actions become apparent in the acts of judgement the understanding performs. If we analyse these acts of judgement we are led to a specific number of titles and moments expressed in the Table of Judgements in the first *Critique*. Once we have identified the logical functions underlying all our judgements, we can ask for the conditions under which they enable knowledge. These logical functions are objectively valid only when applied to the manifold of our sensibility. Only then are the logical functions categories of the unity of our experience, or so Kant argues.

However, if the categories are «valid *a priori* of all objects of experience»,<sup>37</sup> the question of how this being that judges is constituted becomes more urgent. A being that judges thinks. And a being that is unable to cognize without thinking is a discursive one. And if the acts of judgement this discursive being performs are the conditions of the possibility of all cognition, then this being must be a subject that is also able to judge. Kant names this ability or faculty spontaneity. Since spontaneity concerns a subject that is self-conscious in the act of judging, not based on experience, it is the spontaneity of transcendental apperception – transcendental

apperception, as Kant argues in section 17 of the *Critique*, that is expressed by the proposition “I think”.<sup>38</sup>

If I perform the act of 'I think', do I then cognize myself as a thinking being? Is consciousness of spontaneity a kind of self-knowledge? Kant answers these questions in the negative: mere consciousness of thinking can be described as an “undetermined self-perception” (KrV B 423) or as a “feeling of one’s own existence” (IV 334n, *Prolegomena*), but not as a kind of self-knowledge. For referring to myself in mere thinking is circular. It lacks reference to the counterpart of discursive thinking, that is to intuition, and thus cannot count as cognition. If I refer to myself in mere thinking, I always apply the logical functions of this thinking, without being able to know anything beyond them.

The transition from self-consciousness to self-knowledge cannot be achieved by logical means alone. It cannot be achieved by claiming that we have an intellectual intuition of ourselves, too. If there were such an intuition, our cognition would not be discursive. If we do not have an intellectual intuition and if the logical functions of thinking as such are not the grounds of self-knowledge, then there must be a third route leading from thinking to self-knowledge. According to Kant, we take this third route if we take the conditions under which we perform the “I think” into consideration. If, in accordance with section 16 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, , «the I think must be able to accompany all my representations»,<sup>39</sup> in order for these representations to be my representations, this, therefore, also entails that I would be unable to perform this act, if there was no given for this act of thinking. With no representations given to me I am not only ‘worldless’, but also, I cannot «become conscious of my existence outside experience and of its empirical conditions». Thus, without given representations, I exist no longer.<sup>40</sup>

It follows that the Cartesian “I think, therefore I am” is not an incomplete syllogism but rather has to be understood as an act of self-perception, as an «indeterminate empirical intuition, that is a perception». <sup>41</sup> Since perceptions are given to us only insofar as we are affected by things in space and time, the judgement of cognition is halfway in between receptivity and constitution. The act of representing nature is, at the same time, an act of constituting this nature. According to Kant, Descartes' strategy turns out to be mistaken, because it is based on the certainty of our own existence and presupposes this certainty in order to infer the existence of an external world. But neither do I infer my existence from thinking nor could I become conscious of it if there were no external world, warranted by my receptivity. Something must be given to me, regardless of how this might be done in particular. As Kant argues in the Paralogism chapter, «An indeterminate perception here signifies only something

real, which was given, and indeed only to thinking in general, thus not as appearance, and also not as a thing in itself (a noumenon), but rather as something that in fact exists and is indicated as an existing thing in the proposition “I think”». <sup>42</sup> Since “something real” has to be given to me, in order for me to be able to consider myself as existing, this existence of the thinking subject, which has still not been determined by the categories, is merely an existence based on the given representations. In the narrow sense of the word, neither I exist nor the sensation in itself. 'I' and 'sensation' rather represent two different sides of one and the same consciousness of the I.

With the doctrine of an existence present in thinking yet undetermined, Kant accounts for, *first*, the fact that what is active cannot be nothing, without, *second*, having to revise his opinion according to which performing acts of thinking and judgement have to be distinguished from synthetic propositions on the nature of our thinking self. Similar to Christian August Crusius before him, who speaks of a «mere being in thought» and of an «intellectual being” (“inesse intellectui»<sup>43</sup>), Kant with his “existential proposition” points to the possibility to assume different perspectives of epistemic self-determination concerning one and the same subject. *Third*, Kant clearly states that the existential proposition “I think” not only warrants one’s own existence but also the existence of external objects. Contrary to Descartes, if we perform the act of “I think” (KrV B274), we cannot deny that there is an external world, because one without the other is meaningless. In the “Refutation of Idealism” of 1787 Kant's puts this thesis as follows: «The mere, but empirically determined, consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me».<sup>44</sup>

Thus, I am conscious of my receptivity and my spontaneity at the same time in my self-consciousness in the act of “I think”. I am conscious of having been affected by representations, without which I could not think. However, I am also conscious that I am more than the sum of these representations. I am conscious of connecting these representations with the logical functions that depend on the spontaneity of my thinking. The spontaneity of transcendental apperception is not itself nature just because it is a faculty that renders nature possible. The condition of the possibility of nature cannot depend on the laws of nature.

### **Practical Self-Knowledge**

But how do we arrive at self-knowledge based on self-perception? How can we succeed in cognizing ourselves as an object with the categories? In order to attain self-knowledge, the logical functions of judgement have to be applied to intuitions. However, since I can intuit

myself only as an object of inner sense, I can cognize myself only as appearance. We do not have to deal with the modalities of our empirical self-knowledge in more detail here. Practical self-determination Kant addresses as a crucial issue at the end of the revised section on the paralogisms of pure reason, as mentioned above, is much more illuminating regarding the question of the relation between freedom and nature. The complete quotation reads as follows: «Should it be granted that we may in due course discover, not in experience but in certain laws of the pure employment of reason – laws which are not merely logical rules, but which while holding *a priori* also concern our existence – ground for regarding ourselves as *legislating* completely *a priori* in regard to our own existence, and as determining this existence, there would thereby be revealed a spontaneity through which our reality would be determinable, independently of the conditions of empirical intuition. And here we would become aware that in the consciousness of our existence something is contained *a priori* that can serve to determine our existence, which is thoroughly determinable only sensibly, in regard to a certain inner faculty in relation to an intelligible world (obviously one only thought of)». <sup>45</sup> What is this mentioned “ground for regarding ourselves as *legislating* completely *a priori* in regard to our own existence”? That I can indeed determine my existence intellectually is, Kant argues, «revealed» to me by «the consciousness of the moral law». <sup>46</sup>

According to this passage, our consciousness of the moral law implies a spontaneity of our reason that *should* acquire objective reality in this world – a reality it also *would* acquire if that was what we *wanted*. <sup>47</sup> Invoking this kind of consciousness, Kant claims to have removed Pistorius’ central objections. With the notion of a consciousness of the moral law we have, *first*, found the origin of the concept of freedom and *second*, it is freedom what secures that we exist in the rational world, whose causality is the one of freedom. As Kant puts it in the second *Critique*: “The concept of freedom alone allows us to find the unconditioned and intelligible for the conditioned and sensible without going outside ourselves. For, it is our reason itself which by means of the supreme and unconditional practical law cognizes itself and the being that is conscious of this law (our own person) as belonging to the pure world of understanding and even determines the way in which, as such, it can be active.” <sup>48</sup>

At this point, Kant again faces the problem of the *Groundwork*, that is how to explain how both perspectives can be unified in “*the same subject*”. How can I cognize myself as pure intelligence, if I continue to be a “part of nature” as well? According to Kant’s position of 1787, the key to solving this problem lies in the concept of the logical functions of judgement. These functions are the feature both intelligible and empirical self-determination have in

common. The logical functions of judgement are forms of thought of sensible as well as of supersensible nature. They differentiate into categories of nature and categories of freedom not until we use them to determine that kind of existence that is given to us in mere thought. Therefore, the very logical functions by which I determine objects of experience may be used to determine the way in which I apply my “free power of choice” (“freie Willkür”, V 65). Depending on whether I describe my action from the perspective of the «categories of nature»<sup>49</sup> or from the perspective of the categories of freedom, this very action is subject to the causality of sensible or of supersensible nature. The point of this is that I am entitled to judge one and the same action “at the same time” from both these perspectives.<sup>50</sup> «Meanwhile, I would still be warranted in applying these concepts [that is, the categories (H.K.)] in regard to their practical use, which is always directed to objects of experience, according to their analogical significance in their theoretical use, to freedom and the free subject, since by them I understand merely the logical functions of subject and predicate, ground and consequence, in accordance with which actions or effects are determined in conformity to those laws of nature and the categories of substance and cause, although they arise from a wholly different principle».<sup>51</sup>

This quotation from the paralogism chapter makes it obvious why Kant, in the annotation to section 6 of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, argues that we «become immediately conscious [of the moral law] (as soon as we draw up maxims of the will for ourselves)».<sup>52</sup> We become aware of the moral law when we develop maxims, because then, we become aware that we are able to examine whether these maxims qualify for the *form* of pure practical reason. With this concept of maxims that mediates between the intelligible and the phenomenal world, Kant has found the object the categories of freedom are applied to. Their application presupposes that we developed maxims based on inclinations – with the consequence, by the way, that a person who is neither able nor willing to develop maxims cannot act out of respect for the moral law as well. For Kant, the decision to act according to maxims is not a trivial one. In any case, maxims are the objects to which the categories of freedom are applied. We can conceive of maxims as a product of our natural history and as an object of cognition of the categories of nature. But at the same time, we can conceive of them and of the resulting actions as caused by freedom. If we develop maxims we are aware that they could have a form as required by the moral law. This is why the formula of the law of nature is so important, in Kant’s opinion: the form of the causality of nature and the form of freedom are identical as far as the features of necessity and strict universality are concerned. This is also why Kant introduces a terminological distinction between sensible nature and supersensible

nature in 1787. Their forms are identical as regards our rational volition. The moral law «is to furnish the sensible world, as a *sensible nature* (in what concerns rational beings), with the form of a world of the understanding, that is, of a *supersensible nature*, though without infringing upon the mechanism of the former». <sup>53</sup>

Based on Kant's understanding of our logical functions of judgement, this claim is not surprising: if *both* the categories of nature and those of freedom result from applying the logical functions to the manifold of sensibility or of the “free power of choice”, we are here concerned with the *very same* forms of thinking. Thus if we succeed in identifying a way how self-determination of our existence proceeds that is only based on thinking and does not depend on intuition, we then can cognize ourselves as things in themselves. Exactly this is the case with the determination of our “free power of choice” by pure practical reason. <sup>54</sup>

In one passage of his *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant explains the common ground of the legislations of understanding and reason by calling pure understanding reason precisely when understanding is used to determine our will: «Besides the relation in which the *understanding* stands to object (in theoretical cognition) it has also a relation to the faculty of desire, which is therefore called the will and is called the pure will insofar as the pure understanding (which in this case is called reason) is practical through the mere representation of a law». <sup>55</sup> Just as there are not two kinds of logical functions of judgement, we cannot distinguish between two different kinds of spontaneity. <sup>56</sup> Rather, the spontaneity of pure understanding differentiates according to its actual application into a spontaneity of the understanding as the ground of sensible nature and a spontaneity of reason as the ground of supersensible nature. Hence the problem of the *Groundwork*, that is how nature and freedom can be conceived of as *unified* in one subject, seems to have been resolved. We conceive of nature and freedom as unified in one subject since there is just *one* spontaneity and *one* type of logical functions of judgement. We apply them (under different conditions) in order to determine the *one* existence we are conscious of in the act of thinking with intent to cognize ourselves as things in themselves and as appearances. We are entitled to attribute an objective meaning to the categories of freedom because the moral law takes the place of intuition that provides an objective meaning to the categories of nature. Its reality is immediately present to us in consciousness. <sup>57</sup>

### **The duration of my existence**

We could conclude our discussion of the existential proposition 'I think' at this point if not one pressing issue would remain: if the consciousness of my existence presupposes an act of thinking but I cannot perform it because there is nothing given to me anymore about which I

could think, doesn't this amount to me ceasing to exist? As expected, Kant answers this question from two different perspectives: by the means of pure thinking we indeed can only establish «our existence in life».<sup>58</sup> However, this result does not oblige pure practical reason. According to Kant, pure practical reason «determines our behaviour, as if our vocation extended infinitely far above experience, and hence above this life».<sup>59</sup> How does pure practical reason do this? Our image of a twofold cognitive perspective on our self, divided into nature and freedom, would be considerably enriched if nature could be conceived as a whole that is organised according to purposes. This is precisely the step Kant takes in the paralogism chapter of 1787, with the intention to provide a proof of the immortality of the soul sufficient in a practical respect and beyond the doctrine of postulates.<sup>60</sup> Kant's argument proceeds as follows: reason assumes it as a necessary principle that we do not find anything in living creatures that is without a purpose. In an organism, everything answers a purpose and has «its function [*Bestimmung*] in life».<sup>61</sup> If we apply this principle to the human being, it follows that we do not find anything in it that does not have a determinate purpose. But what is the purpose of «the moral law in him»?<sup>62</sup> Because we feel called upon by the moral law to perform actions that can appear to lack meaning and use from the perspective of this life, the moral law has a purpose that points beyond this life. The consciousness of the moral law includes that we strive to become «citizens»<sup>63</sup> of a better world. Because the moral law can command actions that have no use, our existence outlives our earthly death. Pure reason «justifies» our «extending [...] our whole existence beyond the bounds of experience and life».<sup>64</sup> According to the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, the very same reason directs the reflective power of judgement to judge those forms in nature as existing necessarily that seem to be accidental from the perspective of the understanding. Now, this very reason allows us to determine ourselves as final purposes [*Endzwecke*] of a sensible nature that finds its own determination in a supersensible nature.

How to assess this argument? While Kant is usually criticised for having claimed too much and demonstrated too little, I would like to consider an argument against his interpretation of the existential proposition “I think”. This argument is based on the contrary premise: Kant has not claimed enough because he in fact seems to have demonstrated more. What is my point here? If, according to Kant, I am entitled, based on my awareness of the moral law, to apply the categories of freedom to determine my “free power of choice”, then it is practically speaking certain that I exist as an intelligible being, capable of rational self-determination. I have cognized myself as a being existing outside of time and space, that is as a being that cannot *cease to exist*. If this were true, Kant's immortality argument that is based on a

purposive order of nature, is dispensable. Kant could have offered a direct proof from pure practical reason of the continuation of our existence.

At first sight it seems puzzling why he refrained from presenting this proof. However, the following consideration may point to a plausible explanation for this: Whereas rational psychology sought to establish a proof of the immortality of the soul, in terms of Cartesian substance metaphysics, as a proof of pure speculative reason, Kant build his immortality argument on pure practical reason. Yet if pure practical reason only demonstrated the continuation of our intelligible existence, this would be way too little for the purposes of moral philosophy. Kant's immortality proof from pure practical reason does not aim at proving the existence of a pure soul substance. Kant demands a proof that demonstrates the continuation of our rational and non-rational nature<sup>65</sup>. This should be a mode of existence that allows us to accomplish our moral striving and hoping. As Kant puts it in the second *Critique*, “an infinite progressus” (V 122) of our moral striving must be possible. But without desires, there is no moral striving. Exactly for this reason our continuation must be based on arguments that can establish a continuation of our whole existence but not a liberation of our self from our sensible existence. Moral progress must also be possible after our live on earth has come to an end. The concept of life is the crucial one here. It warrants that our striving does not end with death. Since the concept of life, according to Kant, can be explained only by the concept of purposiveness, the proof of our continuation must proceed from the same perspective from which alone we can understand the concept of life. This perspective is that of a world that is consistently organized in a purposive way.

Kant's seemingly paradoxical conception of our existence beyond time is clearly explained in his *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, too. Applying the terminology of his political philosophy<sup>66</sup>, Kant here intends to show that we are obliged to enter a community of virtue under the reign of God. Only under his reign we can hope to overcome the radical evil in us and to enter into the *status civilis* of our moral existence. If our moral striving is not concluded with our earthly life, the a-temporal existence directly inferred from the existential proposition “I think” is insufficient. If we determine ourselves to act as moral subjects, we require a conception of self-existence where our reference to nature is never completely abandoned. If we became pure rational beings with our death, we would necessarily act according to the moral law. We would at once fall into the world of Platonic-Plotinic spiritual beings that is void of needs – an idea Kant would obviously not endorse. Death has no place within the language of pure practical reason.

It might be somewhat significant that in his review of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, Pistorius reveals his dissatisfaction with Kant's conception of the thinking I not least because the notion of an intelligible and not temporally determinable existence did not convince him. According to Pistorius, the human being will never be able to exist as a pure intelligence as long as he continues to strive morally, precisely because our striving always occurs in time, but time is an attribute of the world of appearance only. «If advancing from one state to the other can never be thought without the concept of time, and the concept of time belongs only to the world of senses and appearances, the moral human being, insofar as he ought to remain a moral being, never becomes a pure intelligence or gets away from the world of appearance. It follows that he also can never possess any transcendental freedom, no matter if we conceive of it negatively or positively, that is, he never truly reaches it, even though he can come closer to it in an indeterminate way».<sup>67</sup>

We do not know whether Kant read this review that did not appear until 1794. However, in his essay *The End of All Things*, published in the same year, Kant engages in reflections that could be read as a reply to Pistorius. Kant states that, even though time is not an attribute of things in themselves, applying our pure practical reason implies an understanding of the noumenal world where modifications are possible. For we, as members of this world, «must take our maxims as if in all alterations from good to better going into infinity our moral condition regarding its disposition (the *homo Noumenon*, “whose change takes place in heaven”) were not subject to any temporal change at all».<sup>68</sup> If our moral disposition that belongs to the intelligible world (already in this life) were not susceptible to change, we would have to abandon all hope of attaining our moral «final end».<sup>69</sup> Yet how this timeless change is possible, necessarily remains incomprehensible, according to Kant. Kant could also have argued that we, as good philosophers, should not pretend to be able to solve the insoluble. As philosophers, we should not be “adventurers of spirit” (to use a phrase by Georg Simmel)<sup>70</sup> but rather critics of reason. But as critics of reason we know, as Kant states in the essay *On the End of All Things*, that «we will inevitably entangle ourselves in contradictions as soon as we try to take a single step beyond the sensible world into the intelligible».<sup>71</sup>

According to Kant, if we attempt to explain everything we will end up empty-handed because we will have deprived ourselves of the only *means* by which we can explain why we *cannot* solve some of our philosophical problems. This means is at the heart of transcendental idealism. It is the method of criticising reason.

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1 «Vernunftkenntniß aus Begriffen», KrV A 713/B 741; for the English translation cf. IMMANUEL KANT, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by PAUL GUYER – ALLEN W. WOOD, Cambridge/New York, Cambridge University Press 1998 (from now on: Cambridge edition), p. 630.

<sup>2</sup> This seems particularly true in the case of the *Critique of Practical Reason*; see H. F. Klemme, „The origin and aim of Kant’s ‘Critique of Practical Reason’“, in: *Kant’s ‘Critique of Practical Reason’. A Critical Guide*, ed. Andrews Reath and Jens Timmermann, Cambridge 2010, pp. 11-30.

3 «Ich denke [...] ist] ein empirischer Satz» und enthält «den Satz, Ich existiere, in sich», KrV B 422 Anm.; Cambridge edition p. 453, note. On this see H. F. Klemme, *Kants Philosophy des Subjekts. Systematische und entwicklungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Selbstbewußtsein und Selbstbewußtsein*, Hamburg 2006, pp. 375-403, and H.F. Klemme „Das Ich denke ... ist ein empirischer Satz“. Kants Auseinandersetzung mit Descartes“, in: *Descartes und Deutschland – Descartes et l’Allemagne*, eds. Jean Ferrari, Pierre Guenancia, Margit Ruffing, Robert Theis und Matthias Vollet, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 2009, pp. 177-186 and the literature mentioned there. See also more recently Patricia Kitcher, *Kant’s Thinker*, Oxford 2011.

4 „Existentialsatz“, KrV B 423 Anm.; Cambridge edition p. 453, note.

5 The Cambridge edition translates “self-knowledge” for “Selbsterkenntnis”, even though it always translates “Erkenntnis” as “cognition” (because Kant’s use of the Latin word *cognitio* in relation to *Erkenntnis*). Cf. Cambridge edition pp. 760-763.

6 Aufgrund «gewisser (nicht bloß logischen Regeln, sondern) *a priori* feststehender, unsere Existenz betreffender Gesetzes des reinen Vernunftgebrauchs», wir haben «Veranlassung», «uns völlig *a priori* in Ansehung unseres eigenen *Daseins* als *gesetzgebend* und diese Existenz auch selbst bestimmend vorauszusetzen», KrV B 430; Cambridge edition p. 457. (Translation slightly revised according to Kemp Smith)

7 Das «Bewusstsein des moralischen Gesetzes [...] offenbart» uns nach Kant mit der Spontaneität unserer Vernunft «ein bewundernswertes Vermögen», KrV B 431; Cambridge edition p. 457.

<sup>8</sup> The second *Critique* was written between April and September 1787 and appeared in print in December 1787; on the origin of this work see Klemme 2010 and H. F. Klemme, “Einleitung”, in Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, eds. Horst D. Brandt and H. F. Klemme, Hamburg 2003.

<sup>9</sup> On the relationship between Kant’s moral philosophy and the concept of teleology exposed in the third *Critique* see H. F. Klemme, “Moralized Nature, Naturalized Autonomy”, in: *Kant on Moral Autonomy*, ed. Oliver Sensen, Cambridge 2012 (in print).

<sup>10</sup> His reviews are reprinted in: Bernward Gesang (ed.), *Kants vergessener Rezensent. Die Kritik der theoretischen und praktischen Philosophie Kants in fünf Rezensionen von Hermann Andres Pistorius*, Hamburg 2007. Some of these reviews were already reprinted in Albert Landau (ed.), *Rezensionen zur Kantischen Philosophie, 1781-1787*, Bebra 1991. On Pistorius see besides others Henry E. Allison, *Kant’s theory of freedom*, Cambridge 1990, 29, 41, H.F. Klemme 1996, pp. 282-283, 373, and 2003 (“Einleitung” and “Sachanmerkungen”), Susan Shell, *Kant and the Limits of Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. 2009, pp. 153 and 155, and Bernd Ludwig, “Die ‘consequente Denkungsart der speculativen Kritik’. Kants radikale Umgestaltung seiner Freiheitslehre im Jahre 1786 und die Folgen für die Kritische Philosophie als Ganze“, in: *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 58 (2010), pp. 595-628.

<sup>11</sup> See Klemme, *Kants Philosophy des Subjekts*, 1996, and Karl Ameriks, *Kant’s Theory of Mind. An Analysis of the Paralogisms of Pure Reason*, New Edition, Oxford 2000 (“Preface to the Second Edition”).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Moralische Motivation. Kant und die Alternativen*, ed. H.F. Klemme, Hamburg 2006.

13 «Von der äußersten Grenze aller praktischen Philosophie», GMS, AA 04: 455-463; for the English translation cf. IMMANUEL KANT, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in IMMANUEL KANT, *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by MARY J. GREGOR, with an introduction by ALLEN W. WOOD, Cambridge/New York, Cambridge University Press 1996 (from now on also quoted as: Cambridge edition), pp. 41-108.

14 Die spekulative Philosophie muss zeigen «daß wir den Menschen in einem anderen Sinne und Verhältnisse denken, wenn wir ihn frei nennen, als wenn wir ihn als Stück der Natur dieser ihren Gesetzen für unterworfen halten, und daß beides nicht allein gar wohl beisammen stehen können, sondern auch als *notwendig vereint* in demselben Subjekt gedacht werden müssen», GMS, AA 04: 456; Cambridge edition, p. 102 (translation slightly modified).

15 «Rechtsanspruch», GMS, AA 04: 457; Cambridge edition, p. 103.

16 «zugleich», GMS, AA 04: 457; Cambridge edition, p. 103.

17 Dass sich der Mensch «aber auf diese zweifache Art vorstellen und denken müsse, beruht, was das erste betrifft, auf dem Bewußtsein seiner selbst als durch Sinne affizierten Gegenstandes, was das zweite anlangt, auf dem Bewußtsein seiner selbst als Intelligenz, d.i. als unabhängig im Vernunftgebrauch von sinnlichen Eindrücken (mithin als zur Verstandeswelt gehörig)», GMS, AA 04: 457; Cambridge edition, p. 103.

18 Als «Intelligenz» denke ich mich als eine «frei wirkende Ursache», als «das eigentliche Selbst» und handle «nach Prinzipien einer intelligiblen Welt», GMS, AA 04: 457-458; Cambridge edition, pp. 103-104.

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19 «Weil aber die Verstandeswelt den Grund der Sinnenwelt, mithin auch der Gesetze derselben enthält, also in Ansehung meines Willens (der ganz zur Verstandeswelt gehört) unmittelbar gesetzgebend ist und also auch als solche gedacht werden muß, so werde ich mich als Intelligenz, obgleich andererseits wie ein zur Sinnenwelt gehöriges Wesen, dennoch dem Gesetze der ersteren, d.i. der Vernunft, die in der Idee der Freiheit das Gesetz derselben enthält, und also der Autonomie des Willens unterworfen erkennen, folglich die Gesetze der Verstandeswelt für mich als Imperativen und die diesem Prinzip gemäßen Handlungen als Pflichten ansehen müssen», GMS, AA 04: 453-54; Cambridge edition, p. 100. - Eine Stelle, die diese Interpretation der *Grundlegung* unterstützt, findet sich in den *Prolegomena*, in denen Kant schreibt: „Die Sinnenwelt ist nichts als eine Kette nach allgemeinen Gesetzen verknüpfter Erscheinungen, sie hat also kein Bestehen für sich, sie ist eigentlich nicht das Ding an sich selbst und bezieht sich also notwendig auf das, was den Grund dieser Erscheinung enthält, auf Wesen, die nicht bloß als Erscheinung, sondern als Dinge an sich selbst erkannt werden können.“ (IV 354; vgl. 315)

20 Ein Wille, «der nichts auf seine Rechnung kommen läßt, was bloß zu seinen Begierden und Neigungen gehört», GMS, AA 04: 457; Cambridge edition, p. 103.

21 Als «vernünftige Naturwesen» erkennen wir uns durch unsere Vernunft zu Handlungen in der Welt «bestimmbar», MS, TL, AA 06: 418; for the English translation cf. IMMANUEL KANT, *Metaphysics of Morals*, in IMMANUEL KANT, *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by MARY J. GREGOR, with an introduction by ALLEN W. WOOD, Cambridge/New York, Cambridge University Press 1996 (from now on also quoted as: Cambridge edition), p. 544. – See: „Der Mensch nun als vernünftiges *Naturwesen* (homo phaenomenon) ist durch seine Vernunft, als *Ursache*, bestimmbar zu Handlungen in der Sinnenwelt“ (VI 418, *Tugendlehre*)

<sup>22</sup> On Kant's conception of „Vernunftinteresse“ in general cf. Manfred Pascher, *Kants Begriff 'Vernunftinteresse'*, Innsbruck 1991, and Axel Hutter, *Das Interesse der Vernunft. Kants ursprüngliche Einsicht und ihre Entfaltung in den transzendentalphilosophischen Hauptwerken*, Hamburg 2003.

23 Was aus «unserem eigentlichen Selbst entsprungen ist», das interessiert uns; «was aber zur bloßen Erscheinung gehört, wird von der Vernunft notwendig der Beschaffenheit der Sache an sich selbst untergeordnet», GMS, AA 04: 461; Cambridge edition, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup> On the concept of *oikeiosis* and its significance for Kant see Reinhard Brandt, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen bei Kant*, Hamburg 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Klemme 2003, p. 221.

26 «Es ist nun eben so ungewiß und problematisch, ob wirklich ein für sich bestehendes Subject existirt, dessen Modificationen unsere Vorstellungen und Gedanken sind, als es ungewiß und problematisch ist, ob unsern äußern Sensationen wirklich Objecte entsprechen», quoted in Klemme 2003, p. 221.

27 «Woher erhält er [sic. der Begriff der Freiheit, H.K.] allein diese objective Gültigkeit, daß er sich auf die Verstandeswelt anwenden, daß das, was er bezeichnet, nämlich die transcendentale Freyheit, sich als eine Eigenschaft der *Dinge an sich selbst*, oder der Glieder dieser uns ganz unbekanntem Welt prädicieren läßt?», quoted in Klemme 2003, p. 222.

28 «ein Theil der Verstandeswelt, ein Ding an sich selbst sey?», quoted in Klemme 2003, 222.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. § 25 of the first *Critique*: „[...] my own existence is not indeed appearances (let alone illusion [Schein]), but the determination of my existence [...]“

<sup>30</sup> See H. F. Klemme, „Die Aufhebung von ‚Humes Zweifel‘ (§§ 27-39)“, in: *Kants Prolegomena. Ein kooperativer Kommentar*, eds. Holger Lyre and Oliver Schliemann, Frankfurt a.M. (in print).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. „The *I think* expresses the act of determining my existence. The existence is thereby already given, but the way in which I am to determine it, i.e. the manifold that I am to posit in myself as belonging to it, is not thereby given. [...] Yet this spontaneity is the reason I call myself an *intelligence*.“ (CpR B 157-158 n) Kant argues that the understanding affects my inner sense; vg. CpR B 153-154, 155-156.

32 See on this point Ludwig 2010 and Ameriks 2003, p. 228.

<sup>33</sup> Cf CpR B 153-154, 155-156.

<sup>34</sup> The categories of freedom „are directed to the determination of a free choice (to which indeed no fully corresponding intuition can be given but which – as does not happen in the case of any concepts of the theoretical use of our cognitive faculty – has as its basis [Grund] a pure practical law a priori“ (CpR V 65).

35 Kant definiert den Verstand als Vermögen der «Spontaneität der Begriffe», KrV A 50/B 74; Cambridge edition p. 193.

36 Cf. Kant's *Prolegomena*.

37 Die Kategorien gelten *a priori* «von allen Gegenständen der Erfahrung», KrV B 161; Cambridge edition p. 262.

<sup>38</sup> Dieser Satz bringt nach § 17 der B-Deduktion zum Ausdruck, „daß alle meine Vorstellungen in irgendeiner gegebenen Anschauung unter der Bedingung stehen müssen, unter der ich sie allein *meine* Vorstellungen zu dem identischen Selbst rechnen, und also, als in einer Apperzeption synthetische verbunden, durch den allgemeinen Ausdruck *Ich denke* zusammenfassen kann.“ (KrV B 138) Und in § 24 der *Kritik* schreibt Kant, dass „der

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Verstand, als Spontaneität, den inneren Sinn durch das Mannigfaltige gegebener Vorstellungen der synthetischen Einheit der Apperzeption gemäß (B 150) bestimmt.

39 «Das: Ich denke, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können», KrV B 131; Cambridge edition p. 246.

40 Weil ich mir selbst nicht außerhalb «der Erfahrung und den empirischen Bedingungen derselben bewußt werden» kann, KrV B 426-427; Cambridge edition p. 455.

41 Als eine «unbestimmte empirische Anschauung, d.i. Wahrnehmung», KrV B 422; Cambridge edition p. 453.

42 «Eine unbestimmte Wahrnehmung bedeutet hier nur etwas Reales, das gegeben worden [ist], und zwar nur zum Denken überhaupt, also nicht als Erscheinung, auch nicht als Sache an sich selbst, (Noumenon) sondern als etwas, was in der Tat existiert, und in dem Satze, ich denke, als ein solches bezeichnet wird», KrV B 423 Anm.; Cambridge edition p. 453, note.

43 Crusius spricht von einem «blossen Seyn in Gedanken» und einem «inesse intellectui», cf. Klemme 1996, 384 Anm. 19.

44 «Das bloße, aber empirisch bestimmte, Bewusstsein meines eigenen Daseins beweist das Dasein der Gegenstände im Raum außer mir», KrV B 275; Cambridge edition p. 327.

45 The translation is a combination of Kemp Smith and Guyer/Wood. «Gesetzt aber, es fände sich in der Folge, nicht in der Erfahrung, sondern in gewissen (nicht bloß logischen Regeln, sondern) *a priori* feststehenden, unsere Existenz betreffenden Gesetzen des reinen Vernunftgebrauchs, Veranlassung, uns völlig *a priori* in Ansehung unseres eigenen *Daseins* als *gesetzgebend* und diese Existenz auch selbst bestimmend vorauszusetzen, so würde sich dadurch eine Spontaneität entdecken, wodurch unsere Wirklichkeit bestimmbar wäre, ohne dazu der Bedingungen der empirischen Anschauung zu bedürfen; und hier würden wir innewerden, daß im Bewußtsein unseres Daseins *a priori* etwas enthalten sei, was unsere nur sinnlich durchgängig bestimmbare Existenz, doch in Ansehung eines gewissen inneren Vermögens in Beziehung auf eine intelligible (freilich nur gedachte) Welt zu bestimmen, dienen kann», KrV B 430-431; Cambridge edition p. 457. -- Kant beruft sich auf das Bewusstsein selbst des gemeinen Menschen, „daß es wirklich reine moralische Gesetze gebe, die völlig *a priori* (ohne Rücksicht auf empirische Beweggründe, d.i. Glückseligkeit) das Tun und Lassen, d. i. den Gebrauch der Freiheit eines vernünftigen Wesens überhaupt, bestimmen, und daß diese Gesetze *schlechterdings* ... gebieten“ . „die reine Vernunft enthält also, zwar nicht in ihrem spekulativen, aber doch in einem gewissen praktischen, nämlich dem moralischen Gebrauche, Prinzipien der *Möglichkeit der Erfahrung*, nämlich solcher Handlungen, die den sittlichen Vorschriften gemäß in der *Geschichte* des Menschen anzutreffen sein könnten.“ (A 807/B 835) „Demnach haben die Prinzipien der reinen Vernunft in ihrem praktischen, namentlich aber, dem moralischen Gebrauche, objektive Realität.“ (A 808/B 836) Ist die Welt den sittlichen Gesetzen gemäß, nennt sie Kant „eine *moralische Welt*.“ (A 808/B 836)

46 Dass ich meine Existenz intellektuell bestimmen kann, wird mir durch das «Bewußtsein des moralischen Gesetzes» «offenbart», KrV B 431; Cambridge edition p. 457.

<sup>47</sup> Cf.. „Die Idee einer moralischen Welt hat daher objektive Realität, nicht als wenn sie auf einen Gegenstand einer intelligiblen Anschauung ginge (dergleichen wir uns gar nicht denken können), sondern auf die Sinnenwelt, aber als einen Gegenstand der reinen Vernunft in ihrem praktischen Gebrauche, und ein *corpus mysticum* der vernünftigen Wesen in ihr, sofern deren freie Willkür unter moralischen Gesetzen sowohl mit sich selbst, als mit jedes anderen Freiheit durchgängige systematische Einheit an sich hat.“ (KrV A 808/B 836)

<sup>48</sup> V 105-106; cf. V 55, 56.

49 «Kategorien der Natur», KpV, AA 05: 65; for the English translation cf. IMMANUEL KANT, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in IMMANUEL KANT, *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by MARY J. GREGOR, with an introduction by ALLEN W. WOOD, Cambridge/New York, Cambridge University Press 1996 (from now on also quoted as: Cambridge edition), p. 193.

<sup>50</sup> Kant schreibt in der zweiten *Kritik*: „Man wird hier bald gewahr, daß in dieser Tafel die Freiheit, als eine Art von Kausalität, die aber empirischen Bestimmungsgründen nicht unterworfen ist, in Ansehung der durch sie möglichen Handlungen, als Erscheinungen in der Sinnenwelt, betrachtet werde, folglich sich auf die Kategorien ihrer Naturmöglichkeit beziehe, indessen daß doch jede Kategorie so allgemein genommen wird, daß der Bestimmungsgrund jener Kausalität auch außer der Sinnenwelt in der Freiheit als Eigenschaft eines intelligiblen Wesens angenommen werden kann [...]“ (V 67).

51 «Indessen würde ich doch diese Begriffe [sic. die Kategorien, H.K.] in Ansehung des praktischen Gebrauchs, welcher doch immer auf Gegenstände der Erfahrung gerichtet ist, der im theoretischen Gebrauche analogischen Bedeutung gemäß, auf die Freiheit und das Subjekt derselben anzuwenden befugt sein, indem ich bloß die logischen Funktionen des Subjekts und Prädikats des Grundes und der Folge darunter verstehe, denen gemäß die Handlungen oder Wirkungen jenen Gesetzen gemäß so bestimmt werden, daß sie zugleich mit den Naturgesetzen, den Kategorien der Substanz und der Ursache allemal gemäß erklärt werden können, ob sie gleich aus ganz anderem Prinzip entspringen», KrV B 431-432; Cambridge edition p. 458. -- Im Anschluss heißt es: „Dieses hat nur zur Verhütung des mißverständes, dem die Lehre von unserer Selbstanschauung, als

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Erscheinung, leicht ausgesetzt ist, gesagt sein sollen.“ (B 432) -- Noch im Rostocker Manuskript der Anthropologie bezieht sich Kant auf diese Lehre: „Das Erkenntnis seiner selbst nach derjenigen Beschaffenheit was er an sich selbst ist kann durch keine innere *Erfahrung* erworben werden und entspringt nicht aus der Naturkunde vom Menschen sondern ist einzig und allein das Bewusstsein seiner Freiheit welche ihm durch den kategorischen Pflichtimperativ also nur durch den höchsten praktischen Vernunft kund wird“ (zitiert nach Weischedel, Band XII S. 429 Anm.)

52 Dass wir uns den «moralischen Gesetzes [...] unmittelbar bewußt werden (so bald wir uns Maximen des Willens entwerfen)», KpV, AA 05: 29; Cambridge edition p. 163.

53 Das moralische Gesetz «soll der Sinnenwelt, als einer sinnlichen Natur (was die vernünftigen Wesen betrifft), die Form einer Verstandeswelt, d. i. einer *übersinnlichen Natur* verschaffen, ohne doch jener ihrem Mechanismus Abbruch zu tun», KpV, AA 05: 43; Cambridge edition p. 174.

54 Cf. KpV AA 05: 65, Cambridge edition p. 193.

55 «Außer dem Verhältnisse aber, darin der *Verstand* zu Gegenständen (im theoretischen Erkenntnis) steht, hat er auch eines zum Begehungsvermögen, das darum der Wille heißt, und der reine Wille, so fern der reine Verstand (der in solchem Falle Vernunft heißt) durch die bloße Vorstellung eines Gesetzes praktisch ist», KpV AA 05: 65, Cambridge edition p. 184.

<sup>56</sup> On the opposite view (Kant distinguishes between two kinds of spontaneity) see Henry E. Allison, *Idealism and Freedom. Essays on Kant's Theoretical and Practical Philosophy*, Cambridge 1996, p. 132-33; cf. IV 448. On Kant's different conceptions of freedom and spontaneity see Karl Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*, Oxford 2003, pp. 227-228

<sup>57</sup> Here we find a significant difference to the theory before 1778. At that time Kant believed in freedom being an immediate expression of our thinking.

58 Unser «Dasein im Leben», KrV B 420, Cambridge edition p. 452.

59 Sie bestimmt nach Kant unser «Verhalten» so, «als ob unsere Bestimmung unendlich weit über die Erfahrung, mithin über dieses Leben hinaus reiche», KrV B 421, Cambridge edition p. 453.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Rolf George, „Immortality“, in: *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress*, ed. Hoke Robinson, Memphis 1995, Vol. II, Milwaukee 1995, pp. 669-677.

61 «Bestimmung im Leben», KrV B 425, Cambridge edition p. 452.

62 «das moralische Gesetz in ihm», GMS, AA 425, Cambridge edition p. 76.

63 «Bürger», cf. KrV B 426, Cambridge edition p. 455.

64 Die reine Vernunft «berechtigt» uns, «unsere eigene Existenz über die Grenzen der Erfahrung und des Lebens hinaus zu erweitern», cf. KrV B 425, Cambridge edition p. 454.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. V 9: „*Life* is the faculty of a being to act in accordance with the laws of the faculty of desire.“ See also IV 544: „*Leben* heißt das Vermögen einer *Substanz*, sich aus einem *inneren Princip* zum Handeln, einer *endlichen Substanz* sich zur Veränderung, und einer *materiellen Substanz*, sich zur Bewegung oder Ruhe als Veränderung ihres Zustandes zu bestimmen. Nun kennen wir kein anderes inneres Princip einer Substanz, ihren Zustand zu verändern, als das *Begehren* und überhaupt keine andere innere Thätigkeit als *Denken* mit dem, was davon abhängt, *Gefühl* der Lust oder Unlust und *Begierde* und Willen.“

<sup>66</sup> Cf. H. F. Klemme, „Die Freiheit der Willkür und die Herrschaft des Bösen. Kants Lehre vom radikalen Bösen zwischen Moral, Religion und Recht“, in: *Aufklärung und Interpretation. Studien zur Philosophie Kants und ihrem Umkreis*, eds. H. F. Klemme, Bernd Ludwig, Michael Pauen, and Werner Stark, Würzburg 1999, pp. 125-151.

67 «Läßt sich nun das Fortschreiten von einem Zustande zum andern ohne den Zeitbegriff schlechterdings nicht denken, und gehört der Zeitbegriff bloß zur Sinnen- und Erscheinungswelt, so wird der sittliche Mensch, in sofern er sittlich bleiben soll, nie eine reine Intelligenz werden, nie aus der Welt der Erscheinungen herauskommen; und hieraus folgt, daß er auch jene transcendente Freiheit, wir mögen sie als negativ oder positiv betrachten, nie haben kann, d. i. sie nie wirklich erreicht, ob er sich gleich derselben auf eine unbestimmte Weise nähern kann», *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 1794, p. 93. Gesang (ed.) 2007, p. 89.

68 Wir müssen als Glieder dieser Welt «unsre Maxime so nehmen, als ob bei allen ins Unendliche gehenden Veränderungen vom Guten zum Bessern unser moralische Zustand der Gesinnung nach (der homo Noumenon, ‚dessen Wandel im Himmel ist‘) gar keinem Zeitwechsel unterworfen wäre», AA 08: 335; for the English translation cf. IMMANUEL KANT, *The End of All Things*, in IMMANUEL KANT, *Religion and Rational Theology*, translated by ROBERT ANCHOR, GEORGE DI GIOVANNI, MARY J. GREGOR, ALLEN W. WOOD, edited and with an introduction by ALLEN W. WOOD, Cambridge/New York, Cambridge University Press 1996 (from now on also quoted as: Cambridge edition), p. 227.

69 «Endzweck», EAD, AA 08: 335; Cambridge edition p. 228.

70 «Abenteurer des Geistes», Georg Simmel, *Philosophische Kultur. Über die Abenteuer, die Geschlechter und die Krise der Moderne*, Berlin 1983 (first edition 1923), p. 18.

71 «wir uns unvermeidlich in Widersprüche verfangen, wenn wir einen einzigen Schritt aus der Sinnenwelt in die intelligible thun wollen», EAD, AA 08: 333-334; Cambridge edition p. 226.