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## KANT ON WILL AND FREEDOM

### Outline of issues

This article aims to present a typology of the concept of the will and the "distribution" of freedom in Kantian practical philosophy appropriate to its resolution. The interpretation I will present provokes a certain controversy, by no means unfamiliar to scholars of Kant's ethics. This controversy concerns the fact that by limiting freedom to actions mediated by the categorical imperative, Kant makes the occurrence of immoral and free actions impossible, thereby also ruining the possibility of the occurrence of specifically moral evil, which would correspond to the moral good. This problem was already pointed out by Carl Christian Erhard Schmid in his book *Versuch einer Moralphilosophie*, published in 1790 (i.e. two years after the Second *Critique* and five years after the *Disposition of the Metaphysics of Morals*), and the starting point for his theory of freedom was made by this alleged deficiency of Kantian theory by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling<sup>1</sup>, incidentally influenced by Schmid's work<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Schelling presented his philosophy of freedom in his work *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, published in 1809. Another theory of freedom, also developed as a reaction-remedy to Kant's ethics, was that proposed by Carl Leonard Reinhold in the second volume of his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, which saw the light of day in 1792. Henry Allison writes that in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant, criticizing the concept of freedom as *libertas indifferentiae*, responds precisely to Reinhold. See H. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990, p. 133. Allison also informs us that Reinhold responded to the *Metaphysics* with surprise, caused by the fact that Kant had departed from the proper, according to Reinhold, understanding of freedom known from *Religion within a pure manifold*, returning to his easily challenged views on freedom from the critical period (ibid., p. 134).

<sup>2</sup> M. Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling and Kierkegaard*, Calderon Press, Oxford 2006, p. 52.

Kant addressed Schmid's objections in *Religion Within Pure Reason*, published in 1793<sup>3</sup>. It can be hypothesized that wherever Kant insists that moral evil (*Moralisch-Bösen*) must exist as a result of freedom (for otherwise this evil would not be a specifically moral evil), he is directly alluding to Schmid's criticism. However, the explicit presentation of freedom of the will as the power to do both good and evil is limited in Kant's works to the pages of *Religion*, which in light of his practical philosophy - taken *in toto* - appears as a kind of anomaly<sup>4</sup>. The best evidence of this is the *Metaphysics of Morals*, published in 1797, in which Kant *explicitly* rejects the idea of freedom as *libertas indifferentiae*, i.e. as the aforementioned possibility of free choice among alternative - both moral and immoral - actions<sup>5</sup>. I think that this uniqueness of *Religion* can be explained - following Heinz Mosh Graup - by referring to the "tendentious"<sup>6</sup> character of this work, written, as Graupe believes, under the pressure of the conservative political system of the time.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> This is also noted by Michelle Kosch, *ibid.* p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> See I. Kant, *Metaphysics of morality*, transl. E. Nowak, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 36. On the definition of *libertas indifferentiae*, see *ibid.*, p. 35. That Kant's writings on ethics from the critical period do not support the voluntarist conception of freedom will be pointed out in later sections of this article. At this point, however, it should be noted that in his *Reflexionen*, dating from 1764-1779, Kant takes the same position on the question of freedom as in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. "Can man," asks Kant in *Reflexion* 3865, "be appointed to do moral evil from free resolve [*aus freiem Vorsatz*]?" and answers: "No!". In *Reflexion* 1021, meanwhile, we read that "the ability to act against objective determination [i.e., determination by moral law] does not prove freedom." Also *Reflexion* 3867 states unequivocally: "No one counts as freedom the ability to desire what is contemptible (evil) [...] freedom is the ability to act from the motives of reason." I. Kant, *Texte zur Moralphilosophie aus Kants handschriftlichen Nachlass*, in *Materialien zu Kants*

*"Kritik der praktischen Vernunft"*, R. Bittner & K. Cramer (Hrsg.), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1975, pp. 33-46.

<sup>6</sup> H. M. Graupe, *Kant und das Judentum*, "Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte" 1961, Jg. 31, H. 4, p. 317; see also J. H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, The University of Chicago Press, London, Chicago 1992, pp. 241-243. It should be stipulated that Graupe's article concerns Kant's attitude to the Jewish religion, not to the question of free will, to the extent that it does not directly support my thesis. Nevertheless, this "right-thinking" understanding of freedom toward which Kant directs himself in *Religion* undoubtedly fits into the climate of the general atavism of religious conservatism under Wilhelm II.

him, which prevailed in Prussia after the death of Frederick the Great in 1786<sup>7</sup>. It is also worth bearing in mind that since the so-called *Pantheism* (*Pantheismusstreit*) dispute flared up in the 1780s, Kant must have been anxious - especially after Frederick's death - to mark the distance separating him from Spinozism, which was in Kant's time identified with atheism and immoralism<sup>8</sup>. Part of Spinozism, in turn, was precisely the negation of the arbitrary self-rule of the will.

Regardless of the degree of adequacy of this explanation, the fact remains – given the incommensurability of the theses on will and freedom in *Religion* with the content of the rest of Kant's ethical writings – that it is risky to make this work a point of reference for Kant's theory of freedom, as Henry Allison did in *Kant's Theory of Freedom* – undoubtedly the most influential contemporary work on the subject. Allison's interpretation, which defines freedom in Kant as the ability to incorporate a given motive (moral or otherwise) into a maxim of action (the so-called *incorporation thesis*), meets with approval<sup>9</sup> mainly because, I think, it does justice to our common intuitions<sup>10</sup>. After all, we generally believe that

<sup>7</sup> Here it may also be noted that the publication of *the Metaphysics of Morals*, in which Kant contradicts his theses from *Religion*, coincides with the death of Wilhelm II, Frederick's conservative successor.

<sup>8</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder said in 1787 that "everything absurd and impious was, and to some extent still is, called Spinozism." See B. Lord, *Kant and Spinozism: Transcendental Idealism and Immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2011, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> See A. Reath, *Kant's Theory of Moral Sensibility: Respect for the Moral Law and the Influence of Inclination*, in he, *Agency and Autonomy in Kant's Moral Theory*, Oxford University Press, New York 2006, pp. 12-19; Y. Yovel, *Kant's Practical Reason as Will: Interest, Recognition, Judgment and Choice*, "The Review of Metaphysics," 1998, Vol. 52, No. 2, p. 288; A. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, pp. 51-53 J. Kloc-Konkolowicz, *Practical Reason in the Philosophy of Kant and Fichte*, University of Wrocław Publishing House, Wrocław 2007, pp. 21-23. Also John Rawls's vision of Kant's subject as wielding a "elective will" (*elective will*), brings to mind Allison's *incorporation thesis*. Although Rawls refers to *Kant's Theory of Freedom* in his *Lectures on the History of Ethics*, but not in the context of Kant's theory of freedom, see J. Rawls, *Kant*, in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, B. Hermann (ed.), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London 2000, pp. 177, 285. After all, the author of *A Theory of Justice* writes that "by effort of the choosing will [we are able to check] whether we can incorporate (*incorporate*) a given inclinations into a [morally] permissible maxim of action." Ibid, p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> It is indeed difficult to see any other reason for the anti-Allison interpretation of the freedom in Kant, capturing ethical motivation as constitutive of the occurrence of actions from freedom, dismisses it *ab initio*, describing it as a "disinterpretation" (J. Kloc-Konkolowicz, op. cit, p. 27), "an absurd view" (H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1948, p. 132) or "a mistaken impression" (Y. Yovel, op. cit., p. 281).

we are free not only in the context of ethically right actions, as well as we are convinced that phenomena such as responsibility or guilt, with the ability to do evil by volume choice. In the field of modern metaphysics of freedom, however, we encounter theories that coherently, and justifiably, deny the existence of freedom,<sup>11</sup> without reserving it, as I believe Kant does, for actions that result from respect for moral laws. I think that the very fact of the vitality of such positions in contemporary *strictly* metaphysical debates should be an incentive to take the following reading of Kant's ethics with due seriousness.

This article, however, is not directly polemical in nature, and its main purpose is to explicate the division of the concept of will in Kant's practical philosophy, while the issue of preventing the non-intuitive (or considered as such) consequences of the following deductions, as well as the whole issue of Kant's ontological obligations, are, as it were, bracketed so as not to threaten the autonomy of the presented analysis. In the course of my deliberations, I will also emphasize the importance of the said analysis for the relation between moral value and freedom in Kant's philosophy, point out the important distinction between moral necessity (duty) and moral possibility (which will allow me to distinguish between good will and pure will), and show that where Kant writes about , the matter concerns a certain m o d a l will, and not will *simpliciter*, the concept of which, I believe, is difficult to attribute an unambiguous content in Kant. I will demonstrate the hermeneutical utility of this approach by applying a meticulous diversification of Kant's notion of will to illuminate the multiple and confounding definitions of the will *simpliciter* that we encounter in this philosopher. The most relevant conclusion for understanding Kant's moral theory flowing from my analysis of the concepts of will and freedom, which I present below, is the thesis that in Kant's moral philosophy, free will and freedom, although closely related, are by no means the same thing: man's possession of free will means, I argue, his inherent capacity to be determined to act by moral law and by the laws of nature. Freedom, on the other hand, as a type of causality (*Art von Kausa- lität*), different from natural causality, determines only actual actions, occurring due to the moral law.

In this article I will use the entire critical corpus of the Königsberg philosopher, taking into account the *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilkraft* (*First Introduction to the "Critique of the Power of Judgment"*). In addition, I refer to *the Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *the Metaphysics of Morals*, as well as the lectures on ethics that Kant gave between 1775 and 1880.

### List of terms

Kant distinguishes the following modalities of will and related concepts. We have will (*Wille*), willfullness<sup>12</sup> or arbitrary will<sup>13</sup> (*Willkür*), free will (*freier Wille*), pure will (*reiner Wille*), good will (*guter Wille*), and holy will (*heiliger Wille*) – I will deal with these concepts in the main part of the text, starting with the latter, and then gradually heading "down" – to the will acting in the world of phenomena.

Concepts that are closely related to the will are the concepts of life (*Leben*) and the power of desire (*Begehrungsvermögen*) – with its higher (*oberes*) and lower (*unteres*) varieties. I will examine these concepts in a separate part of this article.

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<sup>12</sup> Translation by Benedict Bronstein – this is the translation I stick to in this article.

<sup>13</sup> Translated by Ewa Nowak.

### Analysis of the concept of will

The holy will is a will that cannot act against the moral law<sup>14</sup>. The moral law is not a prescription<sup>15</sup> (imperative) for it, but is the description of its relationship to other sacred wills. In the same sense, the laws of nature are a description of the casual relationships into which material objects enter. Thus: the moral law itself is descriptive, not normative. Only reasonable, finite beings (one could just as well say - highlighting the duality of the human being in Kant – extra-temporal temporal beings), i.e., human beings – burdened with all the inertia of sensuality – can experience the "coercion to act"<sup>16</sup>, i.e., apprehend the moral law as a binding norm. Hence it follows that an entity possessing a holy will is "beyond good and evil," to put it in Nietzschean terms. This becomes immediately clear as soon as we recall that, according to Kant, an act possesses moral value only if it is performed out of a sense of duty<sup>17</sup>. The holder of a holy will cannot experience this feeling, and therefore none of his actions can have moral value. Moral value is therefore an expression of human subjectivity. However, what is, one may ask, on Kant's grounds, objective, i.e., what does a human being have to do with being endowed with a holy will? The answer is freedom. God, for example, according to Kant, is not even so much free as perfectly free<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, transl. B. Bronstein, Marek Derewiecki Publishing House, Kęty 2015, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> In the *Critique of Practical Reason* we read: "For a being in which reason alone is not the determinant of the will, this law [moral law] [...] is an i m p e r a t i v e, i.e., a law that is marked by duty." Ibid, p. 36; cf. also Ibid, p. 90. In contrast, Kant's lectures read: "[...] in the case of a supreme being, practical necessity does not constitute obligation. God's actions are necessarily moral, but they do not occur out of obligation."

I. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, transl. L. Infeld, Harper & Row, Michigan 1963, p. 15; see also ibid:16.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 90.

<sup>17</sup> See I. Kant, *Justification of the metaphysics of morality*, transl. M. Wartenberg, Marek Derewiecki Publishing House, Kęty 2017, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> See I. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, op. cit. pp. 29-31. The freedom of a being with a holy will is also emphasized by Bernd Ludwig. He also notes that in this connection free "freedom of choice" (*Wahlfreiheit*) does not constitute a proper, philosophical, notion of freedom in Kant's work, and should rather be categorized as "*psychologia empirica*." See Ludwig B., *Die Freiheit des Willens und die Freiheit zum Bösen: Inhaltliche Inversionen und terminologische Ausdifferenzierungen in Kants Moralphilosophie zwischen 1781 und 1797*, in *Kants Rechtfertigung des Sittengesetzes in Grundlegung III: Deduktion oder Faktum?*, H. Puls (Hrsg.), De Gruyter, Berlin 2014.

Freedom is therefore that which is "divine" in man, and not the moral good, from which that which possesses a holy will, and therefore God in particular, is completely separate. This argument agrees with Kant's view of freedom as a kind of causality distinct from natural causality and subject to laws other than natural causality (moral laws or laws of freedom)<sup>19</sup>. An entity endowed with a holy will contains nothing of sensuality that could cause interference with this suprasensory - free - causality determined by moral law, and in this sense such an entity is perfectly free<sup>20</sup>.

Man, on the other hand, is not perfectly free, for the reason that he can fall into slavery (to the senses). Therefore his will, says Kant, can be at best pure, but never holy. Here, as in all of Kant's philosophy, "purity" means the absence of empirical conditioning. The human will is pure only when it is actually determined to act by the moral law<sup>21</sup>, i.e., by the consciousness of the universalizability of a given maxim. Let's note that we can have a pure will by not acting out of obligation. This is a rather trivial observation: after all, not all maxims that are morally possible are also morally necessary. If only actions that are caused by the obligatory character of the maxims in question have moral value, then those actions that are ordinarily permissible from the point of view of the moral law, may, admittedly, occur out of freedom, i.e., be exercised, as it were, out of awareness of the universalizability of the corresponding maxims<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, transl. B. Bronstein, Marek Derewiecki Publishing House, Kęty 2015, pp. 61, 67, 76, 87. Also in *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals* we read: "Since the notion of causality includes the notion of p r a w, according to which by something we call a cause something else, i.e., an effect, must be realized, so freedom, however it is not a property of the will [consisting in action - M. W.] according to the laws of nature is nevertheless not, as a result of this, something not subject to the law at all, but must rather be causality according to immutable [moral] laws." I. Kant, *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, we read that freedom cannot consist in the choice "by a rational being of actions contrary to his own (lawful) reasonableness [...]. Freedom associated with the internal legislation of reason," Kant continues, "is in fact only a kind of ability or power, while any deviation from it is an expression of impotence.

I. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 36. From here it can be seen that God, as a being who cannot suffer any interference with the state of conformity to lawful reason that belongs to him by nature, is free in a perfect way.

<sup>21</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. pp. 47, 67, 74.



but as a non-obligatory cannot have moral value. There is nothing surprising about this: we have already seen that in the case of an entity with a holy will, moral value and liberty are intermixed and even mutually exclusive. Returning to the purity of the will: a pure will, I give a working definition, is a human will that acts out of freedom, with moral value being its incidental rather than necessary feature.

Such a view allows for the delineation of good will. Good will is introduced by Kant in the *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals* as a will that acts out of a sense of duty. This is also how I understand it here: good will acts under the influence of ethical necessity and as such is a variant of pure will. Every good will is pure, while not every pure will is good, because not every pure will acts under the influence of moral necessity. We can also see that the holiness of the will can be understood as its inalienable purity, but not its goodness, since the goodness of the will, as we already know, can only exist in sense-conditioned beings.

We move on to free will. Free will, Kant writes, is a will that can be determined by moral law<sup>23</sup>. The modality "can" is crucial here. Or rather, modalities, since it should be added that freedom of will is a susceptibility to both ethics and nature<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant distinguishes (as he did earlier) between the positive and negative aspects of freedom. Negative freedom implies independence from the order of nature, while positive freedom refers to activity not mediated by empiricism. The positive act of freedom, Kant writes, occurs when "pure reason [is] practical [i.e., causally active, see Kant I., *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 64], which, after all, can only occur under the condition that the maxim guiding a person in all his actions is suitable to occur as a universal law." I. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 45. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant gives the same definition, except that he uses the term "freie Willkür." See Kant I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, vol. II, transl. R. Ingarden, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 1957, pp. 545- 546.

<sup>24</sup> In the second *Critique* we read that "free will is not by itself directed toward such maxims as could strengthen nature by itself according to universal laws [...]; rather, they are personal inclinations which, admittedly, form the whole of the nature according to pathological (physical) laws, but not such nature as would be made possible by our will according to pure practical laws." I. Kant, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 58.



Free will is determined by these two modal properties and does not relate to actuality. For when the human will is subject to actual determination, it is always either a pure will, acting out of freedom, or a sensory conditioned will, acting *nach der Natur*<sup>25</sup> (about which more below). In favor of this understanding of free will is the fact that Kant recognizes, as I said, freedom as a kind of causality that occurs within the moral law, which is its necessary determinant. In this connection, the following statement takes on an important meaning: freedom of the will and freedom as a kind of causality are, on the basis of Kant's ethics, two different things<sup>26</sup>. Let's recall, introduced by me earlier, an entity that is characterized by a holy will. This entity is free, even perfectly free, and at the same time it has no free will, i.e., freedom is not available to it (i.e., interfered with by the empirical) to be achieved, but constitutes for it a *status quo*, not permitting deviation. The entity is therefore perfectly free in that it has no free will. It is very easy to misunderstand here. Consider, for example, Jacob Kloc-Konkolowicz's claim that "[in Kant] the will [...] is made free by the mere possibility of being subject to the rational will"<sup>27</sup>. The sense in which I agree with this claim is peculiar, namely: I think that it is true that the will in Kant is free by virtue of the possibility of being determined by reason, but I do not think that this means that this will acts out of freedom (*aus Freiheit*) also when the actual is not "subject to the rational will [i.e., moral law]"<sup>28</sup> (and this is how Kloc-Konkolovich seems to think, as indicated by the convergence of his views on freedom in Kant with those of Allison).

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<sup>25</sup> In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant writes that there are only two conceivable types of causality: freedom and nature, and every event belongs, either to one or the other causal order. Cf. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. cit. p. 276. Causality, on the other hand, has, according to Kant, a nomological-necessaristic character. See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. cit. p. 292. From here it can be seen that the philosopher from Königsberg postulates the existence of two causal determinisms: the determinism of nature and, as paradoxical as it may sound, the determinism of freedom.

<sup>26</sup> Kant seems to hint at a similar distinction when he points out the difference between the "possibility of freedom" and the "state of " in his lectures. I. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, op. cit. p. 30.

<sup>27</sup> J. Kloc-Konkolowicz, op. cit. p. 86.

<sup>28</sup> A similar thought was expressed by Hermann Cohen in his work *Kants Begründung der Ethik*. What I call the two modal properties of free will, Cohen referred to as "Willkür in bonam partem" and "Willkür in malam partem," the former of which refers to the moral disposition embodied in man's will, while the latter indicates his disposition to submit to the influence of sensuality. In doing so, Cohen emphasized that these two aspects of the will are, according to Kant, insufficient to "guarantee" (*verbürgt*) freedom. H. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, in he, *Hermann Cohen: Werke*, Bd. II, Georg Olms, Hildesheim-Zürich-NY 2001, pp. 239-240.

From freedom, i.e., by virtue of causality, of which the moral law is the law, only the holy, pure or good will acts.

Now we are faced with the most important task: to define the concept of will in Kant in relation to the order of nature.

We know that free will, when it is currently determined to act, is determined to act either by the moral legislation of reason or by the order of nature. And this means that whenever the will is determined to act by something that is not a moral law, it is determined by something that is nature. Let us illustrate this with the following examples. Let's visualize a person's will when he wants to A) buy himself a pair of shoes, but ultimately gives the money spent on them to charity because he wants to relieve the needy, B) eat something fatty, but refrains from doing so because he wants to slim down, and C) eat something fatty and reflexively orders a pizza. Now let's ask: what determines the human will in these examples on the grounds of Kantian philosophy? The most general answer is: nature. In all of these cases, in which there is a more or less instinctive action (see the lower remarks on deliberation), albeit in none of them there is a determination mediated by moral principia, human free will actualizes itself as part of nature, that is, as self-will. Kant repeatedly emphasizes that human willfulness belongs to the order of sensory nature<sup>29</sup>. Self-will is, according to this philosopher, I give a working definition, a proper man's ability to actualize the objects of representation, which aims at man's attainment of a state of happiness<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> For example, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* we read: "Man is himself a phenomenon, his own will [this is how Ingarden translates the term "Willkür"] possesses an empirical character, which is the empirical cause of all his actions" (I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. cit., p. 295) and: "Self-will is only animal will (*arbitrium brutum*), which can only be determined by sense drives, i.e. pathologically" (ibid., pp. 545-546).

This conception of self-will makes it clear that intentionality, too, is ultimately included in Kant's order of sensory nature<sup>31</sup>. Kant defines intentionality as "the causality of a concept in relation to its object"<sup>32</sup>. This object is precisely the state of affairs whose "concept" (representation) can pathologically (sensuously) determine free will *qua* willfulness to act. In turn, when self-will is determined to act by the content of a concept, it is - at the end of the day - driven by the desire for happiness, i.e. the pleasure accompanying the exemplification of that content. In *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Kant presents the human pursuit of happiness as the way in which nature - here as *homo phenomenon* (specifically: *homo sapiens*) - strives to achieve a balance of power. And this way, Kant writes, is not different in kind from the transformations that purely material bodies undergo. In *Erste Einleitung*, Kant assures us that all practical principles, flowing from human self-will [*alle praktischen Sätze [...] von der Willkür als ursache ableiten [...]*], do not constitute the proper object (*Inhalt*) of practical philosophy, which is constituted only by freedom as suprasensory causality and its corresponding laws<sup>33</sup>. Note that the illustration of such principles can be found in examples A and B cited above. What is important, however: since example C does not include the process of deliberation, Kant is not concerned about taking it as a proper case of freedom. It is that very process that suggests a different type of causality than nature<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, we read that "all matter of practical laws [i.e., objects designating self-will for action] [...] groups itself around the principle of self-happiness." I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 50. Kant understands happiness (*Glückseligkeit*) as the pleasure derived from the satisfaction of sense needs. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. cit. p. 549. However, according to Kant, the concept of sensual need has a wide scope and applies not only to what the vernacular defines as "bodily needs," but also refers to "needs of the spirit." See Kant's critique of the demarcation of the higher and lower powers of desire according to the criterion of conceptuality in I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. pp. 38-41. Human happiness, so understood, is, according to Kant, a necessary and never-ending "hypothetical-assertive" imperative of every human being, insofar as it is considered as part of nature (i.e., as a phenomenon). Cf. I. Kant, *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Kant's causal theory coincides with Spinoza's on this point. Both Kant and Spinoza recognized the primacy of the model of explanation that appealed to causal causes, and relegated intentionality to human subjectivity. This resemblance was pointed out and discussed by Beth Lord, op. cit. pp. 93-97.

<sup>32</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, op. cit. p. 89.

<sup>33</sup> See I. Kant, *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in he, *Immanuel Kants Werke*, Bd. V, Ernst Cassirer (Hrsg.), B. Cassirer, Berlin 1914, pp. 180-187.

To make it clear that this is precisely the appearance and that ethically neutral (and therefore, so to , "hedonistically positive") deliberation is a modality of sensory causality, Kant devoted a considerable part of the *Erste Einleitung*<sup>35</sup>. In this text, Kant also cautions against analyzing - "belonging to nature"<sup>36</sup> – arbitrary actions (*willkürliche Handlungen*), in terms of freedom, since this leads, according to him, to a flawed methodology that results in a cross between these necessarily heterogeneous scientific domains. This is what Kant means when he says that under no circumstances can there be possibility of founding a "practical psychology."<sup>37</sup>

Also, if we realize that ethics is, for Kant, precisely a science<sup>38</sup>, we will easily come to understand that its object is not the will acting according to representation of goals. Scientific ethics, insofar as it is scientific, accepts only the paradigm of explanation in terms of causal causes. For ethics as such, the human being is a pure will, the action of whom is described by moral law<sup>39</sup>. This will is pushed to act by being aware of the universalizability of the maxim that is being communicated to it. The presentation of the consequences of this action, i.e., the goals that could be the determinants of willfulness, cannot play a causal role in the etiology of this action, if it is to be considered as an object of ethics.

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<sup>34</sup> That the causal processes involved in "thoughtful decisions" (*überlegte Entscheidungen*) are, according to Kant, part of the order of nature is also emphasized by Bernd Ludwig, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> In the second *Critique*, we also encounter this view of Kant. In this work, Kant distinguishes purely material causality from psychological causality, i.e. causality that "makes actions effective through representations and not through bodily movements," and adds that this distinction occurs within nature and can only account for "comparative" or "psychological" freedom. I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. pp. 102-103.

<sup>36</sup> See I. Kant, *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, op. cit. p. 180.

<sup>37</sup> See *ibid*: 182. Also in the preface to the second *Critique*, Kant "notes with surprise" that the "many people, considering this concept [freedom] only in psychological terms, boast as if they understand it very well [...]" I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> Kant distinguishes (along with mathematics) three sciences: ethics, physics and logic. The first two have their own proper subject domains, while logic is concerned with the form of thought itself. See I. Kant, *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> This is also how Kant's ethics was viewed by Hermann Cohen, he writes: "[...] in final analysis man is [for Kant's ethics] only a point of reference, just as for the sciences he is only an instance of the laws proper to them." H. Cohen, *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*, Gustav Fock, Leipzig 1919, p. 197.

### **Kantian typology of the will vs. Kantian terms of the will**

It is impossible to answer the question "What is the will *simpliciter* in Kant?" directly. Therefore, in order to avoid the disappointments of primitive inductivism, which is destined to get lost in the various definitions of the will *simpliciter* in Kant's writings, it is necessary to approach them with the above-mentioned conceptual apparatus.

In the following, I will present and appropriately classify the definitions of the will that Kant included in the *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals*. This typologization can, of course, also be applied to other issues present in his philosophy (I suggest the reader relate it, for example, to the concepts of autonomy and heteronomy of the will, introduced by Kant in the *Justification*, and developed in the second *Critique*).

In *Reason* we read that the will is A) "the power to act according to the representation of laws, i.e., according to principles [*Prinzipien*]"<sup>40</sup>, B) "praxis reason"<sup>41</sup>, C) "the power to choose which reason cognizes irrespective of inclination as practically necessary [emphasis - I. K.]"<sup>42</sup>, D) "the ability to induce itself to act according to the presentation of certain laws"<sup>43</sup>, E) "the kind of causality of living beings, insofar as they are rational, [] freedom [is] a property of that causality by it [i.e., a rational being] can act independently of extraneous causes inducing it"<sup>44</sup>. And still F) "A rational being counts as intelligence to the world of the intellect and only as a causal cause belonging to it does it call its causality will"<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> I. Kant, *Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 30.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

Ad. A. In the given citation, the main problem of interpretation is to determine the reference of the term "Prinzipien." If we consider that it refers to what Kant calls "materiale Prinzipien,"<sup>46</sup> we thereby conclude that in A Kant considers coextensive concepts that he elsewhere repeatedly distinguishes. For example, in the Second *Critique* we read that only "laws" (*Gesetze*) determine the direction of the "will as wo- li"<sup>47</sup> while "practical principles" (here Kant uses the term "praktische Vorschriften," which, however, means the same as practical "materiale Prinzipien", i.e. amoral rules of action<sup>48</sup>) do not designate the will "directly as a will, but only in view of the desired effect"<sup>49</sup>. If, on the other hand, we take the term "Prinzipien" from the quote *A a priori praktische Prinzipien*<sup>50</sup> as the object of reference, then we obtain a consistent result. However, in view of our previous considerations, the question of what Kant means when he writes "[...] laws [*Gesetze*], i.e., according to the principles [*Prinzipien*]" should not give us sleepless nights. What matters is what he may have meant. So the relevant "map of possibilities" is as follows: if A is referring to a will that is determined only by rights as apriori-practical principals, then it is pure will; if, on the other hand, it is referring to a will that is determined only by the principles as aposteriori-practical *Vorschriften* or such *material Prinzipien*, then it is willfulness. If, on the other hand, it is about will, which can be determined by laws or principles (in the above sense of these terms), then the thing is about free will.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 69.

<sup>46</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 38.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>48</sup> In the second *Critique*, Kant seems to use the terms "Vorschriften" and "Prinzipien" interchangeably; we read there, for example, that "all practical principles [this time in the original we find the "Praktische Prinzipien" and not, as above, "Vorschriften"], which in their assumption take the object (matter) of the power of desire as the determinant of the will, are empirical and cannot constitute practical laws [*praktischen Gesetze*]." Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>50</sup> See *ibid.* p. 48.

Ad. B. What is important for us in the identity of the will with the juridical practical reason is that with the juridical practical reason only the will apprehended independently of sensuality, i.e. the pure, or good will (insofar as man is referred to), can be identical, since the practical reason is in Kant's view a suprasensory entity *ex definitione*.

Ad. C. This is about the will determined to act by moral necessity, i.e. the moral will.

Ad. D. Similar to A. However, one can, I think, judiciously suppose that the concretizing word "certain" indicates the rights inherent in "will as will," i.e., moral rights.

Ad. E. According to the Kantian principle of *tertium non datur*, already discussed by me in this article, and related to sensory and suprasensory causality, we know that if the will is determined to act by something – and it is not sensuality (nature) – it is moral law. That it is ethics that is an "unfamiliar" but proper determinant for the will, can already be inferred from the fact that, according to Kant, the moral law determines the will to act as such<sup>51</sup>. Thus, freedom of will means for the will to be able – as in the case of E – to submit to the moral law. Here we can also safely add that sensuality is, in turn, that property of the will by which it is able to act (or rather, interact) from "extraneous" causes as self-will. So I think it's reasonable to argue that E is all about free will.

Ad. F. Here it is a matter of pure will, i.e., efficient cause acting according to the moral law.

### **The power of desire and life**

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant defines the concept of life by the concept of the power of desire: "Life," he writes, "is the capacity, characteristic of a being, to act according to the laws of the power of desire"<sup>52</sup>. And immediately afterwards he gives the following definition of this power: "The power of desire is the capacity of an agent,

<sup>51</sup> This is also evident from the fact that Kant connects the will induced by law with the "proper self" (*eigentlich selbst*) of man. See I. Kant, *The Justification of the Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 76.

<sup>52</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 24.



whereby it becomes, through its representations, the cause of the reality of the objects of those representations"<sup>53</sup>. At the same time, Kant points out (as I mentioned earlier) that the realization of conceptual content (the objects of representations) is necessarily subordinated, to use Freudian jargon, to the "pleasure principle," and consequently inscribes itself in the order of nature, not in the super- sensual order of freedom.

Thus, we can see that life takes on an entirely physical (in a broad sense) character in Kant's work<sup>54</sup>. It is not surprising that the Königsberg philosopher sometimes describes human life *per se* as representing no special value<sup>55</sup>.

Returning now to Kant's definition of life, I would like to point out that it gives the impression of being circular. The power of desire is the ability to act guided by desires and beliefs, i.e., life, which is, after all, the ability to "behave" (*handeln*) according to the "laws of the power of desire," i.e., to determine one's own activity, being caused by the economy of desires and beliefs. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant gives a definition of life without considering the power of desire anymore; we read there that "[life is] the capacity, inherent in some beings, to act according to the representations they produce."<sup>56</sup>. As we can see, the concept of life here takes on the characteristic that Kant in the second *Critique* attributed to the concept of the power of desire, by which the former concept was there defined. In view of the above, I think it is safe to treat life and the power of desire as equal concepts. It is also, I think, clear that into this pair of concepts fits both the notion of willfulness, which, after all, also refers to the sensual capacity of a causal new human being<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> As is well known, Kant was a firm opponent of hylozoism (J. H. Zammito, op. cit., p. 189). Thus, writing that life is included by Kant in nature, and therefore *ipso facto* in the domain of the sciences, I do not, of course, want to say that he postulated the existence of animate matter as such.

<sup>55</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 95; see also Kant I., *Metaphysics of Morals*, op. cit. p. 179.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> In the introduction to the third *Critique*, Kant characterizes the power of desire in the same way he characterizes arbitrariness in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in the *Erste Einleitung*, i.e., as "one of the many natural causes in the world, namely, one that operates on the basis of concepts." I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, op. cit. p. 13.

We are left to address the question of the higher and lower powers of desire. Here I will limit myself to the following remark: the power of desire *simpliciter* becomes inferior only when contrasted with the higher power of desire, which is identical with pure will. We read in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that "the principle of one's own happiness [...] does not contain any determinations of will [other] than those corresponding to the lower power of desire"<sup>58</sup>. The inferior power of desire is thus the sensual constitution of the (free) will, and as such is the same in Kant's philosophy as the power of desire *simpliciter*. The recognition of this power as "lower" only becomes meaningful when we have the "higher" power of desire, which Kant identifies with pure practical reason<sup>59</sup> and therefore *ipso facto* with pure will.

### Completion

The typology of Kant's notion of the will, which I have presented above, provides a tool for orienting ourselves in Kant's ethical thought. More importantly, however, it demonstrates the resolute anti-libertarianism of Kant's metaphysics of freedom and illuminates the key difference in Kant's view between having free will and acting out of freedom. A careful delineation of the different types of will in the philosophy of the author of *the Critique* also allowed me to highlight what I think are interesting relations in which they stand in relation to moral value, moral necessity and moral possibility.

The above interpretation of Kant presents quite a challenge to our colloquial view of the world. However, this fact, in itself, does not constitute a rationale against it. As I already pointed out at the beginning of this article, anti-libertarian metaphysics of freedom<sup>60</sup>, which goes against the common-sense *status quo*, has a solid representation in the contemporary debate.

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<sup>58</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, op. cit. p. 40.

<sup>59</sup> See *ibid.*

I also believe that the specific "determinism of freedom" I mentioned above, which we encounter in Kant, can be in itself an interesting proposal for independent philosophical reflection. Suffice it to say that on the basis of such a view, what is often considered a necessary condition of freedom of action, namely, the possibility of doing something other than the act actually performed, would not even so much as constitute the *sine qua non* of freedom (as Harry Frankfurt proves in his famous essay *Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*), but would even testify – in the case of the possibility of taking an action contrary to one's duty – to its incompleteness, as it were.

In this connection, I would also like to express my support for Yitzhak Melamed's article-appeal *Charitable Interpretations and the Political Domestication of Spinoza, or, Benedict in the Land of Secular Imagination*, in which the author calls for an end to the abuse of the so-called principle of *charity* in the process of interpreting historical philosophical texts<sup>61</sup>. As Melamed notes, "benevolent" interpreters often go too far in defending philosophical authorities of the past from attributing to them, in their view, "absurd" views, and accordingly tend to impute to them theses that they themselves consider worthy of consideration. In turn, by doing so – as Melamed also emphasizes – they greatly reduce the likelihood of confronting a different, and therefore appropriately stimulating, approach to philosophical problems<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> Since the term "libertarianism" has clung to the context of political theory, I would like to stipulate that I use it - as is also customary - in a *strictly* metaphysical sense.

<sup>61</sup> It seems to me that an example of this is found in the article *Willkür und Wille bei Kant* by Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer. For this author, shortly after *explicitly* declaring his use of the principle of benevolence in interpreting Kant, writes: "It must be admitted that Kant's terminology rather hastily opposes the laws of nature to the 'laws of liberty,' i.e., the laws of 'practical reason,' framed as moral laws, while also the technical-practical [laws] and with them, pertaining to the determination of ends, the 'hypothetical' imperatives [i.e., the amoral rules] [...] must form an essential part of a comprehensive philosophical analysis concerning free actions". P. Stekeler-Weithofer, *Willkür und Wille bei Kant*, "Kant-Studien" 1990, Jg. 81, H. 3, s. 309. If I understand him correctly, what Stekeler-Weithofer means here is that the recognition of ordinary decision-making processes as a manifestation of freedom, is a phenomenon that the theory of such processes "must" preserve. And indeed, such a conviction is our "daily bread," nevertheless, as I tried to show above, Kant's ethics contests it.

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<sup>62</sup> Y. Melamed, *Charitable Interpretations and the Political Domestication of Spinoza, or, Benedict in the Land of the Secular Imagination*, in *The Methodology of the History of Philosophy*, M. Laerke & E. Schilsser (eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, pp. 258-277.

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### Summary

This article presents Kant's typology of the concept of will. The following Kantian concepts fall under scrutiny: free will, good will, power of choice, pure will, holy will, life, and the power of desire. In the course of the analysis a relation is brought to light in which these foregoing kinds of will incline toward moral worth. This in turn allows a discussion about differences between good and pure will as well as between moral possibility and moral necessity. Beside this, the article applies a typology (formulated in advance) of Kant's will-concept to the manifold definitions of will simpliciter that one finds in Kant's writings. This implementation shows that in the Kantian philosophy it is hard to ascribe a clear cut meaning to the concept of will as such and that one is rather advised to conceive of it always in terms of its modalities (enumerated above).

**Key words:** history of philosophy, freedom, will, free will, Willkür, *libertas indifferentiae*, Kant, Allison, Pantheism controversy