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Introduction

Christian Krijnen

Freedom is the core topic of modern philosophy. Seen as a philosophical epoch, a new perspective arises of how humans conceive of themselves and their relationship to the world. From now on, human thought and action is no longer held to be determined by external factors (heteronomy) but self-determined (autonomy), and hence freed from external factors as grounds for its determination. The philosophical paradigm for mastering this impetus of freedom is reason. With his 'Copernican', i.e. transcendental turn, Immanuel Kant gave reason a form that suits the modern understanding of humans as self-determined agents. Reason transpires to be the source of all validity, of any normativity of human thought and action. Objectivity, whichever, is framed from the start by the conditions of reason, or as it is also called in the discourse, of 'subjectivity'.

While the German idealists were thrilled by this thought, they were unconvinced by Kant's elaboration of the idea of transcendental philosophy. Thinkers as diverse as Reinhold, Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel were all of the opinion that Kant's transcendental turn had unfettered a revolution in philosophical thought that should not so much be stopped but rather completed and this should be accomplished by addressing critically the presuppositions or 'foundations' of Kant's philosophy itself.

To these presuppositions belong, without doubt, Kant's architectonic of reason in general as well as the role the concept of freedom has within it in particular. The adventure of exploring Kant's presuppositions from the start gave wings to the astonishing development of German idealist philosophy. The unity of reason now was to be conceived of as freedom. Already Fichte, with revolutionary pathos, qualified his *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) as "the first system of freedom," and subsequently the young Schelling proclaimed that the "Alpha and Omega of all philosophy is freedom." Hegel, as it seems in the most radical fashion, tried to conceive of reason and freedom as a unity from which everything else emerges and can be comprehended. Whereas for Kant freedom is not so much the origin of all philosophy and being but the "capstone" of the whole system of pure reason, for Hegel freedom makes up the beginning, the way and the end of philosophy.

Kant's architectonic of reason forms the starting point of the German idealist attempt at perfecting Kant's transcendental philosophy. Referring to the history of philosophy, Kant divides philosophy continuously into theoretical and practical philosophy as well as categorizing the corresponding objects into nature and freedom. This reference to the history of philosophy, which for Kant is prominent especially as the so called *Deutsche Schulphilosophie*, i.e. the German metaphysics of his age, moreover informs the basic characteristics of Kant's concept of freedom. For Kant, freedom is a *causal power*. In the third antinomy, Kant models freedom as a "power" to begin a series of effects "*spontaneously*." This power-theoretical modelling enables Kant, who already within the cosmological context was focusing on freedom "in the practical sense," to understand humans as agents of their actions, and hence as a subject, not merely as an effect of a natural cause, not as a mere object.

Hegel, surprisingly enough, rejects as a general determination of freedom Kant's cosmological or transcendental concept of freedom as a power to begin a series of effects "*spontaneously*." For Hegel, freedom is not primarily a causal power; it is being with itself in its other. Hence, Kant's cosmological concept of freedom is supposed to stem from more basic presuppositions, which remain unaddressed in Kant's philosophy. Moreover, with his criticism of Kant's cosmological concept of freedom, Hegel criticizes a conception of freedom that in one way or another guides much of the later transcendental philosophy. This still applies today with freedom being a causal power of the subject that determines itself in accordance with its own laws of validity. Hegel, by contrast, aims at establishing a more genuine concept of freedom.

Against the background of this radical turn in the concept of freedom, I organized a *Humboldt Kolleg* on *Metaphysics of Freedom? Kant's Concept of Cosmological Freedom in Historical and Systematic Perspective*. It took place from 29 to 31 March 2017 at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The *Humboldt Kolleg* aimed to put Kant's concept of cosmological freedom into the center. Hence, it explicitly was not primarily bothered with Kant's concept of practical freedom, addressed frequently in contemporary debates. In contrast, it concentrates on the much less discussed and mostly taken for granted cosmological foundation of it.

- What is the philosophy historical background of Kant's concept of cosmological concept of freedom? In this respect prefigurations in ancient and medieval philosophy as well as in modern Rationalism are relevant, e.g. the much-disputed issue of the relationship between willing and the will, Intellectualism and Voluntarism, and hence, conceptions of freedom as freedom of thought and freedom of choice.

- Concerning Kant's cosmological concept of freedom within the framework of his own theoretical philosophy, difficulties arise with respect to the relationship between the cosmological concept of freedom and other basic concepts of theoretical acts like "actions of understanding," "synthesis," or "spontaneity." What problems emerge from this with regard to the unity of Kant's theoretical philosophy?
- What are the challenges the later German idealists' conceptions have to face when dealing with Kant's problem of cosmological freedom? How do they integrate the problem of cosmological freedom regarding a uniform conception of reason? To what extent do their conceptions fall back behind Kant, and to what extent do they substantially go beyond Kant?

In short, how to understand and esteem Kant's concept of cosmological freedom in a historical and systematic perspective? By elaborating on this question, the *Humboldt Kolleg* takes up the contemporary interest in Kant and freedom as well as that for Kant's philosophical predecessors and attempts at a reactualization of German idealism. This collection of essays is the result of the presentations and discussions during the *Humboldt Kolleg*. It roughly follows the historical arrangement leading the program.

Michael Forster discusses *Free Will in Antiquity and in Kant*. He traces the origins in antiquity of a certain model of free will and its relation to morality that Kant, along with many other moderns, presupposes. He then sketches the development of Kant's own theory of free will over the course of his career. Finally, Forster shows that taking the ancient development of the model of free will that Kant assumes and his own development into account not only illuminates key aspects of his mature theory but also makes it possible to assess its strengths and weaknesses more effectively, in particular to see that in one respect it is more coherent than has often been thought (innocent of the "imputability problem") but in another respect even more problematic (concerning free will and causal determinism).

In his *Freedom in Nature, Freedom of the Mind in Spinoza*, Gábor Boros argues that Spinoza's concept of freedom is strongly systematic in character: it appears in most segments of his system. Boros concentrates on what can be called the "cosmological" aspect of Spinoza's overall concept of freedom. This means freedom related to the *cosmos* that Spinoza calls Nature linked to God in his famous expression *Deus sive Natura*, "God or Nature." Boros also analyzes the aspect of natural-theological freedom that makes itself experienced in the human being as the freedom of the *mind*, a completion of the "cosmological" freedom in Nature. Both analyses are carried out from the double perspective

of Spinoza's most important sources, the system of Descartes, on the one hand, and the peculiar type of Neoplatonism, on the other, whose unique representative was the Portuguese-Jewish physician and philosopher Leone Ebreo (Yehuda Abarvanel). Spinoza's main achievement in the history of the concept of freedom seems to be the transference of the theological-metaphysical concept of an anti-indifferentist freedom over to a scientifically oriented concept of it with a natural-theological underpinning.

Thomas Sören Hoffmann addresses *Kants theoretischer Freiheitsbegriff und die Tradition der „libertas spontaneitatis.“* He starts with identifying the 'logical' profile of the problem of freedom within the framework of early modern thinking: due to the new—mainly Cartesian or Galileian—foundations of thinking and science, it is no longer possible to conceive of freedom in the traditional Aristotelian (e.g. teleological) way. The alternatives are now (a) a voluntaristic conception of the “*liberum arbitrium*” and the idea of a mere “*libertas indifferentiae*” or (b) a reinterpretation of freedom by the concept of a universalized “spontaneity” which in Leibniz becomes fundamental for any further debate on freedom. In the second section Hoffmann shows how Kant in his early *Nova dilucidatio* starts from Leibniz-Wolffian premises, so e.g. with respect to the concept of freedom as referring to internal self-determination, being nevertheless open to some criticism of this approach in general and pointing out that the notion of spontaneity should be referred to the action itself, not to the (inner) principle of acting. Finally, in the third section, it is shown that the main issue in Kant's critique of cosmological freedom in his *Critique of Pure Reason* is to make clear that every “ontological” understanding of freedom, including the Leibnizian one, is in itself antinomian and therefore leads to a “transcendental,” i.e. basically reflexive instead of objective way of conceiving freedom. Transcendental freedom itself describes the formal possibility of practical freedom which is connected to the “absolute spontaneity” of a self-realizing idea of freedom which according to Kant is the real cornerstone of his philosophy.

For Klaus Erich Kaehler, in *The Freedom of the Monad and the Subject of Freedom*, the conception of freedom deeply depends upon the whole framework of a philosophy. More in particular, the objective metaphysics of Leibniz is based on the presupposition of a most perfect subject exerting absolute power by knowledge and will, that is as the most perfect subject of reason. Only inasmuch as reason is exerted, freedom is possible. The finite, created monads are free only to the grade of their own capacity of reason. But this does not mean that they are able to change the metaphysical order of being and becoming. Since the freedom of the monads includes the possible reality of each monad determined by the limits of their “complete concept,”

freedom cannot consist in the power of changing itself from scratch but has to be carried out within the subject's internal self-relation as the subject of reason, though limited, to the will. It is free to the degree of its contributing to the universal order of the "best of all possible worlds." Kant, although he rejects Leibniz' metaphysical objectivation of the subject, nevertheless holds on to the idea of freedom as dependent of an internal relation between reason and will. Since for Kant, however, the empirical world as appearance follows strictly the law of causality in space and time, the intra-subjective determination of the will can be exerted originally only independent of the empirical states and their change in time. Ultimately, it is Kant's distinction of appearances and things in themselves, what "rescues" freedom. The determination of willing and acting even within the empirical world has to be ascribed to an "intelligible character"—as an idea of pure reason without any theoretical objective reality but only a practical one.

In *Das Problem der transzendentalen Freiheit und seine Lösung: Kant versus Wolff*, Heiner F. Klemme aims to clarify what kind of problem Kant intends to solve with his conception of transcendental freedom, with reference to both the development of his critical philosophy and to two alternatives concerning freedom (and necessity). These alternatives are represented by Christian Wolff's *German Metaphysics* (1719) on the one hand and Christian Garve's comments on the relationship between freedom and natural necessity in his *Grundsätze der Moralphilosophie* (1772) on the other. It is only at the end of the 1770s that Kant realizes that transcendental freedom is just an idea of reason, and that this idea provides the basis for solving both the problem of the antithetic of freedom and necessity and that of practical freedom, as required by the standpoint of moral philosophy.

The starting point for Stephan Zimmermann's *Kant on "Practical Freedom" and Its Transcendental Possibility* is Kant's distinction between two forms of the freedom of the will. Besides transcendental freedom, which he posits as the foundation of moral philosophy, he also deals with an empirical freedom. Zimmermann follows Kant's reflections through numerous writings and lecture notes. He argues that the so-called "practical freedom" constitutes an undeniable constant in Kant's thought. It does not consist in the absolute freedom or autonomy of the determination of the will to an action but in the subsequent alternativality of the realization of the will already determined, i.e. the relative freedom of choice (*Willkür*) between different actions—they may be those, which the moral law prescribes, or those imposed by our sensible inclinations. On closer inspection, Kant's concept of an imperative stands and falls with the freedom of the *Willkür*, thereby revealing itself as an indispensable part of Kant's moral philosophy; it is presupposed by the 'ought',

through which moral laws (as well as rules of prudence) present themselves where conflicting intentions oppose them. Finally, Zimmermann discusses the transcendental possibility of “practical freedom.” Although this kind of freedom takes place in the midst of the determinism of nature constituted by the second analogy of experience, the decision between alternatives is very well compatible with the principle of causality.

In *Absolute Spontaneity and Self-Determination. The Fact of Reason and the Categories of Freedom*, Martin Bunte shows that freedom in the cosmological sense as absolute spontaneity possesses central importance for Kant’s practical philosophy. The idea of initiating a causal series originally from freedom constitutes the essential core of the idea of imputability; without imputability, morality would be unthinkable. If the idea of a subject capable of dedication, a personality, constitutes the a priori core of praxis, then it should be possible to bring all the determinations of practical reason back to this idea. That this is indeed the case, will be shown by referring to the “fact of reason,” i.e. the consciousness of the moral law, insofar as in this the will knows itself both as determining and as determined. Thus, as in the theoretical realm, self-determination also forms the primary and a priori core of deduction in the practical realm. All other determinations have to be derived from that core as its moments. This again becomes apparent by the fact that the categories of freedom could be exhibited as just these moments. As such, they form a tri-chotomous order of three or four series, according to the law of completeness in the logic of determinations. This ordering is expressed in the three formulas of the categorical imperative, in terms of maxims, natural law, and ends; the latter takes the double form of “end in itself” and “kingdom of ends.”

Marina F. Bykova elaborates on *Kant’s Problems with Freedom and Fichte’s Response to the Challenge*. Approaching Kant’s metaphysics of freedom from the historical perspective, Bykova focuses on Fichte’s response to problems associated with Kant’s concept of cosmological freedom. Recognizing Kant’s failure to unify the intelligible and sensible realms in a way that it could justify the actuality of freedom and explain its possibility in the causally determined world, Fichte took it upon himself to complete Kant’s Critical Philosophy in a way that it could indeed provide a practical affirmation of human freedom. Examining some key elements of Fichte’s theory of freedom, Bykova argues that Fichte surpasses Kant successfully addressing problems that Kant left unresolved. Introducing the concept of the self-positing I, Fichte is able to explain freedom in terms of spontaneity and self-initiation, which Kant only postulated in his cosmological concept of freedom but was not able to justify. Emphasizing the practical significance of the idea of the self-determinacy of the I for the concept of autonomy, Fichte restored the conceptual unity of

freedom and morality and provided a justification for the possibility of a moral theory based on autonomy.

Sameness and Otherness in the Free Principle of Philosophy. Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre in Comparison to Hegel's Science of Logic* is the topic of Faustino Fabbianelli. With Heinrich Rickert and Werner Flach, Fabbianelli proposes a heterological principle (according to which the other of the one must be seen as a positive not-one) in contrast to a principle of antithetic dialectic (for which the other of the one is not just any arbitrary other but rather its other, which is directly opposed to it). He finds the heterological principle expressed in Fichte's late *Wissenschaftslehre* and the antithetical principle in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. By understanding transcendental philosophy as knowledge of the boundary and from the boundary in the Kantian sense, Fichte recognizes the principle of philosophy as an analogical and absolute knowledge, insofar as knowledge is heterological in relation to the absolute. At the same time, Fichte opens up the path to a transcensive metaphysics in Hans Wagner's sense. This has direct consequences for the freedom that can be attributed to the principle of philosophy. The principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is free because it is analogical; it possesses the freedom of the image that understands itself as image of the absolute. On the contrary, for Hegel such freedom cannot be true freedom, because it is still determined by the otherness—that is by the ex-cendence—of the absolute with respect to the image. Conversely, concrete freedom can be found only in the speculative concept as being-with-oneself in the other.

The German idealists intended to complete Kant's transcendental turn by addressing critically the presuppositions or 'foundations' of Kant's philosophy itself. These presuppositions include Kant's architectonic of reason in general as well as the particular role of the concept of freedom. In *Kant's Conception of Cosmological Freedom and Its Metaphysical Legacy*, Christian Krijnen shows that Kant's cosmological or transcendental freedom appears to be not so much a secure starting point for further elaborations but a problem on its own. In doing so, it becomes clear that the profile of Kant's critical conception of freedom in general and that of the third antinomy in particular becomes plausible by taking into account that it draws heavily upon the German metaphysical tradition of the 18th century. As a result, several preliminaries and non-justified constellations come into view. From Hegel's perspective, they cannot even be justified. Rather, getting to the bottom of them transcendently would lead to a more general concept of freedom. Finally, the consequences of this analysis are illustrated by taking into consideration the fundamental axiomatic relation of transcendental philosophy as conceived of by Bruno Bauch, probably the best neo-Kantian Kant specialist.

In his essay on *Hegel's Concept of Recognition as the Solution to Kant's Third Antinomy*, Arthur Kok deals with the role of thingness in the philosophical determinations of nature and subject. In his 'Lectures on the History of Philosophy', when discussing Kant's third antinomy, Hegel reproaches Kant for having "too much tenderness for the things." Kok endeavors to explain what Hegel means by this criticism. Kok's point of departure is the problem of the third antinomy: that we are forced to accept the assumption of transcendental freedom, but by doing so we postulate a contradiction. Kant argues that his transcendental idealism can resolve this contradiction. Yet Hegel does not accept this solution, particularly challenging Kant's distinction between appearances and things in themselves. Kok argues that Hegel's concept of recognition in the self-consciousness chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* can be reconstructed as a further reflection on the nature of the transcendental subject. By reading the self-consciousness chapter in the light of the previous chapter 'Force and Understanding', Kok shows how the lord/bondsman-relation can be understood as Hegel's solution to the contradiction that Kant's antinomies have brought to light. His most important conclusion is that Hegel convincingly argues against Kant that the possible contradiction between appearances and things-in-themselves does not reside in the subject but in fact entails a contradiction of the sensible things with themselves.

Jakub Kloc-Konkołowicz poses the question *Does Spontaneity Have to Be Naturalized? Freedom as Spontaneity—Today and in Kant*. He intends to formulate an apology of Kant's understanding of spontaneity. Kant's position is being reconstructed and placed in the context of his transcendental and practical philosophy. Kloc-Konkołowicz discusses Kant's reasons to give his notion of spontaneity a moral connotation and considers the implications of this moral concept of spontaneity. Subsequently, he depicts the argumentative strategy which underlies the project of naturalization of spontaneity and of interpreting it in anthropological categories. Finally, Kloc-Konkołowicz disputes the main argument of this anthropologically oriented project. By doing this, it becomes possible to answer the following questions: Are the changes proposed by the critics necessary at all? Do they accomplish the aim set by their authors? Do the changes threaten the advantages of the Kantian concept of spontaneity that make this concept so useful to face some of the challenges linked to the modern understanding of individual freedom? In his analyses, Kloc-Konkołowicz sketches the genuine Kantian position and shows its inclusivity. Kant's concept of spontaneous action, clearly delimited from all psychological and other empirical contexts, proves to be basically open to all rational beings independently of their hitherto life-history, inclinations and predispositions.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to a number of people and institutions: The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Bonn, Germany) was the main sponsor of the conference. In fact, already the plan for addressing the issue of Kant's conception of cosmological freedom within the context of a *Humboldt Kolleg* arose during one of ~~the~~ their meetings (in September 2015 in Leipzig on the occasion of the *Anneliese Maier Forschungspreis*). I had the opportunity to discuss ideas for a cooperation in this respect with some of the speakers. Some years ago, the research institute Clue+ was established at the Faculty of Humanities of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. One of its task[▲] is to cope with the infrastructure for conferences. Clue+ not only co-sponsored the *Humboldt Kolleg*, but without the help of Gert-Jan Burgers and his team, especially Rita Hermans and Ties Verhoeven, it would not have been possible to organize the *Humboldt Kolleg* at all. Vincent Panhuysen of the philosophical fraternity was so kind to assist during the conference. The Humanities Graduate School of the Vrije Universiteit supported the conference too. The cooperation with the publishing house Brill has been very pleasant again.