

**SPACE, TRANSCENDENTAL TRUTH AND JUDGMENT IN
KANT'S INAUGURAL DISSERTATION *DE MUNDI
SENSIBILIS ATQUE INTELLIGIBILIS FORMA ET
PRINCIPIIS*¹**

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The philosophical space delimited by the opposition between *veritas transcendentalis/somnium obiective sumptum* has been a site of continuous reflection for Kant. Two different writings – far apart in time and expressions of radically different phases of his thought – explicitly demonstrate the depth of this reflection: the *Dreams of a spirit-seer elucidated by dreams of metaphysics*³ and the answer to the review of Feder and Garver to the *Critique of pure reason* published in appendix to the *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics that will be able to come forward as science*.⁴ For quite a long time, scholars have been dealing with this issue.⁵

The main goal of the present article is to provide a contribution to the study of this topic, which is part of a broader research field concerning the relation between Kant's transcendental philosophy and the Wolffian tradition. In this respect, the inaugural dissertation *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* (henceforth: *Dissertatio*) offers various and interesting cues. To justify the thesis, we should pay particular attention to several technical terms and reflect, at least briefly, upon some cornerstones of Wolffian philosophy. The first two sections of the article will be devoted to this purpose. In the subsequent section, we will discuss, firstly, the changes in Kant's renewed understanding of the *veritas transcendentalis* at the time of the *Dissertatio* and, finally, the problems it left open.

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1. “*SPATIUM ABSOLUTUM*, THIS RIDDLE OF PHILOSOPHERS”

The reflection on the ontological status of space may be taken as a guideline, allowing us to follow the evolution of Kant’s thought. Particularly relevant for my purpose is the short text *Concerning the ultimate ground of the differentiation of directions in space*. The Newtonian conception which Kant accepts here, represents a sort of *unicum* in his philosophical journey. In fact, it is well-known that, while the absolute reality of space is stated in opposition to the Leibnizian-Wolffian conception, only two years later the Newtonian conception⁶ will be abandoned in favour of transcendental idealism, employing the *KrV* terminology. Here, it is not possible to present a thorough survey of this text, but it is important to notice two elements which will remain central in the idealistic-transcendental understanding of space as well. The first one concerns the relationship between space and the complete determination of being: in line with the example of the difference between right and left hand, Kant maintains that the principle of individuation of an extended being cannot be based uniquely on the relation among the parts of its matter. The incongruent counterparts are those beings that are “exactly equal and similar, and yet” they are “so different in themselves that the limits of the one cannot also be the limits of the other” (GUGR, 02: 381/369). Thus, Kant states: “The ground of the complete determination [*vollständiger Bestimmungsgrund*] of a corporeal form does not depend simply on the relation and the position of its parts to each other; it also depends on the reference of that physical form to universal absolute space, as it is conceived by the geometers” (ibid). As we shall discuss in the next section, the issue of complete determination points toward transcendental truth.

The second element which is worth pointing out is more problematic, and it concerns the relation between absolute space and the subject in its corporeal form.⁷ Kant states that our body is the first ground on which we form the concept of directions in space.⁸ Moreover, in the ending part of *Directions in space* he holds that the absolute reality of space – although not free from the difficulties which always occur when we try to philosophize over the first data of our knowledge⁹ – is “intuitive enough for inner sense” (GUGR, AA 02: 383/372). In other words, in this text we can already observe a connection between subject and space. Clearly, this raises various problems, and will be subject to a deep analysis and a radical transformation in the *Dissertatio*.

Lastly, a remark about terminology: in the ending of *Directions in space* Kant holds that space, as it is conceived by geometers, has not to be considered as a mere “figment of

imagination” (ibid.). In the German text, however, Kant uses the technical term *Gedankending*, which elsewhere is employed to translate the Latin expression *ens rationis*.¹⁰ In a *Reflexion* dated by Adickes to the period 1773-1775, we read “*Spatium absolutum*, this riddle of philosophers, is certainly something correct (but not *reale*, rather *ideale*) [...]. It is not imagined (*ens imaginarium*)” (AA 17: 639/155). At first sight, the *Dissertatio* seems to claim something different: “the *concept of space* as some objective and real being or property” would “be imaginary” (MSI, AA 02: 404/398). However, the difference is merely apparent. In the *Inaugural Dissertation*, Kant actually holds that what is imaginary is space itself, insofar as it is real and not ideal; thus, the statement is consistent with the *Reflexion* just quoted. Therefore, Favaretti Camposampiero could show that the Kantian reception of *ens imaginarium* refers to the “antirealist tradition” (Favaretti Camposampiero, 2010: 323), where the term designates something that has no reality beyond our thought. Thus, Kant moves away from Wolff, for whom, instead, the *ens imaginarium* had a heuristic role. However, some passages of the *Dissertatio* hint at different aspects not entirely consistent with this use of the expression. Thus, for instance, when Kant refers to the “*mundus egoisticus*”, he affirms: “[it] is not properly called a world, unless, perhaps, it is called an *imaginary [imaginarius] world*” (MSI AA 02: 389/380). In the *Metaphysik* L2, dated around 1790-1791, we read:

If I assume space to be a being in itself, then Spinozism is irrefutable, i.e., the parts of the world are parts of the divinity. Space is the divinity; it is united, all-present; nothing can be thought out of it; everything is it (AA 28: 567/331).

Although these statements were written twenty years after the *Dissertatio*, the comparison is not unwarranted, since the *Reflexion* 3803 dated to the period 1764-1766 suggests: “Every Spinozist is an egoist. It is question whether every egoist is necessarily a Spinozist” (AA 17: 297/87). The adjective *imaginarius* referred to the egoistic world seems then to pinpoint something more than the mere absence of extra-mental reality. The fact that this consideration is not entirely inappropriate is demonstrated, I believe, by Kant’s terminological choice to characterize the Newtonian space:

As for the first [i.e. Newtonian one] empty fabrication of reason: since it invents an infinite number of true relations without there being any beings which are related to one another, it belongs to the world of fable [*mundus fabulosus*] (MSI, AA 02: 404/397).¹¹

However, just few lines later Kant states: “Although the concept of space as some objective and real being or property be imaginary, nonetheless, relatively to all sensible things whatsoever, it is [...] in the highest degree true” (MSI, AA 02: 404/398). Thus, it seems that at least in this context the imaginary being is somehow comparable to the *mundus fabulosus*. To clarify the meaning of this – at least partial – equivalence, we should take into account Wolff’s philosophy, where *ens imaginarium* and *mundus fabulosus* are not comparable at all. In addition, the excursus will allow us to make clearer in which sense space and time are in the highest degree true.

2. WOLFF: TRANSCENDENTAL TRUTH AS CRITERION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUE WORD AND *SOMNIUM OBIECTIVE SUMPTUM*

Wolff deals systematically with the concept of transcendental truth in his *Ontologia*. There, the argument is consistent with the scholastic one, in which transcendental truth is intended as the ground for logical truth. The concept of *veritas transcendentalis* is expounded in the section devoted to the discussion of general affections of being. The argumentation is preceded by an analysis of the concept of order, which transcendental truth structurally depends on.

Order is just the expression of the principle of sufficient reason which, together with the principle of non-contradiction, are the real cornerstones of Wolff’s thought. Order is defined as “the evident similarity in the way things are arranged one next to the other or one after another” (Ont.: § 472).¹² In this respect, order can be understood as the bedrock of Wolff’s method as it is advanced in *Discursus praeliminaris*: order is the receiving of a rule whereby places are assigned to simultaneous beings and to successive ones. However, we have to notice that the expression *place* – many times invoked by Wolff – is not to be understood only in spatial terms. Place can also be said of the position of a proposition within an argumentative process. Nevertheless, space and time are – we might say – just materializations of order.¹³ For my thesis here, this point is decisive.

Order is the opposite of *confusion*. Since the latter is the contradictory counterpart of the former, confusion is nothing but “the evident dissimilarity in the way things are arranged one next to the other or one after another” (Ont.: 485). Accordingly, confusion is simply the difference in the way of determining the places of beings: “*in confusion, there is no stable rule in virtue of which the places of things are determined*” (Ont.: § 487).

Having established these central elements about the concept of order, Wolff goes on introducing dreaming as the place where neither the principle of non-contradiction nor the principle of sufficient reason are valid. In a nutshell, dreaming is the site of the highest possible confusion:

Within dreams [In somnio] all things [omnia] occur without sufficient reason and the dream is place of contradiction. In the truth of things [rerum], singular beings exist and are produced according to sufficient reason, it is not the place of contradiction (Ont.: § 493).

The reason why Wolff – speaking about dreaming – refers to a generic *omnia*, whereas – speaking about *veritas rerum* – refers to singulars, will be discussed later. Dreaming is where “in the antecedent it cannot be obtained what allows you to understand why the thing that follows is such rather than otherwise” (Ont.: § 493), thereby “within dreams [in somnio] nothing that seems to occur, happens with sufficient reason” (ibid.). The *principium rationis sufficientis* turns out to be the ground of the insurmountable difference between truth and dream:

The world of fable [...] is a dream that lasts for a very long time. Thus, it must not appear odd that the same difference existing between the true world and the world of fable, lies between dream and truth (ibid.).

As noted by Pimpinella,¹⁴ the distinction between true world and dream can be interpreted as an indirect proof of the principle of sufficient reason. Paragraph 493 of *Ontologia* calls back to the 77th, where it is stated: “once the principle of sufficient reason is removed, true world transforms itself in the world of fable [mundus fabulosus]” (Ont.: § 77). Perhaps even more radical in this respect is the *Deutsche Metaphysik* where – within a paragraph significantly entitled “Ursprung der Wahrheit” – it is stated that whoever carefully reflects on the distinction between world and dream, will realize that “without the principle of sufficient reason there cannot be any truth” (G. Met.: § 144).

Finally, we should consider other aspects of *Ontologia*. Paragraph 495 states:

Thus, the *truth*, which is called *transcendental* and which is understood as inherent in things, is the order in the multiplicity of the simultaneous or successive things or if you prefer, it is the order of things pertaining to being [*enti conveniunt*] (Ont.: § 495).

What can inhere in being must be included either in the predicative classes of essentials, or of the attributes, or of the modes. Since transcendental truth is just the order among predicates,¹⁵ we can say that *veritas transcendentalis* is precisely the law according to which the predicative structure of being is established. This interpretation is further confirmed when we consider what Wolff claims in paragraph 497: if in being nothing takes place which is not ascribable to the predicative classes just mentioned, and if the principles of non-contradiction and sufficient reason rule over the dynamics of each classes, then

Nothing can be conceived in any being that is not determined either by the principle of contradiction or by the principle of sufficient reason, and by virtue of this determination to any predicate, which pertains to thing, its place is attributed. Therefore, truth is given [Datur] in every being and consequently every being is true (Ont.: §497).

That being the case, it becomes evident why in the quotation from *Ontologia*, where dreaming is discussed, Wolff introduced a connection between truth and singular being: in his opinion the principle of individuation is nothing but “the complete determination of those things which inhere in being” (Ont.: § 229), and since what inheres in being are only essentials, attributes, and modes, it follows that we reach individuation when the end of the predicative determination of being is reached. The connection between complete determination and transcendental truth is thus established.

These remarks allow us to understand, now, the sense in which logical truth is grounded on transcendental truth¹⁶. Paragraph 499 of *Ontologia* states “*If no transcendental truth is given in things, neither is the truth of universal propositions and singular ones, except in the instant*” (Ont.: § 499). Things are such, because without transcendental truth, that is, without order among essentials, attributes, and modes, there would be no reason for the inherence of the predicate in the subject within judgement. The inherence of the predicate by virtue of the notion of subject is actually what constitutes the truth of judgement. Given the reasoning outlined so far, Wolff can state:

The *criterion of truth* is intrinsic to the proposition and by virtue of this criterion, it is possible to acknowledge the proposition as true, and, as a consequence *the criterion of truth provides sufficient marks to recognize, in any given case, the truth and, most of all, to distinguish the true proposition from the false one, and it is a distinct notion of truth* (LL.: § 523).¹⁷

As a consequence, we should agree with Schulthess' thesis:

(1) Concepts are sets of characteristic marks [*Merkmalskomplexe*] and [...] singular concepts, that is to say concepts of individuals. (2) Judgments are always judgments *de re quadam*. Judgment is grounded in the logical relation esse-in [*inesse-Relation*], which is nothing more than the ontological relation between *res* and *nota*. The metaphysical condition of this logic is the isomorphism between logical and ontological structures (Schulthess, 1981: 20).

These positions will be largely rejected by Kant at the time of the *Dissertatio*. As we will show, this essay – as well as the coeval *Reflexionen*, the *Logik Vorlesungen Blomberg* and *Philippi*, which are all chronologically close to the *Dissertatio*¹⁸ – shows an extensional conception of logic and, thus, a conception of judgement according to which the predicate – and no longer the subject – is the “principle of cognizing” (MSI, AA 02: 411/407). However, this evolution introduces new issues, that only the later phase of Kant's thought will be able to confront and solve.

3. FORM OF SENSIBLE WORLD AS GROUND OF TRUTH.

The eleventh paragraph of the *Dissertatio* plays a decisive role in the argumentation I am here developing. There, Kant discusses the many senses in which the knowledge of a phenomenon can be said to be true. Firstly, truth can be ascribed to knowledge of phenomena, because the phenomenon in itself is the product of the object affecting sensibility; this fact is sufficient to rule out the idealistic position. Thus, the value of the statement lies in its capacity to prevent phenomenal knowledge from falling into illusory knowledge: even though the phenomenon is not the object in itself, it is not the illusory product of imagination either.

Secondly, knowledge of phenomena can be said true if we consider

judgements about things which are sensitively cognised. Truth in judging consists in the agreement of a predicate with a given subject. But the concept of a subject, in so far as it is a phenomenon, would only be given through its relation to the sensitive faculty of cognising, and it is in accordance with the same relation that predicates would be given which were sensitively observable. It is, accordingly, clear that representations of a subject and predicate arise according to common laws; and they thus furnish a foothold for cognition which is in the highest degree true (MSI, AA 02: 397/389).

Many points deserve a thorough examination. First, we must determine what common laws consist in. However, an aspect stands out immediately: the common laws, according to which representations of subject and predicate arise, are the grounds for the truth of judgment. Although this claim may appear unproblematic, there are complications. As I see it, this passage seems to contain a tension *in nuce*. The above quotation does not give rise to doubts about common laws being the ground of the concept of subject and predicate. Since subject and predicate are given through their relationship with sensitive faculty of knowledge, these laws cannot be nothing but space and time as principles of the form of sensible world.

The concept of form is introduced in the second paragraph of the *Dissertatio* as the constitutive element of the concept of world. In the concept of world, form concerns the feature of connection among elements insofar as they may belong to a real whole. The real whole yielded by matter and form, as elements of *universitas*, is that unity that every being belongs to. We have to keep in mind, however, that the fact that every being belongs to this unity, is essentially different from the possibility to predicate a concept with respect to its inferiors: the former is a collective unity, while the latter is a distributive one. In this regard, *Reflexion* 4149 (1769-70) deserves special attention: “Omnitudo est (⁠ disiunctiva) vel distributiva. Universalitas. Vel collectiva. Univeristas. Omnitudo collectiva est vel coordinationis vel subordinationis; prioris terminus est mundus, posterioris est ens primum” (AA 17: 434). Thus, the *omnitudo* of the world and of the *ens primum* is not the *universalitas*, namely, the *omnitudo* of the *summum genus* which is predicated of everything that is.

If we rely on this note, the form of the world must be nothing but the form of coordination through which parts relate to each other as cause and caused, that is to say: “as complements to a whole” (MSI, AA 02: 390). Therefore, coordination is a homogeneous relation among elements, in contrast to subordination where the relation is heterogeneous, “for, on the one side it is a relation of dependence, and on the other it is a relation of causality” (MSI, AA 02: 390). Here it is worth pointing out something that will be discussed later: the relation between cause and caused does not constitute the only form of subordination familiar to Kant. The relation among concepts which occurs in every judgement wherein the concept of subject is subsumed under the domain of the concept of predicate, is a subordination too. “The subordination of concepts [...] can occur both *logice* and *realiter*”: logical subordination consists in the ordering of concepts according to the relation of genus and species, whereas “real subordination [...] consists in the fact that I actually combine concepts with one another, so that not only is one contained under the other, but instead they also cohere as causes and

effects” (*Logik Blomberg*, AA 24: 260/208).

From what we have discussed so far, we can detect some central features of space and time, justified by the analysis of the *Dissertatio*: space and time, in so far as they are principles of the form of sensible world, must bring to light a unity of phenomena distinct from the one brought by distributive unity. Space and time should not be understood as concepts under which phenomena could be subsumed – like predicates in judgement – but as ‘places’ where every phenomenon can be collected and determined. Space and time are, thus, intuitions: “pure (human) intuition is not a universal or logical concept *under which*, but a singular concept *in which*, all sensible things whatever are thought” (MSI, AA 02: 397/390). In the third section, the purity of the form of intuition – which is pure intuition itself – is justified by its being presupposed by the *sensibilia*: as the argument against Leibniz shows, if we try to deduce space and time from relations among beings, we fall into a vicious circle. Time, for instance, cannot be deduced “from the succession of internal states” (MSI, AA 02: 400/394), because “I only understand the meaning of the little word [*vocula*] *after* by means of the antecedent concept of time” (MSI, AA 02: 399/392). Time, we could say, is the only element which gives content to the syncategorematic feature expressed by the adverb. For our argument, which is now reflecting on the sense in which space and time are universal laws, the second element of the exposition concerning the forms of intuition – where their singularity is discussed – is particularly compelling. The argument is carried out likewise for both space and time: different spaces and different times are just parts of the one “boundless” space/time (MSI, AA 02: 399/392 and 402/396), where it is possible, and necessary, to determine their positions. It is here meaningful the occurrence in both paragraphs of the term *positus*. This terminological choice is crucial once we have considered the context to which firstly it refers to.

In Baumgarten’s *Metaphysica*, which was the textbook for Kant’s lectures, we read: “If several things are placed one next to the other or one after another, they are conjoined. Conjunction of several things is either identical or different. If the first case occurs, [then] there is COORDINATION and its identity is the ORDER” (Met.: § 78). In the next paragraphs, Baumgarten goes on providing an argument supporting the very close connection between determination and law which turns out to be “a determination that enunciates the conformity to the ends of reason” (Met.: § 83). Since every determination has a reason and since the determination that can be grasped through a given [*determinata*] reason is called compliant with reason, then “Wherever [*Ubicumque*] there are determinations, there are laws” (Met.: § 84). On the background of these considerations, the term *positus* comes into play, as the

relation of being determined by the conjunction with others. But, if this is the case, then “Where [Ubi] there are places, there are laws” (Met.: § 85). It is easy to see the contextual affinity with what we were claiming above about space and time. In this regard, Schulthess acknowledges:

In the *Dissertatio* Kant interpretes in the light of transcendental philosophy (...) this relation between determining law and determined order, by which he attains a critical concept of space and time. Kant distinguishes two forms of order, which, at the same time, are forms of relation: coordination and subordination. Thus, the form, which determines relation and order, is identified with law (Schulthess 1981: 191).

If we reflect upon what Wolff said about transcendental truth, the analogies become quite evident: space and time are grounds of specific relations which establish the way beings are arranged in relation to each other; thus, they show themselves as laws of evident similarity, in so far as phenomena are placed one next to the other or one after another: what Wolff called *ordo*. Kant’s statement, according to which space and time, in so far as they are forms of the sensitive faculty, are in the highest degree true, receives its full significance. Since they are pure forms of intuition, space and time are the source of truth of the being which, as a consequence of the specific (not just logical) detachment of faculties, has to be called *phenomenon*. In a nutshell: the forms of the sensitive faculty are tightly connected to the traditional concept of transcendental truth. Many places in the *Dissertatio* support the interpretation.

From our discussion of space and time, it follows that, by their being forms of intuition and pure intuitions, space and time are the receptacles of specific coordination codes that cannot be discursively grasped. Through these codes, there arises “a formal whole, which is not part of another whole; that is to say, there arises the *phenomenal world*” (MSI, AA 02: 402/395). In this respect, what Kant observes in a footnote concerning simultaneity is emblematic: “if you were to represent time by a straight line extended to infinity, and simultaneous things at any point of time by lines drawn perpendicular to it [*ordinatim applicatas*], the surface thus generated would represent the *phenomenal world* in respect both of substance and of accidents” (MSI, AA 02: 401/394). Schulthess observed that in Kant’s time the expression *ordinatim applicatas* was the analytical-geometrical term in place to indicate coordinates: “thus, time is the condition for the coordination of appearances according to laws of simultaneity and succession” (Schulthess 1981: 195). Here I am not only reaffirming the relation, already discussed, between forms of sensible faculty, order, and *positus*, but I am rather suggesting how

the individuation of a phenomenal being follows from its determination according to spatial/temporal coordinates. Yet, Wolff had explicitly connected the principle of individuation, the complete determination, and transcendental truth. It is possible to find the connection to these themes which was partially outlined already in *Directions in space*, in the *Dissertatio* as well. In addition to what we have just outlined, a further confirmation of this interpretation is given by the reference to the opposite counterparts:

Thus, between solid bodies which are perfectly similar and equal but incongruent [...], there is a difference, in virtue of which it is impossible that the limits of their extension should coincide – and that, in spite of fact that, in respect of everything which may be expressed by means of characteristic marks intelligible to the mind through speech, they could be substituted for one another (MSI, AA 02: 403/396).

This quotation shows not only the proximity with topics already acknowledged in Wolff, but also the decisively new understanding Kant impresses on them. One last terminological consideration allows us, at once, to recover a further confirmation of our interpretative route and to make clear the changes in the traditional topic of transcendental truth within the *Dissertatio*.

Just before the exposition of space and time, Kant states: “These formal principles of the *phenomenal universe* are absolutely primary and universal [*catholica*]” (MSI, AA 02: 398/391). Noteworthy is the Latin adjective *catholicus*, which in the *Metaphysica* Baumgarten employs in the problematic context related to the concept of transcendental truth: “PRINCIPIA CATHOLICA [...] are common to singular beings. [...] METAPHISICAL TRUTH could be defined by virtue of the conformity of being to principiis catholicis” (Met.: § 92). These principles, which Baumgarten is referring to, are not different from Wolff’s, that is, from the fundamental principles of predication. Kant firmly moves away from this stance. The transcendental truth of phenomenal being consists in its adequacy to principles that exceeds predication, even more: to principles which are unattainable at predicative level. Without falling into a vicious circle, we cannot intellectually determine which time-part comes first and which comes later; complete determination of extended being is possible as long as we consider the *versus*, which is unattainable from the predicative perspective. Despite the long-lasting problematic debate on the concept of transcendental truth, here we can assess the rupture between Kant and the *Schulmetaphysik* tradition: order and individuation are made possible by transcendental truth; however, this foundation is genuinely available only if we

recognize how sensibility exceeds, and is irreducible to, the realm of predicate and judgement. The constitution of being is no more reducible to the logic of predicate, a reduction which, on the contrary, was possible according to Wolff's transcendental truth. Therefore, we could maintain that, within the *Dissertatio*, transcendental truth consists in the constitution of being as a phenomenon. Indeed, the "concept" of space

is not only a concept which is in the highest degree true, it is also the foundation of all truth in outer sensibility. For things cannot appear to the senses under any aspect at all except by the mediation of the power of the mind which co-ordinates all sensation according to a law which is stable and which is inherent in the nature of the mind (MSI, AA 02: 404/398).

Space (and time) is in the highest degree true because it allows being to become an object for a finite subject, that is, allows its constitution as a phenomenon. In this regard, *Reflexion* 3942 is clear:

A cognition is true which is in agreement with the constitution of the object. Since the representation of external objects is only possible by means of the idea of space, all of the axioms of space and what can be derived from them agree with the object, likewise [*imgleichen*] all relations of concept in accordance with the rule of identity (AA 17: 357/100).¹⁹

Once we've reached this philosophical level – the new dimension of transcendental truth where ultimate differences can be truly preserved – we encounter an issue in Kant's thought, one which, in principle, was absent from Wolff's: the relationship between transcendental truth and truth of judgement let a tension emerge, which makes the traditional connection ground/grounded, occurring between the former and the latter, problematic. Before considering the issue, it is worth pointing out a further original element – albeit not free from difficulties – of Kant's renewed understanding of transcendental truth.

As established in the section devoted to Wolff's philosophy, within his reflection on transcendental truth the subject plays no role: the structure of being is isomorphic to originary principles of predication; accordingly, it can be grasped by the understanding operating through judgment. The subject does not determine the status of transcendental truth at all. To the contrary, as the original acquisition²⁰ theme demonstrates, within the *Dissertatio* the subject comes forward as ground of truth in quite a peculiar way. Space and time are not innate representations, rather they are acquired, not from the sensing of objects, but "from the very

action of the mind, which coordinates what is sensed by it, doing so in accordance with permanent laws” (MSI, AA 02: 406/400). Space and time, which – once reinterpreted under transcendental truth – shape order, are products of a coordinating act of the mind, which, in turn, occurs on the ground of a law, the only innate aspect admitted. However, here a difficulty immediately arises: the definition of sensibility as receptivity seems to be inconsistent with the active perspective above mentioned. In this regard, Kim observed that

Kant does not ascribe to sensible perception any activity [...]. Thus, the subject must not be considered as the author of ordination (or connection). The author must be considered as God [...], who created the subject in such a way that his sensible representation works according to a specific law [*nach einem bestimmten Gesetz*] (Kim, 2004: 233-4).²¹

The thesis seems to be effectively confirmed by the scholium of the fourth section mentioned by Kim himself. What we are now discussing, calls attention to a tension and to an issue not yet solved by Kant: several *Reflexionen* ascribe coordination among *sensibilia* to understanding, others to sensibility.²² In both cases, however, unavoidable issues arise concerning the origin of coordination, and, consequently, of pure intuitions. Perhaps, we could explain them by arguing that here Kant has not yet realized the necessity of the self as the author of every connection. In this respect, it is meaningful that within the *Dissertatio* Kant always refers to a generic *mens*. Klemme showed how the Herz’s and Mendelsshon’s reviews²³ had been decisive for this achievement. For, only after 1770 the issue of the self, as the logical author of every conjunction, comes forward. However, in the *Dissertatio* these issues do not seem to be resolved: on the one hand, the constitution of the connection among phenomena does not seem to be ascribed to sensibility because of its passivity; on the other hand, understanding would seem to be excluded as well: its proper operation is, in fact, subordination. Thus, how could it be the author of coordination?²⁴

Thus, now we reach the ambiguity that we pointed out when discussing the eleventh paragraph: the tension which seems to exist between common laws, which allow representations of subject and predicate (space and time as grounds of the *veritas transcendentalis*), and truth of judgement as agreement between subject and predicate. In order to fully understand this tension, we need first to begin with a short description of the understanding within the *Dissertatio*. As is well known, the use of understanding itself is twofold: if we consider its real use, then understanding is a source of originary concepts. Kant lists them: “possibility, existence, necessity, substance, cause *etc.*” (MSI, AA 02: 395/388). The

logical use of understanding, instead, it is not a source of new concepts, it rather presupposes an already available matter on which to be applied:

By the second use [i.e. the logical one], the concepts, no matter whence they are given, are merely subordinated to each other, the lower, namely, to the higher (common characteristics marks), and compared with one another in accordance with the principle of contradiction [...]. Now, the logical use of the understanding is common to all sciences, but not so the real use (MSI, AA 02: 393/385).

Although the “et cetera”, which closes the list of concepts of pure understanding, suggests how far – albeit temporally close²⁵ – the central philosophical thesis of the *Leitfadenskapitel*²⁶ is, nevertheless, here judgment already plays a prominent role²⁷: subordinating concepts means just judging immediately and mediately (syllogisms). Here, Kant develops an important reflection: although the logical use of understanding can apply, and actually largely applies, to phenomena, knowledges remain sensitive, because “they are called sensitive *on account of their genesis* and not on account of their *comparison* in respect of identity or opposition” (MSI, AA 02: 393/385). Furthermore, we should note that the logical use of understanding is what allows the transition from appearance to experience. Since this move is guaranteed uniquely by the application of the principles of identity and non-contradiction, it seems to concern only the clarity of knowledge, as the terms “distinctam” and “adaequatam” (MSI, AA 02: 393/385) – employed to refer to judgment and syllogism, respectively – suggest.²⁸ A further aspect underpins this interpretation. The dynamic through which the concepts are subordinated to one another is crucial for the abstraction-process as well: for instance, when we subsume willow, lindens, and oak under the same mark, this mark is abstracted from them and constitutes a concept. As the *Logik Philippi* testifies, abstraction is an essential element in concepts production, even though it concerns just form: “The author [i.e. Meier] believes that we reach concepts through abstraction. Through abstraction, though, we do not reach any knowledge; knowledge must be already there before abstraction. Through abstraction only the form is modified” (AA, 24: 452)²⁹. However, if that is the case, it follows that the logical use of understanding does not introduce any kind of conjunction among phenomena, but rather it presupposes the sensible material as already organized.

Thus, we are still confronting the original issue: since extra-predicative relations demand a completely heterogeneous logic, how could judgment grasp them? And then, how could agreement among concepts, in judgment, capture the truth of being? Further troubles arise if we reflect upon time, taken as the condition under which a comparison between concepts may

occur in conformity with the principle of non-contradiction.³⁰ However, we could maintain that, at least at the time of the *Dissertatio*, an element of mediation between the predication and the intuitive level subsists. Since the succession displays a heterogeneous relation (what follows does not determine what comes first), which in this respect is similar to subordination, time does seem to contain relations of subordination as well. Indeed, in *Reflexion* 4186, we read “Time is the first condition of the possibility of everything; coordination, in fact, requires simultaneity and subordination succession” (AA 17: 449).³¹ However, this situation does not solve the difficulty; to the contrary, it reaffirms the ambiguity between predication and sensible faculty. On the one side, the specificity of temporal subordination cannot be reduced to the order of predicates, otherwise we would go back to Wolff’s position, which reduces the distinction between sensible faculty and predication to a logical difference. On the other side, as we will now see, the understanding seems already to presuppose the temporal order, in order to use its *proper* concepts.

We may try to solve these difficulties by turning to the real use of understanding. As it has been widely acknowledged,³² concepts of pure understanding come up within experience. The fifth section of the *Dissertatio* provides the most evident proof of this thesis. We may maintain, then, that understanding, through its proper concepts, forms sensible relations which consequently are grasped by judgment. Supporting this hypothesis, we may refer to the original acquisition of pure concepts,³³ which are not innate, but “abstracted from the laws inherent in the mind (by attending its action on the occasion of an experience)” (MSI, AA 02: 395/387-8). However, there are problems even at this level. On the one hand, it seems that pure concepts already presuppose a connection among phenomena, as testified by the use of the concept of cause within experience: “it is only with the assistance of the relation of time that the mind can be instructed as to what is earlier and what is later, that is to say, as to what is cause and what is caused” (MSI, AA 02: 406/399). Even more radical is, again, the *Reflexion* 3942, where we read: “In general, if one would find the concept of cause, then outside of the relations of connection in accordance with ideas of time one will find no explanation [*Erklärung*], that does not include a circle, and there seem to be no others” (AA 17: 357/100). Lorini also observed that, whenever “the method for *real use* is treated as an application of the *logical use*, the former – the real aim of metaphysics – would be ruled only by form of sensible relation” (Lorini 2014: 64). On the other hand, even if we admitted a use of concepts of pure understanding in the constitution of phenomenal beings, the use of those concepts with reference to beings *sicuti sunt* would be jeopardized. Therefore, if Kant maintained that, apart

from their role in the constitution of the phenomenal objectivity, concepts of pure understanding are nothing but logical acts, he would at once imply the impossibility of any genuine cognitive reference to the intelligible world. This would mean attributing to Kant a stance which he will adopt only later.

Thus, at the time of the *Dissertatio*, Kant is already able to present an original and, in several respects, *critical*³⁴ understanding of transcendental truth. The universal and sufficient criterion of truth is considered, under the philosophical perspective advanced since the beginning of the 1760es, as impossible, because the metaphysical requirements on which it would be grounded became to Kant untenable. However, ambiguities, albeit on a different level, reappear: the phenomenal being is somehow true in so far as it is a phenomenon. However, the reference to the truth of predication, because of the reinterpretation of Wolffian doctrine, becomes ambiguous and, ultimately, presupposed but not grounded. To overcome this ambiguity, Kant will need to develop the whole transcendental architecture, whose foundations are the self and its fundamental functions, namely the logical functions of judgement.

4. EXCURSUS: SPACE AND *OMNITUDO REALITATIS*

In the quotation from *Metaphysik L₁* at the beginning of this article, we encountered a comparison between God and space. This is a topic which, with different nuances, recurs many times in Kant's thought.³⁵ The *Dissertatio* is not an exception in this respect. Kim observed that space and time, as formal principles of sensible world, can be regarded as the "common ground of existence" (Kim 2004: 237). With respect to the passage of the *Dissertatio* where Kant states that space, "embracing absolutely all things which are externally sensible", is a principle of *universitas* of the sensible world, Lorini maintained that: "space can be regarded also as a dimension of exteriority, in reference to which the *sensibilia* could be settled just as the *intellectualia* in their relationship to God" (Lorini 2014: 56). In these short concluding remarks, we would like to suggest a further argument supporting this comparison – although clearly, here we cannot explore the complexity of the issue.

Space seems to play a role analogous to the one played by God within the *Nova Dilucidatio*, as *omnitude realitatis*, with respect to judgement. There Kant, starting from the equivalence between possibility and lack of contradiction – which will be abandoned in the *Dissertatio* – holds that comparison is possible, and that from comparison follows possibility

in general, provided that we have notions to compare. If we don't have the minimal elements – namely, *notions* intended from an intentional perspective – to make a comparison, then the possibility itself would be impossible. What guarantees the actual occurring of this act, is, then, absolutely necessary. Comparison and judgment are possible only if “the material of all possible concepts” (ND, 01: 395/16) exists. Thus, God becomes the material ground for comparing – and, thus, of possibility (non-contradiction) – because it has in itself the totality of *realitates*, and, thus, the ultimate foundation of the content of the notions involved in judgements. In this respect, Tommasi observed that “The idea of God so conceived [...] is nothing but the idea of the totality of all possible intensions on which it is possible to form a judgement” (Tommasi 2007: 152). For my thesis, the *Reflexion* 3983 (dated to 1769), despite its incompleteness, is highly significant: “Every concept is either archetype, which are grounds of determinations that pertain to objects and through which the object is determined with respect to all possibilities; or it is *Nachbilder*, which are consequences of things” (AA 17: 375-376)³⁶. Immediately after the quotation, the *Reflexion* is interrupted, however, stating that “through space and time all concepts of experience are possible”. Thus space (and time) would appear as an *Urbild*, by which solely it is appropriate to determine empirical concepts. In this regard, space seems to play the role of *omnitudo realitatis*: as the totality of possible determinations, it provides the basis of judgement, which, instead, consists in the activity of comparing notions. The judgement discussed in the *Dissertation* seems to be of the same kind, although comparison occurs in extensional terms. In this respect, the *Reflexion* 4119 is especially compelling: “All reality must simply be given and, thus, some existing being [*einige Wirklichkeit*] precedes all possibilities just as space is not something possible but it is the ground of all possible figures” (AA 17: 424).³⁷ The comparison is possible if we assume, so to speak, a functional point of view and only if we do not suppress two structural differences: God and space contain everything in themselves and nothing below them. However, the meaning of these “containing” is radically distinct: “the relation of the concept *ens realissimum* with its contents is not that of an aggregate with its parts (as it happens for space), but it is the relation of a ground with its consequences” (Capozzi, 1981: 678). Moreover, God is *omnitudo realitatis* as the set of all possible intensions, whereas space is the possible totality of deictic references, which cannot be simply translated on the intensional level. The *Reflexion* 3716 seems to point in this direction: “(principles of identity and contradiction are with respect to reason what space and time are with respect to senses. Universally: principle of agreement (either of identity or diversity). The principle of the highest reality is in parallel to the set of whole sensations)”

(AA 17: 256).³⁸

Abstract: In this paper, I aim to demonstrate a connection between the traditional topic of transcendental truth and one of the main topics of the *Dissertatio*: space and time as principles of the form of sensible world. I will first examine some technical terms, in order to establish a relation between the topics just mentioned. I will then briefly sketch some fundamental characters of Wolff's interpretation of transcendental truth. In the conclusion, I will present the new elaboration of transcendental truth in the *Dissertatio*.

Keywords: Kant, Wolff, transcendental truth, space, judgment.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ont.: Wolff, C., *Philosophia prima, sive Ontologia, methodo scientifica pertractata, qua omnis cognitionis humanae principia continentur*, Frankfurt-Leipzig 1736 (in *G.W.*, Ab. II, Bd. 3, Hildesheim, Olms, 1962).

LL.: Wolff, C., *Philosophia rationalis sive Logica methodo scientifica pertractata*, vol. II, Frankfurt-Leipzig 1740 (in *G.W.*, Ab. II, Bd. 1.1, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York, G. Olms, 1983).

G. Met.: Wolff, C., *Vernüfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*, Halle 1751 (in *G.W.*, Ab. I, Bd. 2.1, Hildesheim, Olms, 1983).

Met.: Baumgarten, A. G.: *Metaphysica*, Halle, 1757.

AA: Kant, I., *Gasammelte Schriften*, edited by Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaft (and successors), Berlin, G. Reimer (than W. de Gruyter), 1900—. For citations I have used the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. I cite first the volume and page of *AA* and then the page of the English translation.

ND: Kant, I., *Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio* (AA 01).

FS: Kant, I., *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren* (AA 02).

GUGR: Kant, I., *Vom dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegend im Raume* (AA 02).

Dream: Kant, I., *Träume eines Geisterehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (AA 02).

MSI: Kant, I., *De mundi sensibili atque intelligibili forma et principiis* (AA 02).

KrV: Kant, I., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (quoted according to the original pagination A/B).

Prolog: Kant, I., *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* (AA 04).

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NOTAS / NOTES

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² Paolo Treves completed his PhD at the University of Rome “La Sapienza” (Italy) with a dissertation on truth as *adaequatio* in Kant’s transcendental philosophy. His research interests are structured around the history of metaphysics.

³ See *Dreams* AA 02: 342/329.

⁴ See *Prologomena* AA 04: 376/164. See also *KrV A* 201-2/B 247 (Eng. tr.: 311-2).

⁵ See Hinske 1970: 77; Capozzi 2007: 296-302; Carboncini-Gavanelli 199: 233-249.

⁶ On the possible influence of the Newtonian conception of space on the critical one, see Insole 2011: 413-436.

⁷ On this issue, see Scaravelli 1973: 297-335 and Ferrarin 2006: 25-29.

⁸ See GUGR, AA 02: 378/366.

⁹ This reference has to be understood in the light of the problems Kant faces since 1762. See Tommasi 2007: 119-128 and Lorini 2017: 116-37.

¹⁰ See, for example, *Reflexion* 5724, AA 18: 336.

¹¹ In *KrV A* 39/B56/166 we read: “they [i.e. those who assert absolute reality of space and time as something subsisting] must assume two eternal and infinite self-subsisting non-entities [Undinge]”.

¹² The author is responsible for all the English translations of Wolff’s and Baumgarten’s works.

¹³ See *Ontology*: §§ 638-64 and *Metaphysics*: § 46.

¹⁴ Pimpinella 2004: 355.

¹⁵ For further justifications of this statement see *Ontology*: § 502.

¹⁶ See Capozzi 2002: 38-51.

¹⁷ It is reasonable that the passage from *KrV A* 58-59/B 83 (Eng. tr.: 197) was directed against this statement.

¹⁸ See Capozzi 2002: 154-174.

¹⁹ Adickes dates this note, without certainty, to the period 1764-9. See also *Reflexion* 4191, AA 17: 451/119: “that space is something entirely true with respect to outer appearances, because it is the condition of them”. See also Rosales 2000: 39.

²⁰ On this topic see Oberhausen 1997: 136-164.

²¹ For a further analysis of the difficulties in *Dissertation* concerning the relation between God and the cognitive subject, see Rosales 2000: 41.

²² See, for example, *Reflexion* 4048, AA 17: 397 and *Reflexion* 4378, AA 17: 525-6. On this matter see Wunsch 2018: 937-44). The *Logik Philippi* states clearly: “senses or rather the understanding can only coordinate”. AA 24: 454 (my translation). According to Sánchez Rodríguez 2012: 13 and Laywine 2003: 447 in *Dissertatio* sensibility is an active faculty of connecting.

²³ See Klemme 1996: 55-75.

²⁴ The *Reflexion* 4048, AA 17: 397 testifies that Kant was aware of the problem: “The ground of the unity of coordination: if this unity is deducible from the unity of subordination” (my translation). Paraphs, this was one of the difficulties that lead Kant to abandon the opposition coordination/subordination for the characterization of the distinction between sensibility and understanding.

²⁵ See Wolff 1995: 53-7.

²⁶ See *KrVA* 66-9/B 91-94 (Eng. tr.: 204-6).

²⁷ Since 1762 Kant has assigned to judgment a key role, see FS, AA 02: 59/103: “the higher faculty of cognition rests absolutely and simply on the capacity to judge”.

²⁸ These terms are used by Kant dealing with logical perfection according to quality, that is the distinction. See, for example, *Reflexion* 2913 (AA 16: 573-4). See also Capozzi 2002: 483-540.

²⁹ My translation.

³⁰ See MSI, AA 02: 405-6/399. As is well known, Kant will abandon this position in *KrVA* 152-3/B 191-3 (Eng. tr.: 280-1).

³¹ My translation.

³² See, among others, Rosales 2000: 47-53, Licht dos Santos 2008: 49-61, Wunsch 2013: 505-16 and de Boer 2018: 1077-84.

³³ See Sala 1978: 1-16 and Oberhausen 1997: 165-180.

³⁴ See, for example, *Prologomena*, AA 04: 287/83. On this issue, see Rosefeldt 2013: 23-38.

³⁵ See Wohlfart 1980: 146-7; Capozzi 1981: 678-9; Barndt 1998: 101; Ferrarin 2006: 16.

³⁶ My translation.

³⁷ My translation. See *KrVA* 578/B 606 (Eng. tr.: 557).

³⁸ My translation.

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