

Итак, мы можем постулировать кантианский характер философских концепций Отфрида Хёффе и Вольфганга Керстинга. Хёффе более последовательно, чем кто-либо другой из тех философов, концепции которых подверглись анализу, перенимает главные идеи философии Канта и кладет их в фундамент собственной философии. Кантовы идеи трансцендентального обмена в ходе преодоления естественной ситуации, необходимости гарантированности права, всемирно-гражданского состояния играют важнейшую роль в концепции Хёффе. Вместе с тем он, опираясь на Канта, выходит за пределы его философии, критикует его позицию по вопросу суверенитета и разрабатывает теорию субсидиарной и федеральной мировой республики. Керстинг, разделяя с Кантом его универсализм и деонтологизм, воспринимает многие важнейшие элементы его политической философии, прежде всего центральное значение права и контрактуализм глобального масштаба. Воспринимая фундаментальные категории и интуиции практической философии Канта, Керстинг и Хёффе творчески перерабатывают наследие великого кенигсбержца и выходят за пределы его философии, основываясь на его фундаментальных идеях. «С Кантом за пределы его философии» – вот краткая формула, характеризующая философские концепции Вольфганга Керстинга и Отфрида Хёффе.

ANDREA GENTILE
(*Римский университет*)

The notion of “limit” in Kant’s transcendental philosophy

A rational theory about man implicates a philosophical elaboration which characterizes human nature and human condition in his cognitive-practical manifestations and attitudes. Studying and analysing a theory about man in a metaphysical and ontological horizon, we can define and outline a notion which has a decisive philosophical and anthropological function in this particular direction of research: the Kantian notion of “limit”. What is the meaning of

“limit”? Does the notion of “limit” keep the same philosophical meaning or have a continuous semantic transformation? Why does the notion of “limit”¹ have a decisive function and role in Kant’s transcendental philosophy?

This direction of research can be followed and studied moving from some very significant kantian reflections about the philosophical, linguistic and semantic difference between the notion of “limit” (*Grenze*) and the notion of “border” (*Schranke*):

¹ About the notion of “limit”, it is useful to examine the philosophical meaning of the word: *Grenzbegriff* in *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*, bearbeitet von R. Eisler, Band I, Berlin, 1904, pp. 412-413. The author studies in particular the kantian meaning of *noumeno* as “limit-concept”. We can not define a *limit* without admitting or supposing something out of (or beyond) that limit. Our mind can not admit the appearance of phenomenas without “recognizing” that it is possible something out (or beyond) that appearance. So we can not assert the “positive” reality of *noumeno*, but we have to study it “negatively” or in a “negative” way. It is a “possibility”, that is to say a “problem”: one of the most significant problem of our knowledge. Human metaphysical attitude originates and arises just from this critical and decisive point analysed by Kant in Transcendental Dialectics of *Critique of pure reason*. In this direction of research, it is useful to see also the word *Grenze* in *Kant Lexicon*, bearbeitet von R. Eisler, Darmstadt, 1964, pp. 225-226. In comparison with the *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*, Eisler outlines the kantian semantic distinction between the words: “limit” (*Grenze*) and “border” (*Schranke*). About the different meanings of the notion of “limit” in philosophical history, you can compare the philosophical words: *Grenze*; *Schranke* and *Grenzsituation* in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, hrsg. von J. Ritter, Schwabe e Co. Verlag, Basel-Stuttgart, 1974. Studying the concept of “limit” in Anassimandro, Empedocle and Melisso, the author analyses the platonic and aristotelic notions of “limit” and “border”. In modern philosophy, the notion of “limit” gets a new decisive function for philosophical research just starting and moving from Kant’s transcendental philosophy. Looking at all the bibliographical-philosophical volumes of *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* (Bonn), we can notice that there is no study about the notions of “limit” and “border”. The historical and critical literature has not given the exact space to a notion which is perhaps one of the most important concept all around philosophical history.

«The limits (*Grenzen*) always implicate and involve a space which is *out of* (or *beyond*) a determinate field. The borders (*Schranken*) don't need that: they are *negations* which characterize a quantity because they have not an absolute completeness. Our reason *sees* (*sieht*) the different *fields*, *ambits* and *limits* of knowledge-possibility, but cannot *determine* them definitely: it remains in the *appearance* of phenomenas or stops *on the line* of their *borders*»².

Within the structure and the finality of a transcendental philosophy it is very important to analyse the Latin terms used by Kant to define the semantic-philosophical distinction between *Grenze* and *Schranke*. «Limes (*Schranke*) ist unterschieden von terminus (*Grenze*)»³. The notion of *limes* in Latin language always indicates a negation, an absence, an imperfection while we try to define something. On the other hand the notion of *terminus* is often connected with the concepts of *ratio primitiva* and *completudo*: so the *terminus* of a succession (series) is at the same time the first member of the same succession. In this semantic horizon the meaning of possibility is related to the *conceptus terminator* (*Grenzbe-griff*) and the *Grenzen* are «der erste Grund, die *omnitude* des verknüpften und das leztze subjectum»⁴.

Moving from these reflections, the notions of “limit” and “border” have a new, original and very important meaning in transcendental philosophy, in particular in connection with the Kantian essay *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* published in “*Berlinische Monatsschrift*” in 1786. In this writing Kant provides some very significant indications about “how” it could be possible “to orientate oneself” (*sich orientieren*) towards the research of various *conditions* that define and determine the different “fields”, “ambits” and “limits” of *possibility* in a transcendental philosophy. The originality of this writing is in the semantic relation among the notion of “limit”, the concept of “subjective possibility” (*subjective Möglichkeit*) and a reflexive-transcendental process of research.

² I. Kant. *Prolegomena*. P. 120.

³ I. Kant. *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik und Rationaltheologie*. P. 644.

⁴ I. Kant. *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik*. 4415.

Within the kantian analysis of "orientating oneself in thinking" (*sich im Denken orientieren*), the meanings of "possibility" are studied in connection with the meanings of "transcendental" in the *Critique of pure Reason* and in the *Critique of Judgement*.

Kant often uses the notion of "limit" to define just the limit or the *line-limit* beyond which it is not possible to realize a knowledge of objects "given" (*gegeben*) in our experience:

«[...] Moving from the objects given in the experience, our reason, that is to say our *pure reason*, (*rein Vernunft*) decides to create and follow some *subjective conditions*, when it decides to go beyond all the limits of our experience (*über alle Grenzen der Erfahrung*)»⁵. Instead, the meaning of "border" indicates and defines the *border-lines* (*Shranken*) as simple "negations" that characterize a qualitative size or a quantity:

«Studying the possibility of our knowledge, our reason needs to *suppose* a new notion of *possibility* and considers the difference among the realities only through the *negations as borders* (*Shranken*)»⁶.

In Kant's transcendental philosophy, the semantic-philosophical function of "limits" and "borders" is defined in relation to the double distinction-relation "possibility-impossibility" (*Möglichkeit-Unmöglichkeit*) and "limited-unlimited" (*Begrenzd-Unbegrenzd*). But in this *field* is it really possible to define and determine the *limits* in a definite and conclusive way?

«If rational knowledge is homogeneous, we can not think or define the *limits* in a definitive and conclusive way. In mathematics and in natural science, *human reason* certainly knows the *borders* (*Shranken*) but can not know the *limits* in a final and definite way: it recognizes there is something out of it (which can not be determined), but can not see itself through its own inner progress. The development of mathematical knowledge and the possibility of new discoveries always create and determine a change in the *limits* of our knowledge. New physical laws and new scientific inventions will always be discovered by human reason. But we can not exclude the rational meaning of borders because mathematical

⁵ I. Kant. *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* P. 89.

⁶ *Ibid.* P. 137.

knowledge characterizes only empirical phenomena. Metaphysics and moral concepts are outside the *limits* of phenomena: they are *beyond* every sensible intuition and cognition»⁷.

Compared to mathematics and natural sciences, metaphysics directs our reason towards and around the “line-limit” of our knowledge in a *cognitive* and *dialectic process*. This rational process just belongs to typical human knowledge because it is a rational natural necessity of our mind: «transcendental ideas and ideals are created and used to show the *limits* which characterize our *use* of *pure reason*»⁸. In a cognitive process, our reason doesn't find satisfaction when it remains in phenomena. If we remain only in sensitive knowledge, we can not answer the various questions about the *conditions of possibility* (*Bedingungen der Möglichkeit*) of our knowledge. «Transcendental ideas are rational problems: our reason “sees” (*sieht*) that our sensibility can not fill or satisfy a real and complete knowledge [...]. Sensible phenomena are in relation to universal laws. These laws are conditions of possibility *a priori* of our knowledge. In a cognitive process, our reason hopes to realize a complete process moving from conditional reality towards unconditional reality»⁹. Transcendental ideas are used «to define and determine the *limits* of our knowledge. From one side, these limits characterize sensible knowledge; from the other side they are used to study the *limit-line* of our cognitive processes in relation to the various and different *fields* and *ambits* of our knowledge»¹⁰.

⁷ I. Kant. *Proleg.* PP. 120-121.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.* P. 122.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* P. 125. About the relation between the “limits” of our knowledge and the Kantian concept of “transcendental ideas”, cmp. S. Andersen, *Ideal und Singularität, über die Funktion des Gottesbegriffes in Kants theoretischer Philosophie*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1983; N. Fischer, *Transzendentalität und Transzendenz*, Grundmann, Bonn, 1979; H. Grosch, *Kants Lehre vom Ideal der reinen Vernunft*, Halle a. d. Salle, Zurich, 1987; W. K. Zeidler, *Kritische Dialektik und Transzendental-ontologie*, Bouvier, Bonn, 1995 and R. Loock, *Idee und Reflexion bei Kant*, Hamburg, 1998.

«We can define the limits of pure reason because in every *limit* there is something that is really *positive*. For example a surface area is the *limit* of corporeal space meanwhile it is a space. A line is a space which is just the *limit* of a surface. The *point* is the *limit* of a line, but it is always a space-place while borders (*Schranken*) are simple and pure negations»¹¹.

How can we define a cognitive process «in relation to the different realities that we know in connection with the realities that we don't know and perhaps we will never know?»¹². The *limitation* of the experience (in relation to something not given in the phenomenas) is always a knowledge that remains in the *point* in which our reason defines its *limits* and *borders*. This knowledge of the various and different limits is in relation to the limit-lines and border-lines which determine and define what is in the experience and what is *beyond every human experience*. Our reason doesn't remain confined but wants to "suppose" and to "assume" something which is out of that horizon or in any case just *around* the line of these *limits*.

When our reason outlines "limits" (*Grenzen*) and "borders" (*Schranken*) which characterize the possibility of our knowledge, it creates an organic and organized *totality*: just at this moment and at this point our reason opens itself to the "relation" with the pure field of noumenas. This process is only in appearance a *paradox* because the *limits* of our knowledge can not be outlined through a cognitive process, but moving from a *reflexive-transcendental-subjective process* of research. If our reason can really know only objects given in the experience, this *limitation* doesn't prevent crossing the objective limits of our experience: but we can orientate ourself around the "limit" or around the "limits" of our experience, that is to say just till the *relation* with something that can not be known in the phenomenas.

So, if we can not really determine and know the "real possibility" (*reale Möglichkeit*) of objects beyond the limit-line of our ex-

¹¹ I. Kant. *Proleg.* P. 123.

¹² *Ibid.*

perience, this fact doesn't mean that what is out or beyond these limits is certainly nothing. A limit is something really *positive*, and it is also something which is *common* to two different "regions" or "spaces" divided: it is something which is common to phenomenas and noumenas. This common *point* doesn't remove or eliminate the qualitative difference between two very different "world". The first one can be defined, determined and really known, while the second one is destined to remain unknown and unexplored. So we can consider this *common point* between these different regions as a *particular point*, that is to say as a "relation" (*Verhältnis*):

«[...] There is a *particular relation* between knowledge given in the experience in connection with something completely unexplored or unknown: now the concept of this *relation* must be analysed and determined»¹³.

In *Prolegomena* Kant studies and outlines in a critical horizon the possibility and the *limits* of human knowledge. The author doesn't want to cancel metaphysics but he tries to found it in a "critical-transcendental field". This kind of field is characterized by a particular metaphysics that we can call *critical metaphysics*. This metaphysics analyses just "*the possibility of possibility*"¹⁴ of our knowledge. But what does that mean? After having explored

¹³ Ibid. P. 125. The philosophical-semantic relation between the notion of "limit" and the notion of "analogy" is very significant in particular in the rational process of definition and determination the "limits" of pure reason. This rational process opens a central problem in the study of transcendental philosophy: the problem of "double-limit". This problem is connected either to "transcendental notion of limit" or to the "double-meaning" of kantian *a priori*-concept. In this direction of research, it is useful to see: R. Zocher, *Der Doppelsinn des Kantischen Apriori*, in "Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung", 16, 1963, pp. 66-74; F. Glauner, *Reflexion: der transzendente Grenzbegriff*, pp. 96-167, in F. Glauner, *Kants Begründung der "Grenzen der Vernunft"*, Janus Verlagsgesellschaft, Köln, 1990; L. Hertzberg, *The limits of experience*, Acta Philosophica Fennica, Helsinki, 1994 and M. Ole Jensen, *Projections in knowledge*, Scandinavian University Press, Stockholm, Oslo, København, 1995.

¹⁴ R. Engle, *Kants Lehre vom Ding an sich und ihre Erziehungs und Bildungstheoretische Bedeutung*, Berlin, 1996. P. 55.

the different *ambits* and *limits* of our cognitive processes, critical metaphysics studies the *conditions of possibility* of our rational process and tries to go and pass progressively from a *condition* to an other, or other *conditions*. In this process, which will never be concluded in a definitive way, our reason will never be satisfied because it will always discover new *horizons* and new *ambits* and *limits* in its research. As our experience doesn't satisfy our questions and our cognitive aspirations, *critical metaphysics* tries to orientate ourselves around new and different *limits* of the various possibilities which characterize cognitive rational processes. Critical metaphysics sees and feels the existence of noumenas but can not determine them according to the "conditions" of real possibility (*reale Möglichkeit*). It is only a *subjective intuition*, it is a *universal human feeling* with which we go outside the limits and the borders defined in our experience. It is just in this point that we orientate ourself around the *limit-line* which divides the particular *relation* between the objects given in the experience and the field of the realities (*noumeno*) unknown and unexplored.

But how does our reason behave when it discovers the *limits* which characterize and define the different fields and *ambits* in a cognitive process? This is a very important point in Kant's transcendental philosophy which can be studied in the Kantian essay: *What does it mean to orientate oneself in thinking? (Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?)*.

In *Prolegomena*, studying the "possibility" and the different "limits" of human knowledge, Kant outlines the philosophical problem of determination of "reason-limits"¹⁵. But the author doesn't indicate yet "how" it could be possible to *orientate* ourself in this field: how can we try to get a transcendental foundation in this direction of research? Compared to *Prolegomena*, in *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* Kant introduces for the first time the philosophical-semantic relation between the notion of limit and the problem connected with *how* it could be possible to *orientate*

¹⁵ M. Malcher. *Der Logos der Zeit. Das Grundproblem der transzendentalen Reflexion*, in "Kant-Studien", 73, 1982. P. 235.

ourself in the definition of cognitive-limits within a reflexive-subjective process. The originality of this writing is in the semantic relation among the notion of "limit", the concept of "subjective possibility" and a reflexive-transcendental process of research. Through the meaning of the notions of "limit" and "border" and through the semantic relation between the double distinction-relation "possibility-impossibility" and "limited-unlimited", new perspectives of research in Kant's transcendental philosophy are pointed out.

According to Kant, we have to accept the notion of "limit" as an intrinsic and constitutive notion which characterizes every human research. This particular kind of research is a critical-transcendental research. When we recognize the limits and borders of our cognitive processes, we will give them a "validity" and we will found, legitimate and justify all our rational-cognitive and practical activities. For example, the "impossibility" (*Unmöglichkeit*) of our knowledge to go outside the limits of the experience becomes the condition of possibility of validity of our knowledge. The "impossibility" of practical human activity to get sanctity (that is to say perfect identity between will and moral law) becomes the nature and the norm of human morality. The "impossibility" to subordinate nature becomes the principle which characterizes aesthetical and theological judgement.

In every limit there is something which is really "positive" for our reason. That makes possible to realize the *semantic relation* and *connection* among the different "fields" and "ambits" of possibility in a transcendental philosophy. These fields (only in appearance divided) get their own *constitution* just moving from their specific, particular, authentic and original *relation*. The notion of limit, defined in a transcendental context, outlines the connection between the various possibilities of our cognitive processes. Moving from the direct and immediate intuition of our rational knowledge realized according to a subjective-cognitive and reflexive structure, it will be possible to think and define the *limits*. But is it really possible to have a definitive vision of *limits*?

A complete and definitive exhibition is impossible in Kantian criticism. «We can never expose and know what is outside or be-

yond the *limits*: there is not any notion and any empiric sensation which can be useful to determine the realities not given in the experience of phenomenas»¹⁶.

Instead, it is possible to define *negatively* the *limits* according to the limit-concepts and according to a “universal feeling” which characterizes our experiences. This *feeling* is a “need-sentiment” or a “necessity-feeling” (*das Gefühl des Bedürfnisses*)¹⁷ of our reason. Moving from the different conditions of possibility of our experience, we have to recognize, to define and to determine the different *limits* within a transcendental-reflexive process. In a transcendental-horizon, we can notice that what is not given in our experience, can be defined as in a *paradox*: that is to say we can *see immediately* some *conditions of possibility* of our cognitive processes, even if we can not *determine* them in a definitive way.

Kant outlines that «our reason doesn't feel (*fühlt*), but sees (*sieht*) what cannot determine. Our reason *sees* the conditions of possibility and the “necessity-feeling” (*Gefühl des Bedürfnisses*) moves and characterizes our cognitive processes»¹⁸. We can “see” (*sehen*) immediately in a “negative vision” the totality (*totalitas*) according to a “subjective instinct”, that is to say an immediate-subjective “impulse of our knowledge” (*Erkenntnistrieb*)¹⁹. In this case and in this particular point, the totality isn't “given” or “determined”: it is only a *condition of possibility (a priori)*²⁰ which will mark and characterize every possible, objective and real determination of our knowledge.

¹⁶ I. Kant. *Proleg.* P. 128.

¹⁷ I. Kant. *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* P. 85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, note p. 139: «Die Vernunft fühlt nicht; sie sieht ihren Mangel ein, und wirkt durch den *Erkenntnistrieb* das Gefühl des Bedürfnisses».

²⁰ About the different meanings of “condition of possibility” in Kant's transcendental philosophy, cmp. M. Caimi, *El tema de la posibilidad de la posibilidad, y su destino en la filosofía de Kant*, “Revista de Filosofía”, 31-32. PP. 7-26, 1995; A. Gentile, *I. Kant. Che cosa significa orientarsi nel pensare?* Edizioni Studium, Roma, 1996 and J. Benoist, *Kant et les limites de la synthèse*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1996.

Even if a “real” and “objective” determination of the *limits* is impossible (in a conclusive and a definitive way), our reason must suppose something and can anyway “orientate itself” (*sich orientieren*) within a transcendental-rational process. How can we orientate ourself moving from a transcendental process of research? We can orientate ourself according to a reflexive-transcendental process of research: this subjective process is never given in a determined way, but is always open to new possible changes and new discoveries. Kant says we have to use a cognitive process that we can call *Fürwahrhalten*: we can cross the limit-lines of logical possibility and of real possibility moving from a rational-subjective process: we can suppose new conditions of possibility and we can orientate ourself according to some principles universally legitimate because they are naturally and universally inside our own subjectivity.

The kantian meaning of the notion of limit outlines new perspectives of research in a transcendental philosophy. In *Critique of pure reason*, the cognitive-limits look like *limit-lines* that can never be crossed. The limit-lines of “real-possibility” (*reale Möglichkeit*) and “logical-possibility” (*logische Möglichkeit*) are defined and fixed in a conclusive way: we have to remain inside the fields and the ambits marked by those limit-lines. But in the essay *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* Kant introduces for the first time another possibility called: “subjective possibility” (*subjective Möglichkeit*): we can define new “limit-lines” and new “border-lines” within a *transcendental-reflexive-circular* process of research.

According to Kant, the meaning of “limits” between the field of “limited” (*Begrenzt*) and “unlimited” (*Unbegrenzt*), keeping their own autonomy, has a connection with the meaning of “limits” between the field of “possibility” (*Möglichkeit*) and “impossibility” (*Unmöglichkeit*). In this last part of the writing, we will be analysing the particular meaning of distinction-relation “possibility-impossibility” by Kant. We will notice and analyse the semantic differences connected with the determination of “limits” following Kant from *Beweisgrund* to *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* and going through *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* and the last “notes” of *Opus Postumum*.

In our opinion, just these differences in determination of "limits" show how important and decisive the question about *orientation* (*Orientierung*) is in Kant's transcendental philosophy. Within a semantic-philosophical horizon how can we compare the meanings of "possibility" in *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* to the meaning of "possibility" in *Beweisgrund* and to the notion and structure of "transcendental" in *Critique of pure reason*? Moving from the notion of transcendental in *What does it mean to orientate oneself in thinking?* and in the last notes of *Opus Postumum*, do the "limits" between "possibility" and "impossibility" keep the same meaning or do they have a semantic transformation? Why does a semantic transformation of the distinction-relation "possibility-impossibility" assume a decisive function in Kant's transcendental philosophy?

In the *Beweisgrund*, Kant defines the meanings of possibility and studies the problem of "limits" between the "field" (*Feld*) of possibility and impossibility of our knowledge. He seems to legitimize only the "real possibility" (*reale Möglichkeit*) or "inner possibility" (*innere Möglichkeit*). «Keeping off *data* and matters we deny every possibility. This might happen keeping off every existence: so if we deny every existence, every possibility will go away. Moving from these reflections, we can clearly notice that every possibility will fall down when there is not an object given or *datum*»²¹.

Following Kant, it is useful to mark the semantic link between the adjective "every" and the word "possibility". Kant often repeats that if the material object is not given to the sensient subject, "every" possibility will disappear. All those notions that are not included into the *limits* of real possibility, can be neither thinkable nor knowable. Our knowledge must come from pure forms *a priori* (space and time) of our sensibility, that is to say the conditions of possibility of "receptivity" (*Rezeptivität*) of the subject: all knowledge that do not derive from sensation will be necessarily and consequently "impossible". «It is contradictory to conceive a possibility without something real. Since nothing exists, nothing thinkable can be imagined, and we fall in contradiction even though we want something to be

²¹ I. Kant. *Beweisgrund*. P. 119-120.

possible. If space does not exist, or at least it is not coming as a consequence from something existing, the word "space" will mean *nothing* at all. Until you go testing possibilities according to the principle of contradiction, you will never know anything in experience. Doing that, you can consider only the link according to a logical-formal rule. In conclusion, when you try to understand how this thinkable is given to you, you can never ask for anything else but existence»²². And «just for this reason, I deduce at once that when I keep off every existence in general, every real foundation of thinkable will go away. At the same way, every possibility will disappear and there will be nothing to think. Every possibility implicates something real from which our knowledge is given»²³.

Limits defining and determining the field of possibility are those limits necessarily fixed by the real possibility. All that is not real (therefore unexisting) it is not given and consequently is impossible. If in the *Beweisgrund*, just the *innere possibility* comes to be legitimated, in the *Critique of pure reason* Kant re-comprehends the meaning of *limits* between the field of possibility and impossibility into the meaning of a transcendental philosophy. With the word *transcendental* is named «every knowledge which characterizes our own way to know objects as it can be possible *a priori* instead of objects just in themselves, that is to say in their own nature»²⁴. We will find a particular importance in comparing this definition of transcendental with some Kantian reflections expressed in transcendental Logics of *Critique of pure reason*:

«Here I make a remark that will characterize all the forthcoming considerations about transcendental philosophy. Well, we have not to name *transcendental* every *a priori* knowledge, but only that one through which we know *how* some representations (intuitions or concepts) are used or possible *a priori* (i.e. possibility in knowledge and its *a priori pure use*). Therefore, neither space nor any *a priori* geometrical determination are transcendental representations: like this can

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. P. 122.

be possible only the knowledge about no empiric origin of these representations and their possibility to refer themselves *a priori* to the objects connected with the experience. In the same way, the use of space about objects in general would be transcendental. When this kind of use is tightly and exclusively concerning the object of senses, this goes to be named empiric use. So the distinction between *transcendental* and *empiric* is defined in critical knowledge and it does not concern the connection with their own object»²⁵.

Field of possibility in the *Critique of pure reason* is shared by the basic distinction between logical possibility (*logische Möglichkeit*) and real possibility (*reale Möglichkeit*):

«Concept is possible every time it does not deny itself. This is the logical type of possibility and according to that, its object is kept away from *nihil negativum*. But in spite of it, if there is no sharp demonstration about objective reality (*objective Realität*) in synthesis able to create a concept, the concept could be meaningless. On the other hand, this kind of test grows upon some principles of possible experience, not upon principles of analysis (principle of contradiction). It is necessary to be careful in not deriving possibility of things (real possibility) from possibility of concepts (logical possibility)»²⁶.

To know an object «I have to test its possibility (either in reality based on experience, or *a priori* through pure reason). But I can think what I want, only if my concept is possible in thinking. I do that though I am not able to establish and prove if this concept is connected (with the *whole possibility*) with an object or not. To fill a concept with an objective worth (as real possibility, whereas the first possibility was simply logical) I need something more»²⁷.

²⁵ Ibid. P. 124. It is important to remember that Kant did not strictly conform to this meaning of *transcendental*. He often named transcendental what is "independent" from experience, as for example in the fifth part of the *Ideal of pure reason* and in the last notes of *Opus Postumum*. According to the notion expressed here, we can call transcendental only the knowledges about "conditions of possibility" of the experience. Therefore, "a transcendental principle represents a *universal a priori condition* of possibility of our knowledge" (I. Kant. *Critique of Judgement*. P. 21).

²⁶ I. Kant. KrV., note from p. 479, B624/A596.

²⁷ Ibid. A80/B105.

Logical possibility is based upon *analytical unity* while real possibility grows upon transcendental and *synthetical unity*. Through analytical unity the intellect brings in only the logical form of a judgement and it cannot determine the real existence of the object. Through synthetical unity of our knowledge connected with empiric intuition, our intellect brings in a transcendental content in its representations. «Thanks to this kind of *synthetical unity*, the representations themselves are named as objects applying *a priori* on the objects (this is something that formal logic can not realize)»²⁸.

The condition of logical possibility is the principle of contradiction, as a formal and logical principle. Conditions of real possibility are the “conditions of possibility” (*Bedingungen der Möglichkeit*) about experience which must be necessarily conditions of possibility related to the objects of experience. As Kant marks in the first postulate of empiric thought, «it is possible (meaning of real possibility) just what is really connected with the *formal conditions* of experience (either for intuition or for concepts)»²⁹. What «is connected to the material conditions of experience (of sensation) is real. And what owns a connection to reality determined according to universal conditions of experience is (exists) necessarily»³⁰.

We can notice and underline that those *limits* between the field of possibility and impossibility stated by Kant in the *Beweisgrund* have a different meaning in the *Critique of pure reason*. In a transcendental philosophy, real possibility and logical possibility almost seem to shape and delimitate in a definite and fixed way the “field” of “possibility” in general:

«All human knowledge begins with *intuitions*, goes through *concepts* and ends with *ideas*. Each of these three elements owns a *priori* to some *conditions of possibility* of our reason. A whole criticism assures us that human reason in its *speculative use* could never belong to the field of possible experience. Besides the genuine and authentic destination of this very important rational power, we have

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. B266/A219.

³⁰ Ibid. B730/A702.

to employ every method and every principle in a *transcendental research* going across the last nooks of nature. This could happen following every possible principle about transcendental unity (the most important is that connected to the purposes), without crossing those *limits* beneath which only an empty space exists. Surely, a critical-transcendental research (moving from a transcendental Analytics) gave us the sufficient test of the *impossibility* of these principles to cross the *limits* of phenomenas-experience»³¹.

But it is just with the essay *What does it mean to orientate oneself in thinking?* and in the last notes of *Opus Postumum* that Kant re-comprehends those impassable “limits”³² fixed in the *Critique of pure reason*. Kant introduces for the first time into the field of possibility the notion of “subjective possibility”. This cognitive subjective process «is not second in comparison with every other knowledge»³³ (even if it is *qualitatively* different either from real possibility or logical possibility).

Following Kant from *Beweisgrund* to *What does it mean to orientate oneself in thinking?* and going through *Critique of pure reason* and *Opus Postumum*, we can notice that “limits” determining distinction-relation between “possibility” (*Möglichkeit*) and “impossibility” (*Unmöglichkeit*) have different meanings. In the *Beweisgrund*, the field of possibility is only limited by the *innere Möglichkeit*. In the *Critique of pure reason* the limit-line between possibility and impossibility is defined by the meanings of real possibility

³¹ Ibid. About the meaning of “limits” in connection with the problem of Kantian “determination of limits of pure reason”, cmp. F. Glauner, *Kants Dilemma einer Begründung der Grenzen der Vernunft*. PP. 9-21; *Regel und Gesetz: zur Funktion identifizierenden Denkens*. PP. 53-80 in F. Glauner, *Kants Begründung der “Grenzen der Vernunft”*, Janus Verlagsgesellschaft, Köln, 1990; H. M. Baumgartner, *Grenzbestimmungen der Vernunft*, Herausgegeben von P. Kolmer und H. Korten, Freiburg, 1994; F. Heiner Klemme, *Kants Philosophie des Subjects*, Hamburg, 1996; J. Lechner, *Analyse, Rekonstruktion, Kritik*, Berlin, 1998; E. Stadelmann, *Philosophie aus der Besinnung des Denkens auf sich selbst*, Frankfurt, 1999.

³² I. Kant. *Opus Postumum*. P. 362.

³³ I. Kant. *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* P. 12.

(*reale Möglichkeit*) and logical possibility (*logische Möglichkeit*). In the end, moving from *What does it mean to orientate one self in thinking?* to *Opus Postumum* the limits of real and logical possibility are overstepped in a transcendental-reflexive process with the notions of *Fürwahrhalten* and *subjective Möglichkeit*³⁴.

Semantic transformation of the *limits* and of distinction-relation *possibility-impossibility* gives us the chance to remark on a final and very important detail in Kant's transcendental philosophy. Even if the *limits* of pure reason are determined, that does not mean yet we have defined the limits "in themselves". Human mind can easily conceive the "limited" and even the "limiting" whereas it is harder to stop and to orientate itself in a reflexive way around the notion of limit, trying to catch its *inner authentic structure* and recognizing what makes it an *extreme limit*.

A philosophical and anthropological study about limits cannot be fixed in a definitive way. The meaning of *limits* according to the semantic distinction-relation "possibility-impossibility" should be continually studied and analysed within a *reflexive-transcendental-circular* process of research. Considering the "subjective possibility" we are able to *suppose* some subjective principles, we can conjecture and risk new conditions of possibility: they are never definitive and necessary, but we can always modify and re-understand them in a reflexive-cognitive process. Therefore, «Der höchste Begriff, von dem man eine Transzendentalphilosophie anzufangen pflegt, ist gemeiniglich die Einteilung in das *Mögliche* und *Unmögliches*»³⁵. The highest concept from which we can move from transcendental philosophy is the *limit* between "possible" (*das Mögliche*) and "impossible" (*das Unmögliches*). The treble philosophical semantic relation among subjective possibility, meaning of limits (according to the distinction-relation possibility-impossibility and limited-unlimited) and a reflexive-transcendental process can be a steady ground to found and outline new perspectives of research in historical and critical reading of Kant's transcendental philosophy.

³⁴ Ibid. P. 23 and I. Kant. *Opus Postumum*. P. 365.

³⁵ I. Kant. KrV, A290/ B347.