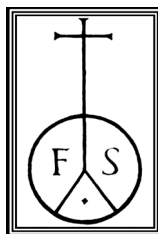


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ABRAHAM CALOV AND IMMANUEL KANT. ARISTOTELIAN AND SCHOLASTIC TRACES IN THE KANTIAN PHILOSOPHY*

MARCO SGARBI

Abraham Calov (1612-1686) was the most important philosopher of Königsberg before Immanuel Kant and a central figure of the *Schulphilosophie* in the xvii century.¹ The *Kant-Forschung* has never paid much attention to him – with the exception of Giorgio Tonelli's investigations – although his thought seems to have a decisive bearing on Kant's appraisal of a number of Aristotelian and Scholastic doctrines. In the present paper I aim to assess Calov's influence on Kant as regards the following topics: 1. a propaedeutic to metaphysics; 2. the doctrine of transcendentals; 3. the concepts of being and nothing; 4. the architectonic.²

1.

CALOV constructed a hierarchical system of sciences, which was typical of the Protestant encyclopedic tradition of the xvii century. Calov's metaphysical system is composed by: 1. *gnostologia*; 2. *noologia*; 3. *ontologia* or *metaphysica generalis*; 4. *metaphysica specialis*; 5. *methodologia*. Calov's definition of *gnostologia* and *noologia* was distinctive because both were a propaedeutic to metaphysics properly speaking.³ *Gnostology* «est habitus mentis principalis contemplan cognoscibile qua tale»,⁴ while *noology* is «habitus mentis principalis affinitatem rerum contemplan quatenus ex eadem prima cognoscendi principia fluunt». ⁵ Both disciplines were to serve ontology, which deals with «trascendentales termini in abstractione entis». ⁶

Gnostology is the science of the knowable, which in Calov's words is an object in general that can be known through experience. According to Calov, knowable objects are basically affections, species and principles.⁷ The knowable differs from the intelligible, which is «omne quod est» and encompasses both the «aliquid» and the «nihil». ⁸ The knowable has always a representational ground; it is a «realitas objective»⁹ while the intelligible does not: «objectum est conceptus realis, suis essentialibus constitutivis et modi cotrahentibus [...] *noema* est latius *objecto*, cum omne objectum quidem sit *noema*, sed non omne *noema* objectum sit. Nam omne quod intelligi potest ab intellectu *noema* est, verum ad objectum adhuc requiritur alia *relatio*». ¹⁰ For the intelligible

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¹ On Abraham Calov see GASS 1876; HENKE 1907; FRIEDENSBURG 1917; SCHÜSSLER 1957; WALLMANN 1981 and 1989; JUNG 1999; FEIL 2001, pp. 3, 33-44.

² All quotes are from I. KANT, *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1902-ff. (= KGS) cited by volumes and pages.

³ There were works on *gnostology* and *noology* such as GUTKE 1625 and FROMME 1631, but they did not thematize the distinction between the two sciences.

⁴ CALOV 1640, p. 1.

⁶ IDEM 1640, *praefatio*.

⁸ See TIMPLER 1607, p. 38.

⁵ IDEM 1651, p. 38.

⁷ CALOV 1640, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰ IDEM 1640, p. 25.

⁹ CALOV 1940, p. 10.

to be knowable it must have a relation with something else, which for Calov is a relation with an object of experience, that is, with a representation.

Calov sketches the distinction between what is knowable, *i.e.*, representable, and what is thinkable, which is similar to the way Kant outlines the distinction between knowing and thinking in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.¹

Calov adds also that the object of knowledge has a material aspect and a formal aspect: «objectum duo continet 1. Rem consideratam seu materiale. 2. Modum considerandi seu formale».² The material aspect deals with the thing in itself, that is, the «objectivity,» while the formal aspect represents the point of view, the subjectivity of the knowing-subject. Calov's distinction between the material and formal aspect of the object of knowledge comes from the Paduan Aristotelian Jacopo Zabarella,³ and it is analogous to the Kantian distinction, which occurs in many passages of his logical works,⁴ but which importantly is absent from other philosophical traditions such as Wolffianism.⁵

In dealing with the object of knowledge, Calov invokes Philipp Melanchthon's distinction of the three operation of the mind: 1. simple apprehension; 2. composition and division; 3. discourse or reasoning. Reinhard Brandt shows that this is the leading thread of Kant's critical works.⁶ Simple apprehension is the proper subject of gnostology because it concerns the way of knowing both sensible and intelligible object. Thus gnostology deals with the first operation of mind. In contrast noology, which analyzes first principles of knowledge, deals with the second operation of mind: composition and division. Composition is the conjunction of a predicate with its subject by means of the copula and it permits the exposition of the principles and of axioms, which are the real subject of noology. Calov characterizes the principles in a very Aristotelian way: they are first, common, immediate, the well-known, and indemonstrable.⁷

One can find noological traces in the Kantian philosophy in the *Nova dilucidatio*. The main aim of this work is to determine a logic that can rule the first basic principles of metaphysical investigations as Calov's *Noologia* did for his *Metaphysica divina*. The title, *Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio*, of the work refers to a noological treatise since it is about the first principle of knowledge.⁸ Some interpreters trace this back to a Kantian attempt to create a foundation of metaphysical principle like Descartes's *Principia philosophiae*.⁹ However here the principles are defined as merely *principia cognitionis*. Descartes was the first to consider the principles of reason as principles of knowledge, eliminating thus the distinction between the gnoseological and ontological sciences.¹⁰ In the *Ontologia sive philosophia prima* Wolff follows Descartes in «cognitionis humanae principia». Kant would have inherited, according to these interpreters, the Wolffian question and thus dedicating his first metaphysical disserta-

¹ KGS, III, B 146.

² CALOV 1640, p. 26.

³ See POZZO 1998b.

⁴ See, for instance, KGS, II, 392; XVI, 26, 85-87; III, A20/B34 and A261/B318; XXVIII, 575; IX, 33.

⁵ On the conceptual couple 'form-matter' see BORMANN, FRANZEN, KRAPIEC and OEING-HANHOFF 1972, pp. 2, 6684-6748; RUMORE 2007, pp. 191-213.

⁶ BRANDT 1991, p. 99.

⁷ CALOV 1951, p. 40.

⁸ It is remarkable that also in Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* ontology was «scientia primorum in humana cognitione principiorum», however it plays a totally different role in comparison to Kant's ontology in *Nova dilucidatio*, which is a propaedeutic to metaphysics.

⁹ See HEIMSOETH 1926, p. 37.

¹⁰ LAMACCHIA 1995, p. 71. An example of Descartes's attitude is the *ego cogito*, which encompasses both logical and ontological perspective.

tion to it by considering the first principles as «*principia cognitionis metaphysicae*».¹ It is significant that Kant modifies the Wolffian position slightly. He adds the adjective «*metaphysical*» to principles and constructs the problem of their ontological meaning in the same ways as Calov does.

The attempt to establish a noological science in Kant is evident in the *Reflexion 4163* (1769-1770). In this note Kant writes:

Alle Wissenschaften der Vernunft sind entweder, die durch die reine Vernunft die Regeln der allgemeinen Erkenntnis überhaupt betrachten, oder die besonderen Regeln der reinen Vernunft selber. *Logica. Phaenomenologia generalis, Noologia generalis* haben blos die Regeln allgemeiner und nicht empirischer Erkenntnisse die durch keine Erfahrung gegeben sind, zum Zweck. Die Angewandte noologie auf das, was durch Erfahrung gegeben ist, obgleich nicht durch Gründe der Erfahrung, ist theoretisch: Metaphysic, oder practisch: Moral.²

According to Kant, then, the science that deals with the rules and the principles of universal knowledge, is general noology. Applied noology deals instead with the rules and principles of knowledge of a particular discipline, and it can be either theoretical or practical. This is the same distinction found in Calov's *Noologia*, where noology was divided into a general part and a special part. The special part was in turn divided into theoretical and practical.³ Clearly Kant takes this distinction from Calov, who was the first to elaborate it.

2.

In Königsberg Calov was also the most important and influential exponent of the doctrine of transcendentals after the publication of Francisco Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae* in 1600.⁴ Tonelli mentions Calov very briefly in his reconstruction of the Aristotelian and Scholastic background of Kantian philosophy and points out that his transcendentals were the «*entia supra naturam*».⁵ This cursory reference can not be accepted, when it is carefully analyzed.⁶ In fact, Calov gives a new meaning to the doctrine of transcendentals, which is different from the common Scholastic tradition because of his new definition of the subject of ontology. The subject of ontology is not the *ens* in general, but it is the «*ens positivum, reale, actuale, incomplexum*»,⁷ and its investigation includes all transcendental affections.⁸ The *ens* does not imply any contradiction.⁹ What is contradictory is *non-ens* and it is in the realm of thought and intelligibility, but not in the realm of the knowable. In this way the *ens* coincides with the knowable and the transcendental affections must refer to the *ens*, not as such, but as a knowable. According to Calov, the transcendental attributes did not denote a mere being, but a knowable, that is, the transcendental attributes without which the knowable would not be the object of knowledge. It is evident that this formulation is extremely close to the Kantian perspective and importantly creates a shift of transcendental philosophy from the old metaphysics to the new transcendental logic.¹⁰

¹ LAMACCHIA 1995, p. 71.

² KGS, XVII, p. 440.

³ CALOV 1651, p. 40.

⁴ See HONNEFELDER 2003, pp. 61-64.

⁵ TONELLI 1964, p. 237.

⁶ According to Calov the transcendentals are not «*entia supra naturam*», as Tonelli argues confusing them with the transcendentals, which have not any specific thematization in his works.

⁷ CALOV 1640, p. 176.

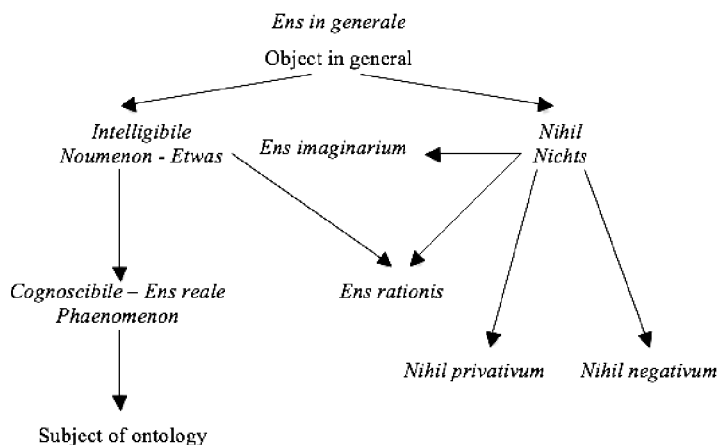
⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 170.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 182.

¹⁰ Calov's notion of transcendental, in opposition to Kant, however, instead of referring to the knowing subject, it expresses the relation between the constituent parts of the object.

3.

I have already shown that Calov did not identify the subject of ontology with the *ens* in general but rather with the knowable, including on the contrary the intelligible object in the *non-ens*. Solely the *ens cognoscibile* has a *realitas objectiva*, while the intelligible can be contradictory or a *non-ens*.¹ Calov's polemical target is without doubt the Calvinist Clemens Timpler. Timpler established that ontology dealt with «*de omne intelligibili, quatenus ab homine naturali rationis lumine sine ullo materiae conceptu est intelligibile*».² Calov's critique of Timpler is analogous to Kant's criticism against Christian Wolff in the *Anmerkung zur Amphibolie*.³ Kant states that the highest concept with which one is accustomed to begin a transcendental philosophy is usually the division between the possible and the impossible,⁴ which was the starting point of the Wolffian ontology.⁵ Every division, however, presupposes a concept that is to be divided, which is the concept of an object in general, what was the *ens* in general for Calov. After this remark Kant proceeds to elaborate his table of nothing. The first kind of nothing of the Kantian table seems to be equivalent of Calov's *non-ens* as intelligible. In fact, Kant writes that the concept to which no intuition can be given and is without a representational ground is nothing. It is a concept without object like the *noumena*; this is similar to the way Calov defines the intelligibles. This explains the reason why for both Calov and Kant it is not possible any science on the intelligibles, because in some sense they are nothing. Ontology is grounded for both authors on a «*realitas objectiva*», on a representational ground.



1. Scheme of Calov and Kant's concepts of being and nothing.

For both Calov and Kant, the intelligible object can be, without a representational ground, of the same kind of nothing of the *ens rationis*, even if the two are not the same. Furthermore, Calov and Kant deny the possibility to have a science of the intel-

¹ CALOV 1651, p. 6.

² TIMPLER 1607, p. 38.

³ It is well known that Wolff takes back Timpler's position in his *Ontologia*. See ÉCOLE 2001.

⁴ KGS, III, A290/B346.

⁵ See WOLFF 1736, p. 62; BAUMGARTEN 1779⁷, p. 3.

ligible object because its knowledge goes beyond the human faculties and pertains only to God: «extra naturam in naturalibus sapere est temerario»,¹ «we have thus denied the power of speculative reason to make any progress in the sphere of the supersensible».²

In conclusion, in contrast with Timpler and Wolff, Kant shares with Calov the Suárezean claims that the existence is not a complement (or a predicate) of the essence: «existentia non est perfectior essentia ... existentia omnibus rebus est intrinseca et essentialis»,³ «das Dasein ist gar kein Prädicat oder Determination von irgend einem Dinge»;⁴ and that the existence is already included in the essence. Calov is almost likely Kant's source of Suárezean doctrines.⁵

4.

Calov was not only the inventor of gnostology and of noology but also of *methodologia* as a separate discipline in his *Tractatus novus de methodo docendi et disputandi*. The treatise was published for the first time in Rostock in 1632 and has the meaningful subtitle *Methodologia nova*, which later became the official title of the work in his *Scripta philosophica*.

Methodology is «omnium disciplinarum, quin et omnium tractationum ordinatum processum monstrare»,⁶ and its rules are instrumental in directing the order and the hierarchy of the various disciplines.⁷ Calov, however, distinguishes the rules of the method from the rules of the architectonic,⁸ conceiving the latter as an integrant part of methodology:

distinguas vero hic inter praescriptionem de disciplinis Methodicam et praescriptionem disciplinarum Architectonicam. Illam dico, quae praecepta tradit de methodo servanda, in disciplinis et omni tractatione, quod est organicum, Hanc vero, quae praescribit leges disciplinis, quas ultra, citraque nequit consistere rectum. Unde quamvis inter alia etiam ordinet disciplinas adductum primorum principiorum, tamen id facit non organice, sed Monarchice per modum regiminis. Ista ergo praeceptio debetur scientiarum reginae, qua determinationem, ejusque Consiliario Noologiae seu habitu intelligentiae, qua praeceptorum ratione.⁹

This conceptualization is extremely similar to the Kantian found in the *Architektonik der Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, as Tonelli wrote: «the only clear precedent to Kant's use of this term [Architektonik] is in Calov, and possibly other Aristotelians sharing his views. Kant had probably been informed of this by his Aristotelian teachers at Königsberg University».¹⁰

A second element of convergence between Calov and Kant in the *Tractatus novus de methodo*, is the constant contraposition between the system and the aggregate, which occurs many times in the Kantian works:¹¹

Aggregatum voco, quod diversa objecta respicit aliquo vinculo inter se unita. Unita sint necessum est, qualis etiam illa sit unio... Communitas vero non sufficit nominis citra essentiae rationem,

¹ CALOV 1651, p. 10.

³ CALOV 1640, pp. 125-126.

⁵ SEIGFRIED 1970, HONNEFELDER 1990, LOMBARDO 1995, HONNEFELDER 2003, ESPOSITO in preparation.

⁶ CALOV 1651, p. 1040.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 1040.

¹⁰ TONELLI 1994, p. 255.

² KGS, III, B xx-xxi, xxvi-xxvii.

⁴ KGS, II, p. 72.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 1040-1041.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ See KGS, III, A833/B860.

qualis est in aequivocis, quae non potest conceptum comune gignere citra mentis nostrae hinc inde distractionem: ideoq[ue] fundare nequeunt unitatem Systematis etiam aggregati.¹

For Calov, as for Kant, the aggregate became system only by means of the architectural rules.²

A last evidence of the strict relation between Calov and Kant is the contraposition between architectonic and technique. In many passages of his methodology and also his *Horistica*, Calov opposed the architectonic to technique, the science which was founded by the Calvinist Johann Heinrich Alsted in his *Technologia*. The technique is the art by which connections among different disciplines are structured but without any architectural guideline. The frequent opposition made between technical unity and architectural unity in *Architektonik* could have its origin here.

All these elements show that Calov's methodology had a strong influence on Kant's architectonic that is incomparable with all the other contemporary architectural doctrines.³

5.

In this paper I have shown some key-points in which Calov has a decisive influence on Kant's transcendental philosophy. It is still an open question where, when, and how Kant read Calov.

The *Vorlesungsverzeichnisse* shows that Calov's works were taught in Königsberg's university by the Aristotelian Johann Jakob Rohde up to the third decade of the eighteenth century.⁴ Many metaphysical and methodological doctrines of Calov were summarized by Paul Rabe in his *Cursus philosophicus* and in his *Methodologia nova atque scientifica, sive tractatus de ordine genuino*, which were the common manuals for to complete the *cursus studiorum* in philosophy at the Albertina.⁵ Kant could become acquainted with Calov's doctrines during his university years.

However, it is possible to date the first traces of Calov in Kant only by the end of the sixties and the first years of the seventies, a period during which he worked as librarian in the Königsberg's *Schlossbibliothek* (1766-1772).⁶ Recent researches have established that this library was very well furnished of books of Königsberg's Aristotelian and Scholastic tradition.⁷ In 1953 Mariano Campo did not hesitate to state that «c'era bene una biblioteca universitaria a Königsberg, ottimamente fornita; e l'aristotelico Christian Dreier (1610-1688) ai suoi tempi era contento di trovarvi tutto quello che desiderava. Ma quanti di quei volumi della *Schulmetaphysik* del Seicento saranno stati aperti da Kant? ...Ma ora che il *Magister* [Kant], ottenuta la *venia docendi*, tiene corsi dal 1755, si può e si deve ritenere ch'egli si sia progressivamente inserito nel mondo accademico locale. Il suo spirito, già aperto e sempre meglio attento alla moderna cultura occidentale, avrà avuto occasione e necessità di prendere altresì coscienza delle tradizioni e della storia due volte secolare della sua università [that of the *Schulmetaphysik*].⁸

It seems very likely that Kant read Calov while he was librarian. Calov was probably one of the key-authors for Kant's changed terminology, which began at the end of the

¹ CALOV 1651, p. 1074.

³ See MANCHESTER 2003.

⁵ POZZO 1989, pp. 4-5.

⁷ See KUHNERT 1926; KROLLMANN 1927; LAVRINOVIC 2004, p. 350; TONDEL 2004, pp. 400, 402, 404, 413; STICH 2004, p. 428.

² *Ibidem*, p. 1076.

⁴ OBERHAUSEN, POZZO 1999, pp. 34, 38.

⁶ See WARDA 1899, pp. 473-524.

⁸ CAMPO 1953, pp. 231-232.

sixties, and a precious source for the Aristotelian and Scholastic doctrines.¹ He is another piece in the puzzle that shows how much Kant was influenced by the Aristotelian and Scholastic tradition and that it is impossible to understand his thought looking only at modern philosophers.²

If my conclusion is right, then how we understand some important elements in Kant's philosophy would have to be reconsidered, since now we must re-interpret these elements in more Aristotelian and Scholastic terms.

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¹ On Kant's 'terminological turn' see TONELLI 1964, pp. 238-242; HINSKE 1974 and 1995; POZZO 2001.

² On Aristotelian influences on Kant see POZZO 1998a.

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