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**METAPHOR AND BOUNDARY:
H.S. REIMARUS' VERNUNFTLEHRE
AS KANT'S SOURCE**

In the XVII Century, the use of metaphor and analogy mainly characterize aesthetics essays, in which it is constant a recall to the Leibnitian *je ne sais quoi*. As Elio Franzini writes, one of the main characteristics of the XVII Century thought is to bring back the perception of art or its production to a *je ne sais quoi* or to a sixth sense¹. Rhetoric acquires, then, an important position in the philosophical research. Philosophy, in fact, takes to recur an increasing number of times to symbolization or metaphorization in order to explain elements, not only aesthetic, that slip out of a conceptual definition. Although Kant is always cautious in using the instruments of rhetoric², the use of metaphor in his works has been recognized by many scholars as a peculiar element of critical philosophy³. Already Hans Vaihinger suggested an interpretation of Kant «*als Metaphoriker*»⁴.

Kant's metaphors must be considered not as symbols or allegories, that refers to a further content, but rather as similitudes or figures of speech that clarify philosophical argumentations. Also for this reason, among Kant's metaphors, there is a large use of images that refer to geography or to the semantic area of the earth. Metaphors that suggest images of the earth, of the territory or of the geographical space normally hint back to *gründlich*, fundamental concepts of critical philosophy and they are witness of a

¹ See E. Franzini, *Estetica del Settecento*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1995, p. 25.

² See G. Garelli, *L'oceano della ragione: metafore kantiane*, Milano, Cuem, 1996, p. 19.

³ See: H. Vaihinger, *Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Stuttgart, Spermann, 1922, vol. 1, p. VII-IX; Id., *Kant - ein Metaphysiker?*, in F. Myrholm (hrsg.), *Kritizismus*, Berlin, Pan Verlag Rolf Heise, 1926, pp. 64-73; J. Ortega y Gasset, *Las dos grandes metaforas*, in Id., *Obras Completas*, vol. 2, Madrid, Taurus, 1966, p. 387; R. Assunto, *Prefazione*, in I. Kant, *Scritti precritici*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1982, p. X.

⁴ See G. Garelli, *L'oceano della ragione: metafore kantiane* cit., p. 33.

systematic, constructive and definitive instance⁵. In this article, I would like to analyze a Kantian metaphor that refer to one of the main concept of critical philosophy, that is the delimitation of reason. The aim of my article is to recognize in H.S. Reimarus one of the possible source for such a metaphor.

1. Limits and boundaries: Reimarus as Kant's source

In *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?* Kant asks: «for with what right will anyone prohibit reason – once it has, by his own admission, achieved success in this field – from going still farther in it? And where then is the boundary at which it must stop?»⁶. So, Kant seems to ask himself: is it really possible to determine the limit between the field of possibility and that of impossibility, in a necessary rigorous and definitive way?

Examining the concept of boundary of reason we refer, then, to the foundations of critical philosophy: in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in fact, Kant observes that «the highest concept with which one is accustomed to begin a transcendental philosophy is usually the division between the possible and the impossible»⁷. In this regard, as R. Eisler stresses⁸, the Kantian semantic distinction between *Schranke* (limit) and *Grenze* (boundary), to which few specific studies are dedicated, it is absolutely determinant for critical philosophy⁹. The distinction between *Schranke* and *Gren-*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶ I. Kant, *Was heisst: sich im Denken orientieren?*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. VIII, hrsg. von der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1912, p. 137 (I. Kant, *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?*, in *Religion and rational theology*, ed. by A.W. Wood and G. Di Giovanni, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 11).

⁷ KrV, B346/A290 (I. Kant, *Critique of pure reason*, ed. by P. Guyer and A.W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 382).

⁸ See the voice *Grenze* in *Kant Lexicon*, bearbeitet von R. Eisler, Hildesheim, Olms, 1961.

⁹ A. Gentile writes that, by inspecting the *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* (Bonn), it has to be noted that there is no study about the structure and the linguistic-semantic distinction between *Grenze* e *Schranke*. The Kantian notion of 'limit' has never been considered as it deserves by the historical and critical literature, but it has a very important role in the study of the transcendental philosophy (A. Gentile, *Ai confini della ragione. La nozione di 'limite' nella filosofia trascendentale di Kant*, Roma, Studium, 2003, p. 194, nota 1). In addition to the work of A. Gentile, the following studies on the problem of limit have to be considered: the chapter *Limiti e confini* in E. Franzini, *Filosofia dei sentimenti*, Milano, Mondadori, 1997, pp. 98-107; L. Illetterati, *Figure del limite: esperienze e forme della finitezza*, Trento, Verifiche, 1996; P. Faggiotto, *'Limiti' e 'confini' della conoscenza umana secondo Kant. Commento al paragrafo 57 dei 'Prolegomeni'*, in «Verifiche» 15/3 (1986), pp. 231-242.

ze¹⁰ was already present in the cultural environment in which Kant wrote and it is used by several authors. I think, however, that it could be significant to refer back to Hermann Samuel Reimarus' *Vernunftlehre* as a possible source for Kant¹¹.

Hermann Samuel Reimarus is certainly well known for his theological writings, quoted in the *Critique of judgment*¹² and interpreted by Lessing¹³. Also his writing on logic, unexpectedly,

¹⁰ The distinction between *Schranke* e *Grenze* creates a lot of translation problems. In this regard, see the note of Claudio Cesa (G.W.F. Hegel, *Scienza della Logica*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1974, pp. XLI-XLII) in which he writes that the distinction between *Schranke* and *Grenze* is present, more or less unaltered, in all German Idealism.

¹¹ Due to the particularity of the subject, there is any critical study on the relationship between Kant and the *Vernunftlehre* of Reimarus. There are still a lot of ideas in *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (See W. Walter - L. Borinski (hrsg.), *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Studien zur Vernunftlehre von Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, Veröff. Joachim Jungius-Ges. Wiss. Hamburg, 38, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980). A reference to this relationship stay in the work of Paola Rumore, who, referring to the work of Hinske, writes that Reimarus establishes in his *Vernunftlehre* the parallel, dear to Kant, between natural laws and understanding laws (P. Rumore, *L'Ordine delle idee. La genesi del concetto di 'rappresentazione' in Kant attraverso le sue fonti wolffiane (1747-1787)*, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2007, p. 105). Manfred Kühn affirms that Reimarus was influenced more by Locke than by Wolff, by demonstrating that he paid more attention to the psychological observation (M. Kühn, *Der Objektbegriff bei Christian Wolff und Immanuel Kant*, in H. Klemme (hrsg.), *Aufklärung und Interpretation. Studien zu Kants Philosophie und ihren Umkreis. Tagung aus Anlass des 60. Geburtstages von Reinhardt Brandt*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1999, p. 42). Some important informations on Reimarus are given by the *Introduction* of Frieder Löttsch in the 1979 edition of the *Vernunftlehre* (F. Löttsch, *Vorbericht des Herausgebers*, in H.S. Reimarus, *Vernunftlehre*, München, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979). Some elements on the *Urteilstheorie* of Reimarus are highlighted in the *Einleitung* of Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (W. Schmidt-Biggemann, *Einleitung*, in H.S. Reimarus, *Kleine gelehrte Schriften. Vorstufen zur Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, Veröff. Joachim Jungius-Ges. Wiss. Hamburg, 79, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, pp. 9-65). Finally, in order to have a general idea on Reimarus and his relationship with the Enlightenment, see: *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) ein 'bekannter Unbekannter' der Aufklärung in Hamburg*, Veröff. Joachim Jungius-Ges. Wiss. Hamburg, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973.

¹² By discussing the relationship between teleology and theology, Kant affirms that Reimarus has proposed that natural finality is a proof of the existence of God: «this argument taken from physical teleology is worthy of honor. It produces the same conviction in the common understanding and the most subtle thinker; and a Reimarus, who fully expounded this proof in his still unsurpassed work (*Die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion*, 1754) with the thoroughness and clarity characteristic of him, has thereby earned immortal merit» (KU, p. 477 [I. Kant, *Critique of the power of judgment*, ed. by P. Guyer, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 340]).

¹³ Between 1774 and 1778, Lessing published seven fragments of a theological manuscript of H.S. Reimarus in *Beyträge zur Geschichte und Literatur aus dem Schätzen der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel*. After the publication of Reimarus' fragments and the consequent well known discussion (*Fragmentenstreit*), Lessing publi-

could represent an important Kantian source. This affirmation is based on two different considerations: Reimarus' *Logic* constitutes a significant turning point in the Wolffian school and it expresses the attempt to read the distinction between limits and boundaries in a systematic perspective, as Kant will do.

Norbert Hinske, who realizes one of the few studies on the relationship between Kant and the Reimarus' *Vernunftlehre*, identifies three different elements that prove the influence of this text on the Kantian thought¹⁴. First of all, a statement by Johann Gottfried Hasse, who writes that «between philosophers, for him (Kant) Reimarus stays above all»¹⁵. Moreover, Arthur Warda confirms that Kant has read Reimarus' *Vernunftlehre*, testifying that in his library there was a copy of the first edition (1756) of Reimarus' treatise¹⁶. Finally, in the essay on negative magnitudes (1763), Kant explicitly quotes Reimarus' *Vernunftlehre* and writes: «reference can be made, for instance, to the logic of Reimarus, which considers the phenomenon»¹⁷.

These elements don't eliminate the hypothetical importance of Reimarus for Kant, but the influence of *Vernunftlehre* is evident if we consider his content. The elements that join Reimarus' and Kantian treatment of limits and boundaries are mainly three: the concept of philosophy as court for reason, the relationship between reason and thing in itself and the autonomy of the rational capacity. To these elements we have to add that both Reimarus and Kant employ metaphors by using a geographical vocabulary. In this semantic area, the delineation of limits and boundaries of reason allows to determine the territory of possi-

shed the *Antifragmenten* (G.E. Lessing, *Sämtliche Schriften*, hrsg. von K. Lachmann, Bd. XXII, XXIII, Goschen, Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1886-1924).

¹⁴ See N. Hinske, *Reimarus zwischen Wolff und Kant. Zur Quellen- und Wirkungsgeschichte der Vernunftlehre von Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, in W. Walter - L. Borinski (hrsg.), *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Studien zur Vernunftlehre von Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, Veröff. Joachim Jungius-Ges. Wiss. Hamburg, 38, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980, p. 20.

¹⁵ J.G. Hasse, *Der alte Kant, Hasse's Schrift: Letzte Äußerungen Kants und persönliche Notizen aus dem opus postumum*, Berlin-Leipzig, A. Buchenau und G. Lehmann, 1925, p. 30.

¹⁶ A. Warda, *Immanuel Kant Bücher. Bibliographien und Studien*, Bd. III, Berlin, M. Breslauer, 1922, p. 53.

¹⁷ I. Kant, *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band II, hrsg. von der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Reimer, 1912, p. 191 (I. Kant, *Attempt to introduce the concept of negative magnitudes into philosophy*, in *theoretical philosophy (1755-1770)*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 229).

bility of reason and to draw the map which pick off the systematic unity. Reimarus and Kant, then, belong to the same cultural environment that use metaphor to determine those elements that slip out of a conceptual definition and that refer to a geographical vocabulary in order to underline the determined nature of boundary and the poorly defined nature of limit.

2. The distinction between limes and terminus and the court of reason: the geographical metaphor

As it is well known, in the *Prolegomena* Kant distinguishes the notion of limit and that of boundary: boundary defines a closed and determined space, it defines reason and her correct use inside experience. Limit, instead, is a «negative magnitude», because it indicates what is over phenomenical boundary, it indicates so what reason can't achieve: the *noumenon*. Kant writes

boundaries (*Grenzen*) (in extended things) always presuppose a space that is found outside a certain fixed location, and that encloses that location; limits (*Schranken*) require nothing of the kind, but are mere negations that affect a magnitude insofar as it does not possess absolute completeness. Our reason, however, sees around itself as it were a space for the cognition of things in themselves, although it can never have determinate concepts of those things and is limited to appearances alone.¹⁸

In this regard, Elio Franzini's analysis interestingly claims that Kant employs a geographical vocabulary in order to draw a map of reason. In this perspective, the distinction between limits and boundaries becomes crucial, since limits can be crossed, but boundaries have to be grounded in relation to experience. In fact, with reference to the *experience* of boundaries and through the crossing of limits, we can find the rule for the foundation of knowledge and its territory¹⁹.

This consideration is based on the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. Thanks to this distinction, the subject could experience boundaries and this is her cognitive horizon; but we cannot have an experience of limits, that bring to contradictions on a cognitive and theoretical level²⁰.

¹⁸ Prol., p. 352 (I. Kant, *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics*, in *Theoretical philosophy after 1781*, ed. by H. Allison and P. Lauchlann Heath, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 106).

¹⁹ E. Franzini, *Filosofia dei sentimenti* cit., p. 99.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

In the distinction between *Schranke* and *Grenze* it is so central their semantic definition that occurs, as Franzini stresses, with a geographical vocabulary. Such an interpretation is confirmed by what Kant writes, in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*:

if I represent the surface of the earth (in accordance with sensible appearance) as a plate, I cannot know how far it extends. But experience teaches me this: that wherever I go, I always see a space around me in which I could proceed farther; thus I cognize the limits (*Schranken*) of my actual knowledge of the earth at any time, but not the boundaries (*Grenzen*) of all possible description of the earth. But if I have gotten as far as knowing that the earth is a sphere and its surface the surface of a sphere, then from a small part of the latter, e.g., from the magnitude of one degree, I can cognize its diameter and, by means of this, the complete boundary, i.e., surface of the earth, determinately and in accordance with a priori principles; and although I am ignorant in regard to the objects that this surface might contain, I am not ignorant in regard to the magnitude and limits of the domain that contains them.²¹

In the first Critique, it is then evident how Kant use the geographical language in order to describe the delimitation of reason. It is clearly determinant the influence of the astronomical studies accomplished by Kant and, most of all, in the first Critique, the reference to Galileo and Copernicus is absolutely crucial. With my analysis, I would rather like to stress that the distinction between *Schranke* and *Grenze* and the use of geographical language was already present in the Wolffian school. In particular, I would like to state that it is possible to retrace one of Kantian source in the *Vernunftlehre* of Hermann Samuel Reimarus. Reimarus, in fact, writes:

we talk a lot about limit (*Schranke*) of reason and everyone says that our reason is limited; commonly, rather boundaries (*Grenzen*) of reason cannot be determined by laws, so lords cannot establish boundaries of their territories through series of peace treaties.²²

Even though Reimarus' metaphor is definitely less articulated than the Kantian one, the aim of drawing the «territory of the pure intellect», as Kant writes in the *Analytic of principles*, is already present in the *Vernunftlehre*.

²¹ KrV, B787/A759 (p. 653).

²² H.S. Reimarus, *Vernunftlehre*, hrsg. v. F. Löttsch, München, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979, p. 42.

The Reimarus' distinction between *Schranke* and *Grenze*, aside from being expressed by a geographical metaphor, is also coherent with the Kantian statement in *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik und Rationaltheologie*: «*Limes (Schranke)* ist unterschieden von *terminus (Grenze)*»²³. Already in Latin, *limes* and *terminus* have a geographical connotation. *Terminus (Grenze, boundary)* means the end of a territory, fixes a determination and outlines a space of unattainable. *Limes (Schranke, limit)* fixes, on the contrary, a boundary poorly determined, means something negative, the incompleteness poorly defined of a whole.

Also in Reimarus, boundary has to be well determined, according to logical laws of contradiction, while limit refers to something obscure, undetermined, something that, for these reasons, has to be expressed with clearness and distinction. This separation between *limes* and *terminus* has been already used by Leibniz for its relevance in the method of infinitesimal calculus. The presence of this separation in the *Vernunftlehre* means, however, her diffusion in the German thought of the XVII Century and, in particular, in the Wolffian school. Furthermore, the use of *Schranke* and *Grenze* with the same meaning of *limes* and *terminus* subscribes a geographical semantic area that refers to another geographic metaphor: tracing boundaries of reason means drawing its map; it also means then taking its systematic whole. Stressing the use of metaphor and the geographical language allows us, therefore, to identify the close link between the delimitation of reason and the aim of building an unitary system that involves the relationship between reason and experience.

By deviating, in fact, from the Wolffian philosophy, which considered experience only as the starting point providing materials to reason, Reimarus, on one hand, defines the relationship between reason and experience as the ground for the systematic drawing and, on the other hand, by distinguishing between *Schranke* and *Grenze*, expresses the necessity of tracing the boundaries of reason with reference to the empiric. The delimitation of reason happens, in fact, according to natural laws, in relationship with experience, which is no longer considered as

²³I. Kant, *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik und Rationaltheologie*, in *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. 28, hrsg. von der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Berlin-Leipzig, De Gruyter, 1968, p. 644. (see A. Gentile, *Ai confini della ragione* cit., pp. 200-202).

source of materials for reason, but as drawing that refers to the application field of knowledge.

By anticipating a metaphor dear to Kant, Reimarus suggests a study of reason that take the rational capacity in front of a court. He aims thus at identifying, in his *Vernunftlehre*, the possibility of reason according to its correct use²⁴. As Norbert Hinske writes, even considering only the aims of Reimarus and the use of the metaphor of court, it is possible to identify the deep resemblance between the *Vernunftlehre* and the Kantian Critique. Reimarus seems, in fact, to mark a breaking point in the Wolffian school, by going in the same direction that, some years after, will be that of Kant. In the distinction between limits and boundaries and in the aim of taking reason in front of a court in order to establish its correct use, Reimarus seems to propose a new concept of philosophy.

In the Wolff's *Psychologia empirica*, as Jean Ecole has highlighted, the delimitation of reason and the relationship with experience are necessary, but not fundamental. Wolff is interested, in fact, in the architectonical structure of reason, and experience is only the starting point for rational activity. Reimarus, instead, puts the relationship between reason and experience, that is between subject and world, at the foundation of his system, as also Kant does. Delimiting reason means regulating, in a systematic way, the relationship between sensibility and intelligible capacity. In this regard, Hans-Jürgen Engfer, in his essay on the Reimarus' theory of judgment, writes that this author forms, «while remaining in the Wolffian philosophy, a turning point, that in the Sixties and Seventies acts as a foundation of an Enlightenment philosophy that interprets herself analytically»²⁵. Remembering the importance of Reimarus could be, therefore, useful not only in order to reconstruct Kantian sources, but also in order to highlight the fundamental Kantian matter of the delimitation of rational boundaries into the relationship between reason and experience.

²⁴ Hinske states in fact that the use of some important metaphors in Kantian thought (among which the court of reason) could come from Reimarus' *Vernunftlehre*: Hinske remembers however that the same metaphors are also in J.H. Lambert *Organon* (see N. Hinske, *Reimarus zwischen Wolff und Kant* cit., pp. 21-22).

²⁵ H.-J. Engfer, *Die Urteilstheorie von H. S. Reimarus und die Stellung seiner Vernunftlehre zwischen Wolff und Kant*, in W. Walter und L. Borinski (hrsg.), *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* cit., p. 58.

3. The boundary concept: the thing in itself

As I said, while describing the relationship between reason and thing in itself, Reimarus establishes the boundaries of reason by distinguishing *Schranke* and *Grenze* and by using a geographical metaphor. Reimarus, moreover, as Kant will do, would establish what is the territory of intellect in order to define a criterion of truth in the path of knowledge. In the *Critique of pure reason*, Kant, in fact, writes:

we have now not only traveled through the land of pure understanding, and carefully inspected each part of it, but we have also surveyed it, and determined the place for each thing in it. This land, however, is an island, and enclosed in unalterable boundaries (*Grenzen*) by nature itself. It is the land of truth (a charming name), surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean, the true set of illusion, where many a fog bank and rapidly melting iceberg pretend to be new lands [...]. But before we venture on this sea, to search through all its breadth and become certain of whether there is anything to hope for in it, it will be useful first to cast yet another glance at the map of the land that we would now leave, and to ask [...] by what title we occupy even this land, and can hold it securely against all hostile claims²⁶.

Here Kant deals with the problem of boundary and limit, by using a geographical language and he puts the distinction between *Schranke* and *Grenze* in relationship with *Grenzbegriff*, the boundary concept, that is the *noumenon*. The definition of rational boundaries becomes, then, the central problem in critical philosophy: the relationship between phenomenon and *noumenon*²⁷.

Also in the *Vernunftlehre* the boundary definition directly involves the relationship between reason and thing in itself, in order to identify a criterion of truth. The terms used by Reimarus are still Wolffian and he clearly doesn't refer to the idea of *noumenon* as *Grenzbegriff*. The problem of the relationship between reason and thing in itself is rather in connection with boundary and seems to have a lot in common with Kantian philosophy. In Reimarus' *Logic*, limits of reason, determinable by laws, consist in being or not being able to represent the thing in itself in a clear and distinct way. Boundaries of reason are defined, instead, according to natural laws, contradiction and agreement. Limits of reason, then, could be abstractly established according to a criterion of clearness and distinction, but boundaries of reason

²⁶ KrV B294-295/A236 (pp. 338-339).

²⁷ See A. Gentile, *Ai confini della ragione* cit., p. 236.

have to be searched out in nature. Nature defines the correct use of our rational faculty and describes the «map of reason». Similarly, the delimitation of a territory couldn't be defined only by formal treatises, but has to take into account, most of all, the geographical conformation of nature.

If, on one hand, Reimarus uses a still Wolffian language, in which terms as *Klarheit* and *Deutlichkeit* are central, on the other hand, the resemblance with critical philosophy is surprising; at least, as Norbert Hinske argues, the position of the matter is identical²⁸. In fact, if terms of clearness and obscurity are not present in Kantian philosophy they are rather a reason of controversy with Baumgarten²⁹, the relationship with nature and its laws is undoubtedly fundamental in the definition of the boundaries of reason.

The fact that Reimarus puts the distinction between limits and boundaries of reason identifies a conception of the rational faculty very different from the Wolffian position. In a Wolffian sense, drawing limits of reason means to identify its possible functions and its architecture; determining its boundaries means, instead, to show the correct use of reason. For this reason, Reimarus writes that rational laws, grounded on nature, establish intellect boundaries³⁰ and reason is delimited by the clearness of representation and the law of identity and no contradiction³¹. In particular, according to Reimarus³², it is possible to have a correct use of reason only into limits of a clear and distinct representation. What joins Kant to Reimarus is, therefore, the same conception of reason, defined not according to its parts, as Wolff did, but according to its usage, both theoretical or moral. In this regard it is interesting that also Reimarus distinguish a theoretical and a moral application of reason.

²⁸ See N. Hinske, *Reimarus zwischen Wolff und Kant* cit., p. 22.

²⁹ See at this regard *Erleuterungen zur Psychologia empirica in A. G. Baumgartens Metaphysica*, in I. Kant, *Handschriftlicher Nachlass*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band XV, hrsg. v. P. Menzer, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1911, pp. 3-54. In regard to the relationship between Kant and Baumgarten see C. La Rocca, *Das Schöne und der Schatten. Dunkle Vorstellungen und ästhetische Erfahrung zwischen Baumgarten und Kant*, in H.F. Klemme - M. Pauen - M.L. Raters (hrsg.), *Im Schatten des Schönen. Die Ästhetik des Hässlichen in historischen Ansätzen und aktuellen Debatten*, Bielefeld, Aisthesis Verlag, 2006, pp. 19-64.

³⁰ See H.S. Reimarus, *Vernunftlehre* cit., p. 20.

³¹ See *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³² See *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Obviously, in Reimarus any critical systematic issue, comparable to the Kantian Critique, is missing. For Kant the relationship between sensible and supersensible plays a crucial role, and he tries to identify a middle term in the power of judgment through the principle of natural finality³³. Reimarus, instead, seems happy to stop his research to the identification of the limits of reason in natural laws, of identity and contradiction, that makes a clear representation of the object possible. It is interesting, however, to remark that Reimarus suggest the existence of a relationship between reason and thing in itself. This relationship could anticipates the Kantian concept of limit, even if Reimarus doesn't refer to the supersensible in relationship with boundaries of reason. By showing boundaries of rational activity, in fact, Reimarus writes:

when we have determined the concept of the faculty of reason, so it is all solved thank to that. Truth is accordance of our thinking with things and according to this we think. This logical truth in thinking (*veritas in cogitando*) implies also a metaphysical or substantial truth (*veritatem in essendo*) in the thing in itself. [...] For this reason, things have in themselves their essential truth, according to laws of contradiction and accordance, with which our natural faculty of reason agrees in thinking.³⁴

Undoubtedly, totally similar idea was already present in Wolff's *Philosophia prima*, in which the «*veritas transcendentalis*» of the thing in itself is affirmed³⁵. Wolff, however, doesn't admit another fundament, as natural laws, for the relationship between reason and thing in itself. It is the theological validity or the thing in itself that could function as ground. For Wolff, besides, was impossible to think to a metaphysical presupposition that stay beyond logical truth³⁶. In Wolff's writings we have then a definition of the limits of reason, but no definition of its boundaries.

Reimarus, instead, affirms that truth could be find only in relationship between reason and thing in itself and in this agreement the correct use of reason according to natural laws could be established. Similarly Kant affirms that when meta-

³³ See KU, pp. 219-221 (pp. 21-24).

³⁴ H.S. Reimarus, *Venunftlehre* cit., p. 38-39.

³⁵ «*Si nulla datur in rebus veritas transcendentalis, nec datur veritas logica propositionum universalium, nec singularium datur nisi in instanti*» (C. Wolff, *Philosophia prima sive ontologia*, in *Christian Wolff Gesammelte Werke*, hrsg. v. J. Ecole und H.W. Arndt, II Abteilung, Band 3, Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1962, p. 385).

³⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 385-387.

physics is intended as science, it provides «satisfactory proof of the laws that are the a priori ground of nature, as the sum total of objects of experience»³⁷. The meaning of thing in itself in Kant is certainly much deeper and definitively different from that of Reimarus. I believe, however, that it is interesting that in Reimarus, and then in Kant, the concept of thing in itself is fully determinant for the identification of the boundaries of reason. As it is well known, in fact, the distinction between limits and boundaries is strictly connected to the distinction between *phenomenon* and *noumenon*, thanks to which it is possible to know limits, but not boundaries (*Grenzbegriff*, that is *noumenon*) of reason.

This is probably the point where the biggest distance between Reimarus and Kant, as regards their analysis of boundary, is more apparent. The experience of boundary, indeed, with reference to the *noumenon* clearly constitutes, in the Kantian thought, a «Copernican Revolution» within the philosophical tradition. For Reimarus the relationship with the thing in itself becomes a criterion of truth and the laws inscribed in nature are something to which reason has to confirm itself. Kant, instead, as he writes at § 57 of *Prolegomena*, admits the existence of the thing in itself as the very ground and condition of possibility of phenomenon. For this reason, in the first Critique, Kant supports that the *noumenon* is just a boundary concept (*Grenzbegriff*), and it has to circumscribe sensibility. The *noumenon* has, so, a merely negative mode of employment³⁸.

In this regard, Pietro Faggiotto claims that Kant's real problem is not how to infer the existence of intelligible being, but rather how to necessarily determine them without empirical contamination³⁹. According to Faggiotto, the problem of boundary in Kant doesn't consist in a trying to put supersensible objects in nature, but rather it consists in an effort to describe the relationship between sensible and intelligible world. Differently from Reimarus, Kant is not interested in the agreement with the identity and contradiction laws, but in the relationship between sensible and supersensible as a boundary relationship. The distinction between limit and boundary defines, then, a knowledge relationship; it doesn't describe ontological regions of reality, but

³⁷ KrV, BXIX (p. 111).

³⁸ See E. Franzini, *Filosofia dei sentimenti* cit., p. 101.

³⁹ P. Faggiotto, *Limiti e 'confini' della conoscenza umana secondo Kant* cit., p. 237.

rather defines the territorial paths of thinking⁴⁰. Boundary, in fact, identifies the correct use of reason referring to experience and puts the existence of the thing in itself as condition of possibility of experience. Limit, that reason tries to overcome every time, establishes the relationship between sensible and supersensible.

There are several self-evident differences between the *Vernunftlehre* and the *Critique of pure reason*; but Reimarus, similarly to Kant and differently to Wolff, considers the relationship between reason and the thing in itself as a fundamental element in rational limits definition. For Reimarus, describing the map of reason, by identifying limits and boundaries, means following natural laws, by searching truth of the thing in itself and by finding in experience the systematic ground of reason. Similarly, for Kant, investigating intellectual territory means establishing limits between sensible and intelligible, through a definition of the relationship between phenomenon and the thing in itself.

4. Boundary, autonomy and system

The relationship between empiric and *noumenon*, that defines the distinction between limit and boundary, remains a distance point between Reimarus and Kant. But there subsists many others elements in the *Vernunftlehre*, that can be considered as anticipation of Kantian elements. First of all, Reimarus claims that boundaries of reason can't be defined according to abstract laws, thus anticipating the Kantian necessity to establish a priori the delimitation of rational faculty. Reimarus, in fact, supports that delimitation of territories must has to follow the geographical conformation of territory; similarly, the map of reason has to be traced following natural boundaries, that in Kantian language means the impossibility to go over boundaries of experience.

For Kant, the determination of boundary and the reference to limits of reason define, in fact, the critical use of philosophy. Thanks to the geographical metaphor already quoted, if we think of the surface of the Earth as a flat surface, we can know its limits from time to time, but we can't a priori know boundaries of the surface in its whole. It is the case of sciences, as Math and Physics, which limits are constantly moving as the horizon. Sciences could, in fact, progress indefinitely in their research. If we think, instead,

⁴⁰E. Franzini, *Filosofia dei sentimenti* cit., p. 99.

of Earth as spherical, a little part of it is enough to determine extension, diameter and limits; by determining the finiteness of surface, it is possible to fully identify its unity and completeness.

Critical philosophy, in fact, knows its own boundaries and therefore doesn't strain indefinitely to an unattainable limit, but it is defined by the boundary and by the relationship with what is beyond its limit. Andrea Gentile consistently claims that the possibility of determining its own boundaries gives to reason the privilege of being autonomous and the legislator of itself. *Critique*, according to Gentile, doesn't mean only the examination of boundaries, but also the analysis of the internal structure of knowledge⁴¹.

In the Kantian distinction between limits and boundaries, we can find, therefore, an idea of reason as legislator of itself, as something autonomous and that affirms the possibility of being comprehended in a systematic unity by determining its own boundaries. Kant, in fact, in the first *Critique*, claims that reason is grounded in itself; it is «a unity entirely separate and subsisting for itself, in which, as in an organized body, every part exists for the sake of all the others as all the others exist for its sake»⁴². Similarly, Reimarus writes that we «have fundamentals of the entire *Vernunftlehre* in front of eyes»⁴³; reason naturally has its own rules and it has to do nothing but applying them in its relationship with the world. Reason finds its ground in nature and determines its own limits according to given natural laws. Thus, it has not to take its rules from philosophy, from logic or from some theory of knowledge. As Norbert Hinske writes, in the Reimarus' *Vernunftlehre*, «reason becomes its own source, grounded in itself; it becomes its own *a priori* rule, it becomes literally autonomous»⁴⁴.

By determining autonomy of reason, Reimarus completely moves away from Wolff and he puts the basis for an idea of reason, that finds its ground and its boundaries in itself; this idea of reason will be the Kantian one. According to Reimarus, science, so, is not a set of theories which unity has to be deduced. Philosophy as science consists instead in the correct use of reason according to rules given by nature, that is contradiction rules, which establish boundaries of reason. By anticipating Kant, meta-

⁴¹ A. Gentile, *Ai confini della ragione* cit., p. 209.

⁴² KrV, B XXIII (p. 113).

⁴³ H.S. Reimarus, *Vernunftlehre* cit., p. 51.

⁴⁴ N. Hinske, *Reimarus zwischen Wolff und Kant* cit., p. 25.

physics as science consists in the critical use of philosophy. Only a kind of philosophy that considers the rational faculty as autonomous and grounded in itself can, therefore, put reason in front of a court.

According to Reimarus, philosophy is

science of all fundamental theoretical and moral truths that explore happiness in human beings [...]. Because Philosophy is a science, in regard to all objects, it has to give a clear ground and a prove of all the connected things to the found (*gefunden*) reason.⁴⁵

Philosophy, then, can reach unity of reason, because it can autonomously establish its boundaries according to laws given by nature. So, also in Kant, critical philosophy can reach the systematic unity, by considering a priori limits of reason. In the Kantian distinction between limits and boundaries

there is a second thing to be attended to, which is more philosophic and *architectonic*: namely, to grasp correctly the *idea of the whole* and from this idea to see all those parts in their mutual relation by means of their derivation from the concept of that whole in a pure rational faculty. This examination and guarantee is possible only through the most intimate acquaintance with the system⁴⁶.

Although it is important to remember that in Reimarus transcendental intents cannot be found, I think it is however important to highlight how, also in the *Vernunftlehre*, the distinction between limits and boundaries is strictly connected both to the autonomous statute of reason and to the systematic unity between nature and reason. These elements will be included by Kant in the transcendental relationship between sensible and supersensible.

That the problem of boundary is for Reimarus strictly connected to the problem of system is evident if we think that boundaries of reason have to be found in nature, in which consists the ground of Reimarus' philosophical system. Also in the *Vernunftlehre*, so as in the *Critique of pure reason*, determining limits of the reason map means reaching the system in its whole and defining the relationship between the intelligible faculty and the natural sensible.

⁴⁵ H.S. Reimarus, *Vernunftlehre* cit., pp. 13-14.

⁴⁶ KpV, p. 10 (p. 144).

This reconstruction of the relationship between the Reimarus' *Vernunftlehre* and Kantian thought, through an analysis of the use of metaphor that defines boundaries of reason, aims at highlighting the numerous points in common between the two authors. In my analysis I tried, however, to keep the peculiar perspective of Kant always in mind.

Reimarus' *Logic* is not a text very well known by the scholars, but it was undoubtedly well known by Kant. This writing could finally highlight the relationship between Kant and the Wolffian school; Kant marks a definitive break with Wolff's philosophy, but he could find anticipations of this departure in other authors and, among these, in Reimarus. Particularly, with the *Vernunftlehre*, the relationship between reason and experience becomes systematic and not merely functional anymore; boundaries of reason, moreover, are indicated in nature. The focus shifts radically from the functions and parts of the rational faculty to the determination of boundaries in relationship with experience. Reimarus thus describes reason as a systematic whole.

The *Vernunftlehre* is therefore worthy of our attention, as in this writing Reimarus recognizes a connection between the relationship of reason with experience and the distinction between limits and boundaries. Particularly, by distinguishing *Schranke* and *Grenze* (as *limes* and *terminus*), Reimarus' *Logic* anticipates the connection among the definition of the boundaries of reason, the affirmation of the thing in itself, the autonomy of the rational faculty and the effort towards an account of the systematic unity of reason in reference to experience. Finally, Reimarus uses, as Kant does, a geographical language that allow to explain the distinction between limits and boundaries with a metaphor and that let describe boundaries of the rational territory through a map of its whole.