

VIRTUALISTIC TRANSCENDENTALISM AS A CONCEPT OF SYSTEMATIC CRITICAL METAPHYSICS. THE PENTALOGY OF VALENTIN KANAWROW

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Abstract. Valentin Kanawrow develops his system of critical metaphysics across five systematically linked monographs. The core of this pentalogy is the original concept of *virtualistic transcendentalism*. Kanawrow creates a new metaphysical system as a continuation and reorganization of Kant's transcendental philosophy. The *virtual* is the domain of the pure a priori form of thought, which, however, must reach and realize experience in its regions. This transition from a priori to a posteriori is mediated by transcendental schematism – an entirely new theory developed by Valentin Kanawrow. In its descent to experience, the transcendental schema *devirtualizes* itself and deduces the phenomena as formats of the true ontologizations of the given in experience. Transcendental phenomena result in plural regional critical ontologies, such as special metaphysical domains. The large-scale system of critical metaphysics of Valentin Kanawrow ends with a transcendental anthropology demonstratively developed on the conducted Analytics of the transcendental phenomena constituting the lifeworld of human being.

Keywords: Kanawrow; Kantian philosophy; metaphysics; transcendental schematism; transcendental phenomenology

In the full power of its self-constitution and in the rapid course of its development, philosophy invariably seeks to achieve the purity of its innermost field. This field can be reached only from the possibility of its own reflection on itself; only the philosophical holds the supreme positioning of the beginning. Therefore, since the times of ancient Greek philosophy, of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, this supreme field has been constituted as *first philosophy*, and subsequently as *metaphysics*. The question of the subject matter, the parts, and the making of this system to the full finished form and comprehensive result is the question of metaphysics.

At the heart of modern philosophy, Immanuel Kant turns the question against the dogmatic acceptance of self-understanding about metaphysics and poses it with criticality and severe clarity: “How is metaphysics possible as science?”

(Kant 1998, p. 148). Kant's plan is initially to put the capacity of reason as such to critical inquiry in order to answer the question of how we construct metaphysics and to develop the latter into a system of special sciences. The *Critique of Pure Reason* and the following two *Critiques* bring out the full territory of reason, after which Kant developed the two main directions of metaphysics: *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (1786) – about nature (see Kanawrow 2003, p. 314), and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) – about freedom (see Kanawrow 2003, p. 347). Essentially, Kant's project regarding the field of metaphysics results in two areas, the two special metaphysics in the *stretch* (in Kanawrow's term) given as external world – given as human world: metaphysics of nature and metaphysics of freedom.

Kant's question, however, opens up the very possibility of searching anew for the subject of metaphysics and thus its own field to be developed in even greater detail and richness. In this sense, Kant's question also requires new answers and solutions – for the project of a “new metaphysics” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 176), with which a completion of the system of pure philosophy to be sought.

In contemporary Bulgarian philosophy, Valentin Kanawrow suggests his project for a new metaphysics, as a systematic critical metaphysics. This new metaphysical project unfolds in five systematically linked monographs: *Kant's Critical Metaphysics. An Attempt at a Virtualistic Transcendentalism* (2003), *Critical Ontologies of Spirituality* (2006), *Ways of Metaphysics. Kant and Heidegger* (2011), *Ways of Transcendental Schematism* (2015), *The Transcendental Road to Man* (2020). Valentin Kanawrow, in a truly critical spirit, developed Kant's transcendental philosophy into a new metaphysical system. The core of Kanawrow's philosophical system is the new concept of *virtualistic transcendentalism* – “a non-conservative rethinking, interpretation, continuation and extension” of Kant's transcendental philosophy (Kanawrow 2015, p. 19). Basically, the concept is developed in the first book of the pentalogy, and the four subsequent books deal with the architectonic construction of the system of critical metaphysics.

The starting point for Kanawrow is Kant's transcendental philosophy, especially the first *Critique*, in which Kant unfolds his doctrine on the a priori constitution of pure reason. This constitution is “a priori” because it derives the pure forms of reason “before all experience” and without any element of experience (Kant 1998, p. 136). It is also “transcendental” because it seeks “the grounds of knowledge” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 323). Here Kanawrow realizes his first original solution outside of Kant's system, accepting and postulating the a priori as an independent and supreme zone for reason, which provides the grounds and covers the supreme realm of the *possible*: “Insofar as the a priori is equivalent to pre-experience grounding – but not to pre-experience existence, – reason is a principle and a priori basis” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 182). Kanawrow constitutes it as the initial and purely ideal topos, which is the proper field of pure a priori form. For Kanawrow, here in the highest position is reason itself, as a complete, indivisible “pure form of thinking”

(Kanawrow 2003, p. 274), which is the proper foundation and summit of all knowledge, but also of that to which knowledge is directed: “the world of human” and their “world-building” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 13).

Here comes Valentin Kanawrow’s own innovative term and concept. The pure a priori form of reason is a pure “open” possibility for foundation, for “synthesis”, for the realization of reason and its knowledge. Kanawrow introduces the term “virtual” in the pure supreme zone of the a priori: “The virtual functionalizes the a priori and thus transcendentalizes the form of knowledge as an initial synthesis” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 274). With this, an essential result was achieved: the virtual names and separates into a pure ideal and supreme topos the a priori form, which is no longer bound to the a priori constitution of reason and becomes the pure basis and beginning of metaphysics. But this is a new kind of metaphysics. Its basis and initial area is knowledge, the pure “logos” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 293), and the entire sphere of reason. For this reason Kanawrow shapes it as a *Metaphysics of Knowledge*, which encompasses the supreme domain of the virtual – as an area of the pure form of thinking. That is why here is the first major reorganization of Kant’s philosophy. The Critique for Kant means only propaedeutics to proper metaphysics. And so, in Kant’s project for metaphysics, no place is set aside for the own field of metaphysics itself, even as *metaphysica generalis*, but we simply get it in the form of its specialized sciences, strictly related to the fundamental topics and directionality of human knowledge. Kanawrow offers here a fundamental step towards constituting and generating the field of the purely metaphysical. It is truly virtual, and it is fulfilled in the critique and derivation of the basis of knowledge, in the fundamental form of thought, as the proper purity and foundation of all reason. Thus, with Kanawrow we really have a pure “metaphysics of metaphysics”, as he points out in a quote from a letter of Kant (Kanawrow 2003, p. 37). Here, there is nothing else that defines and founds reason except reason itself and its own absolute self-reflection as the self-laying of grounds. Moreover, and in its complete non-objectness – as a zone of the virtual. That is precisely why this first purest and highest architectonic part of Kanawrow’s critical metaphysics is not *metaphysica generalis*, as he clearly emphasizes (Kanawrow 2011, p. 8), but remains the first area and beginning of all critical metaphysics.

The goal of Kanawrow’s critical metaphysics, however, is the special types of metaphysics. But not like doctrines and divisions of metaphysics – here is the most important feature of virtualistic transcendentalism. In a deeper sense, critical metaphysics realizes the critical task of Kant’s transcendental philosophy, namely, to reach and create experience itself. Experience is the opposite point that virtualistic transcendentalism must reach, and with this, the true scope of critical metaphysics extends: from the realm of the virtual and the pure form of thought to the regional zones of experience. The stretch is huge and thus the real task is set – to fill the gap that has opened in Kant’s transcendental philosophy: between concept and intuition,

between the theoretical and the practical and for a “smooth transition between them” (Kanawrow 2006, p. 11). Here, Valentin Kanawrow resolves an old and provocative debate – about the relationship between metaphysics and ontology. On the side of experience, virtualistic transcendentalism must reach the object regions realized by the pure form of thought, constructing their logos-determined being. That is why they unfold as regional “critical ontologies”, “always in the plural” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 285), in the richness of their objectivity and logos-content. They are actually the realized and structured experience: “the typologically dissected possible experience, i.e. on the lifeworld abstractly arranged in relatively distinct and complete spheres” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 287), which will achieve the real goal of virtualistic transcendentalism – to create the objects in experience, to synthesize and fulfill them meaningfully a priori, with “active synthesis” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 274), actively, but always from a priori grounds, from the pure form of thinking.

The scope and own system of critical metaphysics is formed, which extends into its zones: *critical metaphysics of knowledge*, as an a priori zone, and *regional critical ontologies*, as a posteriori zones. And here is the essential and architectonically directed question – an internally dynamic, deeply living process and way of virtualistic transcendentalism is taking shape: in the transition from *A priori* to *A posteriori* (Kanawrow 2020, p. 94). This is a process that Valentin Kanawrow calls the “devirtualization” of the pure form of thinking (Kanawrow 2003, p. 287). The pure form of thinking enters into its active synthesis and must find its format, which will provide the “conditions” for structuring and filling the “a posteriori”, as objectified own regions of experience, as arranged in completed spheres “lifeworld” (Kanawrow 2003, p. 287). Methodologically, the decision must be key here and activate an inner working mechanism from Kant’s transcendental structure of pure reason. Kanawrow’s solution is exceptional and completes the course of virtualistic transcendentalism: the role of mediator is occupied by the transcendental schema developed by Kant briefly and rather with a view to some solution for the connection between the categories and intuition. Kanawrow brings the transcendental schematism into a new structural part with exceptional importance, active power, and results for achieving the de-virtualization of pure form and for constructing human experience. Transcendental schematism is the third structural part of Valentin Kanawrow’s critical metaphysics.

The system of critical metaphysics achieves a complete architectonics:

Critical metaphysics of knowledge

Transcendental schematism

Critical ontologies.

The important constructive decisions lie ahead: what are the main critical ontologies? How does the transcendental schema work to give form to the totality of human experience? And how does all this affect the possibility of metaphysics?

Virtualistic transcendentalism finds an answer to the first question with its meth-

odological construction in the metaphysical doctrines of Kant's transcendental philosophy. Such areas are nature, morals and religion, specifically developed by Kant after the *Critique of Reason*. If these areas are viewed as critical ontologies identical with the special metaphysics (Kanawrow 2003, p. 286), already formed in transcendental philosophy, a regional devirtualization of the pure a priori form should have taken place in them as the process of moving from grounds to regional object construction. Kanawrow carries out their research in detail in search of their internal active syntheses. The result is exceptional: the work of the transcendental schema in its new formats is demonstrated, which fully and demonstrably expands the scope of transcendental schematism and actually makes it an architectonic part of critical metaphysics. The transcendental schema then goes beyond *time* only, which alone Kant sees as the source of transcendental schemas, and the actual synthesis of other working transcendental schemas must be drawn. Kanawrow demonstrates the work of *time*, but also of *space* as schemas of constructing the metaphysical foundations of natural science (Kanawrow 2003, p. 317). Kanawrow derives the transcendental schema to work for the entire field of the practical (Kanawrow 2003, p. 338). And this is *freedom* as a "formal ground of the practical" (Kanawrow 2003, p. 338). With this, a real reorganization of Kant's transcendental philosophy has been made: through the transcendental schema of freedom, the practical is also brought under the virtual sphere of the pure form of thinking, and accordingly it will find its devirtualization through the work of the transcendental schema of freedom. This is an extraordinary result that advocates the unity of reason and will be developed progressively through systematic critical metaphysics: to fill the "split" of theoretical and practical and to fill the abyss between them (Kanawrow 2020, p. 106). Kanawrow here also develops the serious thesis of revising the own foundations of the unconditionality of the moral law, which must be based in the unified reason itself, "to be valid unconditionally a priori" (Kanawrow 2003, p. 341). Just after the critical ontology of nature, an "ontology of morals" can be built to develop "the pure idea of the social" (Kanawrow 2003, p. 347).

The third area, as a special metaphysics developed by Kant, is religion. Kanawrow structures it as an "ontology of faith", from the "specificity of religious experience" (Kanawrow 2003, p. 357). The third transcendental schema constituting the relevant critical ontology is also derived. Kanawrow here also points out the derivation of the transcendental schema of faith in its status of searching for "a basis for the final goal of pure reason" (Kanawrow 2003, p. 373) and as a transcendental schema directed at the transcendent, and thus as a return to the realm of supreme grounds. As a result of the unfolding of virtualistic transcendentalism on the field of special metaphysics as critical ontologies, three transcendental schemas have been derived that are fundamental to the regional experience: those of space-time, freedom and faith. In the course of virtualistic transcendentalism, they set the search for other basic schemas and the fulfillment of the entire project of critical metaphysics in the two-directionality of its architectonics.

In fact, Kanawrow's second book already unfolds an independent new critical ontology – “the ontology of spirituality” (Kanawrow 2006, p. 8). This initiative comes in response to a clear lack in the system of Kant's transcendental philosophy and essentially a problematic area – the construction from a priori positions of history: “its own critical history of philosophy” (Kanawrow 2006, p. 77). Kanawrow's solution is large-scale and is proposed by the methodology of virtualistic transcendentalism: building the ontology of mind (Geist) as the effective beginning and founder of the world principles of the philosophical-historical epochs. Kanawrow clearly indicates the mind (Geist) as an “ontological correlate of reason” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 142). Therefore, the proper forms of the “being of mind” (Geist) are these activity principles of historical being (Kanawrow 2006, p. 9). Their being is a kind of “monads” (Kanawrow 2006, p. 60) of the spiritual, which are precisely the “ontologems”, the type of being of spirituality through its various epochal manifestations. Indeed, here Kanawrow discovers another transcendental schema, which is not indicated as manifested. It is of the first order because it affects the very being of the bearer of the cognitive principle. And this is the transcendental schema of the very “subjectivity of rationality” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 142), when not someone else and something else, but reason itself forms itself as a condition (transcendental schema) and a phenomenon (Kanawrow 2006, p. 46) of the possibility of its history and also as a being-history of its rational and spiritual experience. The own ontologems in the transcendental construction of the history of spirituality, which Kanawrow brings out and unfolds, are the *soul*, *intelligence*, *mind* (Geist) and *culture*. Kanawrow summarizes the turning point towards the pluralization of the foundations of the ideal being of mind as a breaking of monism in the ontology of culture (see Kanawrow 2006, p. 288). With the possibilities to derive new schemas in the structure of transcendental schematism, the first and last schema are set, and a possibility for a systematic registry of transcendental schematism is provided. We can see how the transcendental schemas in the devirtualization of the pure form of thought powerfully move the cognitive content richness and experience, and gather and master them into a complete critical ontology. But do critical ontologies drive metaphysical mind and specificity, and what does this portend for the roads of metaphysics?

And what will happen if we apply the methodology of virtualistic transcendentalism to metaphysics itself and build it “on the entire horizon of European philosophy” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 19)? Here we will ask ourselves together with Valentin Kanawrow: what happens to the logos and its leading place to understand and organize the world? Metaphysics itself can be constituted as a pure transcendental schema with the leading phenomenon of the logos beginning or beginning at all, which is the own lifeworld of philosophy itself. With such a high horizon over the entire human (philosophical and theoretical) experience, the possible roads of metaphysics and the possibilities for a powerful ontologization of the being of philosophy, and of the being and living form of its all-grounding must be outlined.

Kanawrow constructs virtualistic transcendentalism from a position that sets the necessary “two possible types of fundamental metaphysics: cognitive and being-defined” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 16). They lead: the first from the logos to the “typicality of being”, and the second from the “hidden “simplicity” of being” to the “typicality of knowledge” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 16). The whole metaphysics from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to the great project of Hegel fits in the type of the former. The cognitive-defined metaphysics seeks knowledge and its foundations from which to derive being. Kanawrow points out the enormous power of Nietzsche’s philosophy and passion as the factor that brings about the “paradigmatic change” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 141) and deals a crushing blow to the logos philosophizing. Then, according to Kanawrow, “a metaphysical “place” is discovered for another, different from absolute reason, ontological builder of the world” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 151): Nietzsche destructs and directs philosophizing to “new philosophical possibilities” and “new philosophical principles” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 181). Heidegger is the philosopher whom Kanawrow describes as the creator of the being-defined type of metaphysics (Kanawrow 2011, p. 203). Heidegger starts from the very human facticity in being (Kanawrow 2011, p. 186), takes away any relation to transcendence in setting the beginning. The beginning is the very simple “appearance”, “event”, “worldliness of the world of human” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 203). That is why Heidegger achieves a new beginning of philosophizing: the self-given, “the beginning is a grasp (Anfang) of being with itself, a disclosure of itself in the event” (Kanawrow 2011, pp. 260 – 261). This self-giveness of the beginning is therefore a “originality of the origin” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 266), a beginning, free from the subject, from the object, it is placed only in nothingness, but also in the “whole of being”, and thus it is brought beyond the logos initiation of philosophy and its pursuit of “physis” (Kanawrow 2011, p. 191). But this beginning is found in its orientation towards the human, namely the logos. Therefore, language (Kanawrow 2011, p. 312), the pure logos, turns out to be a condition of the beingness of being. In these new dimensions, beyond the monistic classical paradigm, the *phenomenon* itself stands at the center, with its movement and disclosure, and metaphysics is precisely in this hiding-disclosure of it upon the overall background of being. The position has been found and the result of the metaphysics of being in authentic human being as a phenomenon of being has been demonstrated, and therefore the road of the metaphysics of being is clarified as a metaphysics of the pure immediate phenomenon – a phenomenology as an ontology of human in the integrity of their presence and arrangement in being.

The road of the new metaphysics is outlined anew by Heidegger; it points to the phenomenal domain of the human, and it is precisely the entry into this domain that must provide the true regional structuring of experience. This set the direction of transcendental schematism as a real architectonic part of Kanawrow’s critical metaphysics. In the fourth part of the pentalogy, Kanawrow unfolds a large-scale “tran-

scendental dynamics of the a priori form of thinking” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 28). The aim is to bring out “the typicality of transcendental schematism and different types of experience” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 45). Because it is precisely through the transcendental schemas that the construction of experience is possible. Their “schematizations” are the implementation of experience, but in the dynamics and power of the pure form of thinking, which always works through transcendental schemas (Kanawrow 2015, p. 213). Transcendental schemas, according to Kanawrow, really mediate the transition a priori – a posteriori and must achieve their complete devirtualization as working formats of the experience. It is this complete process and descent of pure form through the transcendental schemas that is their deduction and must result in the particular types of transcendental schemas working for experience. Within the Kantian tradition, this is the first such undertaking of a special deduction of transcendental schemas as the grounds and course of their transcendental dynamics.

What is extremely important and interesting here is the question of the basis of this deduction. Kanawrow sees it in the completed course of virtualistic transcendentalism to grasp and cognitively unfold the entire experience (Kanawrow 2015, p. 63). But it is a proper human experience, as Heidegger discovers, and then its own complete condition and possibility are always and only a *human* general transcendental condition for the construction of experience. That is why Kanawrow completes the deduction of schemas by embedding them directly in experience, but not as concepts, but as real, vital schematizations of experience – as actual constructed, cognitive, procedural, and creative constructs. And as such, “schemas function in experience as phenomena” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 41). Hence, Kanawrow reveals the specificity of transcendental schematism, which ends as a vital and active organization and implementation of experience in a “formal-cognitive transcendental phenomenology” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 45). In the life construction of experience, the schemas provide a “formal-cognitive regionalization of experience” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 51). Therefore, they produce and establish “types of experience” and set the “transcendental conditions” of experience (Kanawrow 2015, p. 219).

Critical metaphysics begins with a critical metaphysics of knowledge and the first critical ontologies. In its large-scale course through the first ontologies, the necessary course of metaphysics through the special metaphysical regions is demonstrated. They prove to be a devirtualization of the pure a priori form in the course of virtualistic transcendentalism. And they necessarily require the active element of the transcendental schema and the development of a new transcendental schematism. Entering the living and rich realm of experience, as total human experience, transforms transcendental schematism into a transcendental phenomenology to give the living and cognitive structures of experience. Along this road, transcendental schematism becomes “multichannel”

(Kanawrow 2015, p. 225) and must find the basic phenomena that construct the objectivity of experience. Kanawrow initially brings out in the fourth part of the pentalogy three transcendental phenomena – embodied, completely devirtualized modes of the pure a priori form, which give the basic regions of experience. In the first place is the transcendental phenomenon of *time-space* as a transcendental condition, “form of the givenness of experience” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 237) of the outer and inner intuition, of the perceptible world. The second transcendental phenomenon is *freedom* as a “pure transcendental condition of the ethos inhabitation and orientation of human” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 162). The third transcendental phenomenon is *language* as a transcendental condition of “the communication or intuitive empathy of human towards the environment and others” (Kanawrow 2015, p. 162). The three transcendental phenomena also delineate regions of experience, and their critical element and orientation are present in all of them – they are conditions of the human possibility of experience. Phenomena, as real, experientially embodied schemas are, as Heidegger defines metaphysics, authentically human and truly life-principles, arrangements of human experience and lifeworld. But then, as Kanawrow points out at the end of his fourth book, the question is whether only these three phenomena are the vital and logos constructions of experience, are there others, is it possible to derive the fundamental phenomena of experience? And where does the whole transcendental phenomenology point in Valentin Kanawrow’s critical metaphysics?

Already with its title, the fifth book throws down the challenge and declares the result of the completed transition a priori – a posteriori of virtualistic transcendentalism. The supreme transcendental condition of all really regionalized experience must be necessarily derived and encompassed in a separate *metaphysica specialis*. And this is necessarily the whole human, even not only as phenomenology, but as an independent critical ontology – “the critical ontology of man” (Kanawrow 2020, p. 33). Its subject is on the whole possibility of experience, specialized through the human: “the whole region of the human” to give “the content unity of human being” (Kanawrow 2020, p. 62). The definition and deployment of transcendental anthropology in the critical metaphysics of Kanawrow is an essential result that is achieved for the first time in the field of critical Kantian philosophy in general.

Kanawrow’s fifth book completes and demonstrates transcendental phenomenology. The question is raised about “Analytics of the possible transcendental phenomena that mediate the devirtualization of the pure form of thinking” (Kanawrow 2020, p. 99). The Analytics undertaken by Kanawrow must bring out, highlight and unravel the main schematizations of the truly human – in its most typical manifestations: from the perception of the external world through intimacy, morality and the social, through the formation of social life, through the pure structures and meanings of the symbolic, to the “deification of man”

(Kanawrow 2020, p. 116), to approaches to Transcendence. These are the supporting cores and the course of the Analytics of transcendental phenomena in the critical metaphysics of Kanawrow. The Analytics in the course of virtualistic transcendentalism derives its “table” of the transcendental phenomena of human:

- Space-time-number – an organism, natural being, body (Kanawrow 2020, p. 119);
- Love – gender and affection, falling in love (Kanawrow 2020, p. 143);
- Language – communication, meaning (Kanawrow 2020, p. 177);
- Politics – coexistence and the making and implementation of power decisions (Kanawrow 2020, p. 201);
- Freedom – consciousness, release and understanding of the moral law (Kanawrow 2020, p. 231);
- Faith – “God’s way in man” (Kanawrow 2020, pp. 253, 258).

This polyphonic, rich, large-scale transcendental-phenomenological constitution of human develops in the critical ontology of human. The transcendental anthropology, which concludes the system of Valentin Kanawrow’s critical metaphysics, realizes the “pluralistic being of man” (Kanawrow 2020, p. 440), embracing the deeply structured regions of *family, people, state, spirit, church*, each of which is derived through the cores of the transcendental analytics of phenomena. The end is the “I” – “the last synthetic step in the ontological constitution of human” (Kanawrow 2020, p. 430). With all this, Valentin Kanawrow declares and demonstrates the “humanistic pathos” of transcendental anthropology, which completes the large-scale progress of virtualistic transcendentalism in a system of critical metaphysics and gives its overall meaning and purpose to “show and assert the significance and unchanging nature of man, of the human being” (Kanawrow 2020, p. 443).

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