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I. Introduction

Thus the difficulty we encounter in the question about nature and freedom is only whether freedom is possible anywhere at all, and if it is, whether it can exist together with the universality of the natural law of causality, hence whether it is a correct disjunctive proposition that every effect in the world must arise either from nature or freedom, or whether instead both, each in a different relation, might be able to take place simultaneously in one and the same occurrence (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A536/B564).ⁱ

In this passage Kant reveals himself as a compatibilist deeply concerned with the question of whether a reconciliation of nature and freedom is possible.ⁱⁱ Although scholars have succeeded at pointing out why reading Kant as a compatibilist is superior to reading him as a libertarian incompatibilist, the infancy of his unique compatibilism has not been amply addressed.ⁱⁱⁱ In the pre-critical period Kant uses the terms 'spontaneity' and 'freedom' to describe his negative and positive conceptions of freedom. This paper will demonstrate that what the pre-critical Kant calls 'freedom' (spontaneity's other half) is consistent with what Kant will later call 'autonomy'. This is commonly ignored in other treatments of Kant's theory of freedom (most notably by Allison).^{iv} Kant's failure to employ systematically the term used in his mature work is alone insufficient reason to believe that autonomy is not born for Kant until later. Once a pre-critical version of autonomy is acknowledged, one will see that the negative and positive ideas of freedom that pervade the critical philosophy are both latent in the pre-critical period. Kant's compatibilism is unique because, unlike his compatibilist ancestors, it is twofold, consisting both of the claim that mechanistic laws of nature are compatible with spontaneous agency and that the determination of an agent by his/her representation of the good is compatible with free will. The key to understanding the unity of his dual compatibilism is seeing the mature theory of freedom as linked to his early thought, specifically the *Nova Dilucidatio*, the *Inaugural Dissertation*, and "An Attempt at Some Reflections on Optimism".

II. Antecedent Determination in the *Nova Dilucidatio* and the *Inaugural Dissertation*

Although the *Inaugural Dissertation* is the pre-critical work closest to the first *Critique* chronologically and perhaps thematically, it is farther from the critical formulation of freedom as both spontaneity and autonomy than the *Nova Dilucidatio*. Nevertheless, we have in these early works a loose formulation of the central questions that Kant's mature theory of freedom attempts to answer. Allison notes the pre-critical beginnings of spontaneity only and suggests that autonomy is first developed in the *Groundwork* (Allison 1996, 134). The construal of autonomy is first made explicit there, but the general exposition of moral agency contained in the following passage strongly

suggests that autonomy has pre-critical roots. In a dialogue between Titius and Caius in the *Nova Dilucidatio* Kant has Titius say:

For *spontaneity* is action proceeding from an *internal principle*. What is determined in conformity with the representation of the good we call *freedom*. The more certainly anyone complies with this law, and therefore the more he is determined by all the posited motives for willing, the freer he is. It does not follow from your argument that freedom is impaired by antecedently determining reasons (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 402).^v

This passage demonstrates Kant's belief that the ideal agent is one completely determined by the good. Despite the fact that early passages like this one are largely ignored in the prominent treatments of Kant's theory of freedom, his pre-critical writing reveals early elucidation of the ideas of freedom that Kant masters in the *Groundwork* and the first and second *Critiques*.

Although the pre-critical notion of freedom might seem to be as compatibilist as its Leibnizian counterpart, it is distinctly different. Kant develops his own theory of freedom in order to eliminate the errors he finds in Leibniz's thinking. In the *Nova Dilucidatio*, the main pre-critical text reflecting the spirit of his mature theory, Kant posits the Principle of Determining Reason in an attempt to rebuild the principle of sufficient reason. Kant mentions the deficiency of all other treatments of the principle, even Crusius' honorable idea that perhaps the principle is indemonstrable (Ak. 396). With his principle of determining reason Kant suggests that the world is antecedently determined and that we seek the reason "that makes determined things out of things that are indeterminate" (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 392). He makes the distinction between two kinds of causes, but only the first kind is actually a cause in the way that we traditionally think of causality, namely, as an efficient cause. He writes, "You can call the former reason also the reason why (*rationem cur*) or the reason for the being or coming-to-be [of something] (*rationem essendi vel fiendi*). You can call the latter the *reason that* (*rationem quod*) or the explanation of how we come to know the thing (*rationem cognoscendi*)" (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 392). So, the *reason why* is the antecedent determining cause of something, while the *reason that* is merely consequential. He goes on to establish Proposition V, which holds that nothing is true without an antecedently determining reason (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 393). However, the strength of this determinism should not be confused with the idea that the modality of the world is absolute necessity. For Kant, the only absolute necessity is what is uncaused, namely, God (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 394-5). On the other hand, what is contingent does have an antecedently determining reason or cause (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 396). This claim sets Kant up for his compatibilism. Since Kant explicitly criticizes the weight given to the distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity, we can safely assume that he does not intend for what is antecedently determined or contingent to be taken as hypothetically necessary (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 399).

The *Nova Dilucidatio* leaves us without a clear understanding of contingency (we wait for the final pre-critical work, the *Inaugural Dissertation*, to clear this up), and it leaves Kant with a substantial commitment to causal determinism. He writes, "The

events of this world are determined with such certainty that the divine foreknowledge, which is incapable of any error, perceives both their future occurrence and the impossibility of their opposite” (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 400). Kant’s belief that our actions are causally determined remains firm throughout his own development, but he will find a place for causal determinism within his theory of freedom by carefully thinking through modality. In 1770, Kant produced the *Inaugural Dissertation*, which evidently bears some seeds of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (these seeds include its treatments of space and time as well as its vague formulation of the pure concepts of the understanding) (Beck 1992, 113f.). Furthermore, he adds to these primitive formulations a treatment of possibility and necessity.

In the *Nova Dilucidatio* Kant explains that “the principle of contradiction which is expressed in the proposition: *It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time*, is actually nothing but a definition of the impossible” (Ak. 391). And now in the *Inaugural Dissertation* he writes, “To that primary principle the concept of time adheres, for given contradictorily opposed characters in the same thing at the same time, an impossibility becomes manifest, and is thus formulated: *whatever is and is not at the same time is impossible*” (*Inaugural Dissertation*, Ak. 416).^{vi} Basing the definition of impossibility on the principle of contradiction leads Kant to claim that “the human intellect can therefore make no judgment of impossibility in cases in which such a contradiction is not found” (*Inaugural Dissertation*, Ak. 416). However, this is unsatisfactory for Kant. He goes on to say that it is “illegitimate to assume any primary force is possible, unless it be given by experience; by no acuteness of intellect can its possibility be conceived a priori” (*Inaugural Dissertation*, Ak. 417).^{vii} Therefore, while impossibility can be defined in terms of the principle of contradiction, possibility cannot. Since possibility cannot be determined *a priori*, Kant says that we can establish whether the opposite of something is possible only by knowing that at one time the substance did not exist (*Inaugural Dissertation*, Ak. 417). Here we finally begin to see what is at stake in this analysis, namely, that the possibility of some substance’s opposite entails the contingency of that substance. In fact, Kant says, “It is truer that changes prove contingency than that contingency proves mutability, and accordingly, if nothing transient and perishable met us in the world, we could hardly have acquired any notion of contingency” (*Inaugural Dissertation*, Ak. 417).

So, if one should desire to know whether something, let’s say, substance A, is necessary or contingent, then one must determine if at any time substance A was not in existence. The result of this claim is that the only absolute necessary being will be a substance that has always existed and will always exist. Kant holds that only God, who is uncaused and eternal, is absolutely necessary (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 394-5). However, this conclusion about the necessity or contingency of substances leaves Kant with a difficult question concerning the necessity or contingency of human agency. Are human actions contingent or necessary? In one sense it would seem obvious that they are contingent because it is quite easy to note a time (before the action, before the birth of the agent, etc.) when the action did not exist. Yet, one could interpret Kant’s claim that in order to know something is contingent one must directly observe it not existing to mean that one should observe an alternate world parallel to this one up to the point of the action in question to see if the agent’s action is non-existent in that alternate world. If one were able to observe such an alternate world and the action in question were non-existent in it,

then one could conclude that the action is contingent. However, naturally we lack observational access to any such alternate world, and as a result, we will never be able to know for sure whether an agent could have refrained from some particular action. Thus, it is possible that human actions are necessary rather than contingent. Having already acknowledged God as a necessary substance, Kant will use that as a model for accepting the possibility that human actions are necessitated.

III. Benevolent Necessity: The Divine Model of Freedom

Michael J. Seidler says of Leibniz that his attempt to square reason and experience was noble yet inconsistent. He writes:

This is evident in Leibniz's account of human freedom, where the explanatory demands of reason and the reformist aims of moral agency create a tension that he never explicitly resolved. But it is a fruitful tension insofar as it reveals a broader problematic in moral philosophy that can also be detected in Leibniz's Stoic predecessors and in his inheritor, Kant (Seidler 1985, 34).

Like Leibniz, Kant grapples with the metaphysical questions raised by the idea of perfection. Leibniz put to use the ancient Stoic claim that this is the best of all possible worlds in order to offer a solution to the problems related to the existence of evil in the name of theodicy. Kant concludes with Leibniz that "there is a possible world, beyond which no better world can be thought" (*Optimism* 2:30).^{viii} He argues against the opponents of optimism who propose the false analogy of the self-contradictory concept of the greatest of all numbers, who say that "just as to the sum of units in a number further units can be added without ever producing the greatest number, so also to the sum of reality in a world further reality can be added without ever producing the greatest reality" (*Optimism* 2:32). Kant responds to this by pointing out the false analogy and noting that the greatest degree of reality is possible and is indeed found in God. Satisfied with his argument that "one world of the greatest excellence was the highest finite good, alone worthy of choice" by God (*Optimism* 2:33), Kant finds himself saddled with a deterministic view of the divine will (to match his deterministic view of the human will). For God's choice is always determined by knowledge of the good (since Kant takes God to be omniscient), just as human beings are ideally determined by the good (which demonstrates Kant's intellectualist moral psychology).

In the face of this determinism Kant refuses to posit a fictitious notion of freedom. He continues his argument that God chose this world because it seemed best and states that, since God is never mistaken, this world must actually be better than the alternative worlds. He writes:

Even if it had been possible for the Supreme Being to have been able to choose according to the fictitious notion of freedom which some have put into circulation, and to have preferred the worse to much that was better as a result of I know not what absolute whim, He would never have acted in that fashion. One may dream up for oneself something in the nature of a demi-god of fable, but the only handiwork

which is *proper* to the God of gods is that which is worthy of Him, and that is the handiwork which is the best of all that is possible (*Optimism* 2:34).^{ix}

The nature of the Supreme Being will by definition not include a preference of what is worse to what is better. As a result, it is absolutely certain that God would choose the best of all possible worlds. Kant implies that to say this optimific willing is certain but not necessary is a mock freedom. He says, “Furthermore, not being able to choose other than that which one distinctly and rightly cognizes as the best constitutes, perhaps, a constraint which limits the will, and a necessity which cancels freedom” (*Optimism* 2:34). Admitting that God cannot in any legitimate sense choose what is less than the best, Kant accepts the placement of a limit on the divine will. However, he is completely content with this constraint. He sees a worst case scenario of two avenues: “of which one was the lack of freedom and the other of the morally best” (*Reflection* 3704: Outline of Optimism). The lack of freedom guarantees the best of all possible worlds, while the provision of freedom endangers the choice of what is best. He says, “If I am positively to choose between two errors, then I prefer to praise the benevolent necessity (*gütige Notwendigkeit*), which is so favorable to us, and from which there can arise nothing but the best” (*Optimism* 2:34). This *gütige Notwendigkeit* corresponds to the general notion of moral agency that Kant called freedom in the *Nova Dilucidatio*. The *gütige Notwendigkeit* is the determination of the will in conformity with the representation of the good. Rejecting the ability to do otherwise as a criterion, Kant uses God’s necessitated freedom as the standard for freedom. He proposes that the more determined one is by the law of optimific striving, the more free one is.

Kant’s determinism is further revealed in Proposition IX of the *Nova Dilucidatio*, where he writes, “If whatever happens cannot happen unless it have a reason determining it antecedently, it follows that *whatever does not happen could not happen*, because clearly there is no reason for its occurrence, and without a reason it is quite impossible that it should happen” (Ak. 399). Recalling the portion of Leibniz’s theory of freedom that is freedom of choice, namely, that something’s contingency consists in the true possibility of its alternative, it may seem that Kant’s reformulation of contingency has resulted in the denial of freedom by some sort of Diodorean necessitarianism. Of course, this is not the case. He contends that free volition is what is determined in conformity with the representation of the good. For Kant, human beings do have inclinations or desires, but we are not necessarily determined by them. Instead he believes that inclinations provide possible reasons for a possible action, but these mere possibilities do not necessitate our behavior (which is precisely why an agent is to be held morally responsible for his/her action regardless of whether the action is moral, that is, autonomous, or not, that is, practical or immoral, both of which are heteronomous). What makes a certain desire a sufficient reason to act is that the desire is in line with one’s general rules for conduct. Kant writes, “In the very inclining of his wishes and desires, so far as he willingly yields to the inducement of his ideas, his actions are determined by a fixed law in a connection most certain and yet voluntary” (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 400). He is left to develop his compatibilism when he refuses to make the weak claim for the sake of freedom that only moral actions are exempt from the

constraints of reason. He rejects this strategy as unsuited for intelligent beings, and writes:

But that their own reasons determine their certitude is the characteristic mark of freedom, for they are elicited only through motives of the intellect applied to the will, while on the contrary in brute animals (i.e., in physico-mechanical actions) everything happens in necessary conformity with external solicitations and impulses without any spontaneous inclination of the will (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 400).

This passage epitomizes the spirit of autonomy in the pre-critical period, and it looks ahead to the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant makes the distinction between animal will (*arbitrium brutum*) and free will (*arbitrium liberum*).

IV. Positive and Negative Freedom in the Critical Period

A. Spontaneity and Transcendental Freedom

After establishing the need for the law of causality in the Second Analogy, Kant faces a new problem. Specifically, asserting the law of causality appears to saddle Kant with an infinite regress of antecedent causes. If every occurrence must have an antecedent cause, how can Kant account for freedom? As Allison points out, “if this were so, then there would be no cause or ground sufficient to determine the whole, that is, no adequate explanation of the totality of appearances. This, however, contradicts the principle of sufficient reason” (Allison 1983, 312). As a result of this contradiction, Kant posits another kind of causality, a causality through freedom. That is, he establishes a transcendental freedom which he defines as “the faculty of beginning a series of successive things or states from itself (*von selbst*)” (A448/B476; see also A533/B561). This transcendental freedom serves as the beginning for all series of causes and conditioned effects. In the conclusion of his remark concerning the thesis of the Third Antinomy Kant explains the reconciliation of transcendental freedom with the natural law of causality as follows: An ordinary case of voluntary action includes both a decision and an action. Both of these “do not lie within the succession of merely natural effects and are not a mere continuation of them” (A450/B478). Although the decision and deed involved in a voluntary action are “only the continuation of a previous series” “as far as time is concerned,” this voluntary action begins “an absolutely new series” because “the determining natural causes...entirely cease in regard to this event” (A450/B478). The point here is that voluntary action does *follow upon* the temporal series, but it does not *follow from* it (*die zwar auf jene folgt, aber darau nicht erfolgt*) (A451/B479).^x Kant has made room here for something to begin a series of appearances in regard to its causality even though it may be preceded in time by something else. Therefore, Kant is fully committed to the notion that an action is free insofar as it is not causally necessitated, even though it is determined insofar as it follows in the temporal sequence.

Comparing transcendental freedom to moral freedom, Kant writes:

We thus cognize practical freedom through experience, as *one of* the natural causes, namely a causality of reason in the determination of the will, whereas transcendental

freedom requires an independence of this reason itself (with regard to its causality for initiating a series of appearances) from all determining causes of the world of the senses, and to this extent *seems to be contrary* to the law of nature, thus to all possible experience and so remains a problem (A803/B831).^{xi}

This passage captures the problem at the heart of the transcendental idea of freedom. Kant points to a similarity between moral freedom and the laws of nature, namely, that they are both “natural causes” which can be experienced. As such both moral freedom and the laws of nature are different than transcendental freedom, which is beyond our ability to experience. The transcendental idea of freedom requires a complete separation between reason *qua* the causality for initiating a series of appearances and the series themselves, which in the sensible world are themselves determining causes. This independence, then, entails a causality that is different in kind from the causes (i.e., moral freedom and the laws of nature) that we can experience. I take this difference in kind to be what Kant is referring to when he wrote that transcendental freedom *seems to be* contrary to the law of nature. His immediate claim thereafter that transcendental freedom is contrary to all possible experience supports my interpretation of that otherwise problematic remark.

This passage is the one in which Kant comes closest to stating that transcendental freedom as a cause simply works differently than other kinds of causes. With the so-called natural causes (i.e., moral freedom and the laws of nature)^{xii} the cause of an effect is not entirely separated from the effect. With the laws of nature the cause of any given effect is in the phenomenal realm just as the effect itself is. For example, if an agent strikes a cue ball with a billiard stick that act is phenomenal as is the ensuing movement of the cue ball. Meanwhile, with moral freedom the cause of an effect is a noumenon (A541/B569), but the effect is phenomenal. For instance, the cause of my decision to offer a customer the correct change is in a different realm than the effect of that decision, namely, the act of giving correct change. Thus, my moral freedom is a noumenal cause that produces a phenomenal effect. This differs from the way that transcendental freedom operates as a cause. With transcendental freedom no phenomenal effect is produced, and therefore, this is neither a case of a noumenal cause producing a phenomenal effect (as with moral freedom) nor is it a case of a phenomenal cause producing a phenomenal effect (as with laws of nature). Therefore, how transcendental freedom works as a cause is something we cannot experience as a thing in itself. Thus, the positing of this kind of causality is problematic because it is something beyond our capacity to know. So, as Kant said, in the end we question the possibility of the freedom of the human will because it depends for its existence on transcendental freedom (A534/B562). Establishing that the difficulty plaguing the theory of transcendental freedom is not with transcendental freedom itself but rather with our inability to experience it directly, Kant has made room for the possibility of transcendental freedom. This possibility is all that Kant needs to pursue his inquiry into moral freedom, which is what he has been driving towards all the while. The issues concerning modality and transcendental freedom have largely been means leading us up to our final end, which is the moral freedom of the human will.

What relation does the possibility of transcendental freedom have to freedom as we customarily think of it, that is, moral freedom?^{xiii} Allison contends that transcendental freedom functions as the model for moral freedom, which “is commonly thought to involve an element of spontaneity, similar to the spontaneity affirmed in the thesis in connection with a first cause” (Allison 1983, 314). However, Kant gives us reason to reject this suggestion; for Kant, the benevolent necessity of divine freedom is the proper model for moral freedom, that is, autonomy.^{xiv} Naturally there is a sense in which God is transcendental freedom insofar as Kant conceives of God as a first cause, and if God is the model for moral freedom, then it is possible that Allison is right that “ordinary cases of voluntary action, such as my ‘free’ decision to rise from my chair, are to be conceived in just this way” (Allison 1983, 314). Yet, although moral freedom is similar to transcendental freedom in regard to its spontaneity, Kant is careful to point out that transcendental freedom constitutes part but not all of what we consider freedom to be (A448/B476). Moral freedom is positively construed as autonomy. As a result, any libertarian incompatibilist suggestion that transcendental freedom is the model for moral freedom cannot get off the ground. Let’s us turn then to looking closer at autonomy as the quintessential compatibilist conception of freedom.

B. Autonomy and Moral Freedom

Kant defines the moral conception of freedom in the Dialectic as “the independence of the power of choice from necessitation by impulses of sensibility” (A534/B562). He contrasts this moral freedom with a power of choice that is pathologically necessitated. He calls that power of choice an animal will (*arbitrium brutum*). Concerning this contrast he writes, “The human power of choice is indeed an *arbitrium sensitivum*, yet not *brutum* but *liberum*, because sensibility does not render its action necessary, but in the human being there is a faculty of determining oneself from oneself, independently of necessitation by sensible impulses” (A534/B562). The human will is pathologically affected but the crucial point here is that it is not pathologically necessitated. In the Canon of Pure Reason he makes this same distinction. He writes:

A faculty of choice, that is, is merely animal (*arbitrium brutum*) which cannot be determined other than through sensible impulses, i.e., pathologically. However, one which can be determined independently of sensory impulses, thus through motives that can only be represented by reason, is called free choice (*arbitrium liberum*), and everything that is connected with this, whether as or consequence, is called practical (A802/B830).

What we understand by our customary use of the term “freedom” is what Kant formulates as practical or moral freedom. Because the human being, *qua* rational, can overcome its *arbitrium brutum*, it is said to have an *arbitrium liberum*. On the other hand, the animal is determined not at all by the intellect but entirely by impulses. This conformity with natural impulse demonstrates the animal will’s lack of any spontaneous inclination of the will. Allison notes that this determination through sensible stimuli alone leaves no room for freedom. He notes Kant’s “example of a dog, which being hungry and in the presence of food is causally determined to eat. This is then contrasted with a person who,

possessing an *arbitrium liberum*, can resist the pull of inclination and act on the basis of general considerations (*per motiva*)” (Allison 1990, 68). Kant calls these considerations based on reason “considerations about that which in regard to our whole condition is desirable, i.e., good and useful” (A802/B830). Thus, the mark of a free will is consideration of what is good and beneficial for one’s entire condition. However, the distinction between human and animal wills demonstrates that the human will is still determined not by instinct but rather by reason. As a result, it is Kant’s intellectualism that leads him to develop the notion of autonomy from the *Nova Dilucidatio*’s idea of freedom as “what is determined in conformity with the representation of the good” (Ak. 402). Again this is further evidence that autonomy is nascent in the pre-critical period.

What is at stake in defining desire here is whether desire indicates something rational or something more “naturally” appetitive. I will call the former rational desire and the latter natural desire. For example, a will that desires to eat something simply because it tastes good is determined by natural desire; whereas a will that does what it truly likes is not determined by natural desire but determined by rational desire. A health conscious person eating what is good for him/herself is an example of someone acting in a manner determined by rational desire. Allison is correct to assume that Kant believes that a free will is undetermined by natural desire. However, returning to Titius’ remark that “to act freely is to act *in accordance with one’s desire* and indeed in conformity with consciousness” (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 403) leads one to conclude that an autonomous agent is determined but free because s/he is determined by something other than natural desire.^{xv} Allison’s libertarian reading precludes his acceptance of Kant’s position that a free will is indeed determined by rational desire. The intuition that autonomy is not freedom because the actions of an autonomous agent are determined fails to account for what sort of thing determines the actions of the agent. In the case of autonomy it is rational desire (which Kant’s moral psychology maintains is universal) that determines the agent, and rational desire is the most appealing determinant. Titius’ remark that freedom is acting in accord with desire and consciousness implicitly relies upon the concept of rational (rather than natural) desire. Having unearthed this meaning, we can see the imprecision inherent in Allison’s claim that autonomy is the will’s ability to determine itself free from its desire.

Perhaps one would be attracted to such an understanding of autonomy because in the Second *Critique* Kant explains that if freedom were nothing other than the Leibnizian conception “it would be no better than the freedom of a turnspit, which when once wound up also carries out its motion of itself” (Ak. 97). At that time he stresses the significance of transcendental or absolute freedom. This designation follows the delineation made in the Third Antinomy. Moreover, it reflects the quotation from Caius and Titius’ dialogue where Kant wrote that spontaneous actions arise from internal principles. However, what Kant intends by “internal principle” needs clarification. Caius suspects that a principle is internal so long as two criteria are met: first, one must have a choice between at least two options, and secondly, that one is indifferent toward each option. Such a view of freedom, modeled upon Leibnizian compatibilism, entails that one course has some alternative that is a real possibility, and this is what Kant finds insufficient. As Wood writes, “Kant, however, flatly refuses to define freedom in terms of indifference. Freedom is the power to choose according to legislative reason” (Wood 1984, 80).

Instead of resting content with only this negative construal of freedom, Kant suggests that freedom is precisely what is determined, namely, determined by reason.

A free will is determined alone by what one concludes is the good, that is, by rational desire. He explicitly states that antecedently determining reason in no way undermines freedom. Thus, in the *Nova Dilucidatio* Kant makes room for positive freedom (half of what he will later call “practical” or moral freedom) within his metaphysical picture that is grounded by the Principle of Determining Ground and all the strength of Proposition V. In fact, the more internally determined one is by this striving after one’s understanding of the good, then the freer one is. Being determined by the causality of nature is irrelevant so long as one strives optimifically. Freedom is the ability to be determined in some way independently of the laws of nature, while being determined by one’s own reason. Allison’s claim that freedom is the capacity to be determined independently from the causality of nature leaves this distinction between heteronomy and autonomy untouched. This is disappointing since the main point of Kant’s moral philosophy is to examine moral rather than merely practical judgments. Hence, he concludes that “a free will and a will subject to moral laws are one and the same” (*Groundwork*, Ak. 447). It is on this meaning assigned to autonomy that I base my claim that the spirit of autonomy is present in the *Nova Dilucidatio*. There is a definite likeness between his early idea that freedom is “what is determined in conformity with the representation of the good” (*Nova Dilucidatio*, Ak. 402) and the formulation of freedom here as self-rule according to the categorical imperative. Both involve the will being determined not by natural desire but by rational desiderata.

VI. Conclusion: Kant’s Unique Compatibilism

Because of his critique of Leibnizian compatibilism, which he thinks does not go far enough toward reconciling nature and freedom, Kant is often mistaken for a libertarian incompatibilist. Here I have marshaled evidence from Kant’s pre-critical works to augment the defense others have offered for reading Kant as a compatibilist. For Kant is a compatibilist not just in one manner but in two; his is a unique compatibilism, consisting of two distinct notions of freedom, transcendental freedom and moral freedom.

The compatibility of the latter with determinism is what I call moral compatibilism. It is based on Kant’s belief that the intellectualist determination of the will is compatible with a genuine freedom of willing. At the heart of moral compatibilism is Kant’s understanding of autonomy, which is modeled upon benevolently necessitated divine freedom. Although the lexicon is not systematic throughout the corpus, I have argued here, *pace* Allison, that the autonomy does exist pre-critically. My analysis of the *Nova Dilucidatio* has shown that the positive conception of moral agency depicted there is autonomy as it is known in the *Groundwork* and second *Critique*. Careful reading of his moral philosophy shows that Kant has the deepest of commitments to the idea that morality consists of autonomy. Autonomy *qua* the determination of the will in conformity with the representation of the good is at once determinism and freedom. Hence, this is one of Kant’s compatibilisms.

Since spontaneity is explicit in the pre-critical period, there is no controversy concerning the first appearance of spontaneity in the corpus. Instead what is notable about spontaneity’s compatibility with determinism is the way in which it reveals (and is

revealed by) transcendental idealism. Transcendental freedom is described in the Third Antinomy as the power to be the absolute first cause of a series, but this spontaneous cause itself has a beginning, namely, the “state of the not yet acting cause” (A446/B474). If the alleged first cause is to be a first, then it “presupposes a state which has no causal connection with the preceding state of the cause” (A446/B474). However, according to Kant, we demand a law of causality in order to render our experience possible (A446/B474-A447/B475). Therefore, first causality “abrogates those rules through which alone a completely coherent experience is possible” (A447/B475). Thus, in positing two realms, one noumenal and one phenomenal, Kant reconciles spontaneity with causal determinism. This cosmological compatibilism is the second of Kant’s compatibilisms. Concerted attention to Kant’s pre-critical theory of freedom has enabled us to understand fully this unique twofold compatibilism.^{xvi}

ⁱ Trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood.

ⁱⁱ Some scholars disagree, asserting that Kant is a libertarian incompatibilist. E.g., Allison (1990) and Kemp Smith (1992).

ⁱⁱⁱ See Wood (1984) and Hudson (1991). One exception is Hudson (1994).

^{iv} See, e.g., Allison (1996).

^v Trans. John A. Reuscher.

^{vi} Trans. John Handyside, rev. Lewis White Beck.

^{vii} Compare this with the claim in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the Categories of Modality are pure concepts applied *a priori* to objects (A79/B105).

^{viii} Trans. and ed. David Walford.

^{ix} Emphasis added.

^x Emphasis added.

^{xi} Emphasis added.

^{xii} These are related insofar as Kant calls them both “natural causes” at A803/B831.

^{xiii} For the most part this paper uses the term “moral” rather than “practical” to describe Kant’s second notion of freedom, so as to avoid confusion with “practical judgments” which Kant contrasts with moral judgments.

^{xiv} This notion of the freedom of the human will being modeled upon the freedom of the first cause of the universe is quite traditional. It can be found in the work of such thinkers as the Stoics and Saint Thomas Aquinas.

^{xv} Emphasis added.

^{xvi} Many thanks to Rudy Makkreel, Christel Fricke, and Don Rutherford for reading earlier drafts of this paper.

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