ANDREA VESTRUCCI

Theology as Freedom

Dogmatik in der Moderne

Mohr Siebeck

Dogmatik in der Moderne

Edited by

Christian Danz, Jörg Dierken, Hans-Peter Großhans,
and Friederike Nüssel

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Theology as Freedom

On Martin Luther's "De servo arbitrio"

Mohr Siebeck

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ISBN 978-3-16-156975-3 / eISBN 978-3-16-156976-0
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-156976-0

ISSN 1869-39621 / eISSN 2569-3913 (Dogmatik in der Moderne)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at *http://dnb.dnb.de*.

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The book was printed on non-aging paper by Laupp & Göbel in Gomaringen and bound by Buchbinderei Nädele in Nehren.

Printed in Germany.

Preface

The topic of this book has deep roots in my life. I am not sure whether time is an indicator of the right to speak about a topic,[1] but certainly it is the evidence of an abiding and consummate passion.

This passion began when, as high school student, I first came into contact with the *querelle* between Erasmus and Luther, and with the problem of relating human freedom to divine freedom. Many years later, this interest flourished in my second doctoral dissertation in systematic theology, defended last year at the University of Geneva. Finally, this same passion has come to full fruition in this book, a complete rewriting of that dissertation.

My positions and ideas benefited considerably from criticism and advice from Hans-Christoph Askani, both during and after the dissertation. I matured in ways I could only hope for, thanks to the attentive freedom he granted me. My scientific debt to him is incalculable.

It is a true pleasure for me to express my profound gratitude to the Academic Society of Geneva, and in particular to its President, Patrizia Lombardo.

I am also particularly grateful to Günter Bader, Patrice Canivez and Ghislain Waterlot for their essential observations and comments during the defense.

This book benefited from numerous scientific exchanges and collaborations during the last five years. Forgetting too many, I would like to thank Andrew Benjamin, Davide Bigalli, Christophe Chalamet, Frédéric Chavel, Andreas Dettwiler, Michel Grandjean, Van Harvey, Ágnes Heller, Peter Murphy, Manfredo de Oliveira, Renato Pettoello, Anselm Ramelow, David Roberts, Mahendra Roopa, and Jonathan Sheehan. I am the only addressee for any criticism.

I would like to express my gratitude to Mohr Siebeck, and in particular to Katharina Gutekunst, for their patient and professional assistance.

Alessio Pirastu has helped and supported me far more than I deserve.

In memoriam Joana Borges Mesquita, Yves Clerget, and Angela Cortelezzi.

Palo Alto, California, August 2018 Andrea Vestrucci

[1] See Mann, "Joseph Novels": 9. Discussing his *Joseph-Roman*, Thomas Mann states that his interest in Egyptian mythology began in elementary school.

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Note on Citations

In this book, modern sources are always referenced by their abbreviated titles. The following cases might call for a more detailed explaination.

For the works by Martin Luther, I indicate only the volume of the Weimarer Ausgabe (WA) followed by the page and line numbers. If more than one work appears in the same volume, I differentiate each work with a letter after the number of the volume, according to the order of appearance of each work in the volume. For instance, Luther's *erste Bearbeitung* of the *sieben Bußpsalmen* is indicated as WA 1a, the *Disputatio Heidelbergae habita* is indicated as WA 1b, and the *Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute* is indicated as WA 1c. The bibliography at the end of the book displays each of Luther's referenced works along with its respective WA volume.

Desiderius Erasmus's *De libero arbitrio διατριβή sive collatio* is abbreviated as *Diatribē*.

Finally, I refer to the three *Critiques* by Immanuel Kant as *KrV*, *KpV*, and *KU*, respectively.

Introduction

Theology *is* freedom.

This bold statement results from analyzing one of the most important and controversial works of Christian theology: Martin Luther's *De servo arbitrio*. In this book, I argue that *De servo arbitrio* manifests, and evidences, the very freedom distinctive of theological discourse.

Of what does this freedom of theology or *as* theology consist? And how is this relationship between freedom and *De servo arbitrio* possible?

Let us begin again.

1. A First Look

Freedom is one of theology's subjects. Theology speaks about divine freedom, human freedom, and their interrelation. Theological anthropology, moral theology, soteriology, theodicy – all of these are examples of theological discourses dealing with the issue of freedom.

Theology might speak about freedom in ways that are unconventional or unexpected, or even in ways that are seemingly absurd. This is how Erasmus of Rotterdam, in his *De libero arbitrio διατριβή sive collatio* (1524), judges the position that Martin Luther defends in his *Assertio* (1520): Luther's negation of the theological relevance of *liberum arbitrium*[1] is absurd.

Luther's reply, *De servo arbitrio* (1525), does not retract this "absurd" position. Rather, Luther's work engages the legitimacy of Erasmus's charge of absurdity.

My reflection focuses on the fact that a judgment of absurdity is rejected. Rejecting a judgment of absurdity means stating that the principles or conditions of the distinction between absurdity and meaningfulness are inadequate. Where these conditions should see meaning, they see only absurdity. Thus, *De servo arbitrio* questions the validity of the conditions for the formulation of

[1] In this book I leave this term in its Latin version. Translating it (for instance, as "free will," or "free choice"; see also *infra*, Ch. 1 note 11) would mean losing the immediate and intuitive semantic connection to its conceptual twin, the "*servum arbitrium*" (usually translated as "bondage of the will"). As I will clarify shortly, this connection between the two concepts is of fundamental importance.

meaningful propositions about freedom. When they are applied to theology, these conditions are *limited*.

As we will see, this questioning of the conditions' validity pertains *only* to theology. For this reason, theology *itself* is freedom. Theology challenges what is deemed to be unquestionable, being assumed as the ground or foundation of every possible questioning. In sum, theology is the freedom *of language* to reconsider language's logical *forms*.[2] *De servo arbitrio* applies this situation – this formal freedom – to propositions about freedom.

This is my point: *De servo arbitrio* does not merely present a concept of freedom opposed to the one defended by Erasmus. Rather, Luther's work operates upon the forms of meaningful conceptualizations of freedom[3] – forms that Erasmus assumes (and defends) as axiomatically valid. *De servo arbitrio* is a very particular *meta*-discourse: usually, a meta-discourse presents the methodological foundations of a set of propositions (such as the set of propositions on freedom); instead of doing this, Luther's work presents the theological *limitation* of such foundations. In this way, *De servo arbitrio* helps to demarcate the specific place of theology among the other expressions of human intelligence.

[2] To understand my use of the term "form," consider the following definition: "*Materie* ist das datum, was gegeben ist […]. Die *Form* aber, wie diese data gesetzt sind, die Art, wie das Mannigfaltige in Verbindung steht" (Kant, *Vorlesungen*: Ak XXVIII 575). I assume this or that word (for instance, "*liberum*" and "*arbitrium*" or, in general, "freedom" and "*x*") to be the "matter," and the logical rules connecting words in a meaningful way (in our case, in the concept "*liberum arbitrium*", or "freedom = *x*") to be the "form." Therefore, a form is the condition of the meaning of a concept. I will shortly outline three formal languages (or logics) of freedom the validity of which *De servo arbitrio* questions.

[3] By "operating upon" the forms or logics of conceptualization I mean handling, reshaping, reworking, modifying these forms. *De servo arbitrio* reshapes (or modifies) the forms of conceptualization of freedom. This modification is intrinsic to the questioning of these forms' validity. To question the validity of a form means that the form is object of investigation. This investigation happens on a level that includes the form: this level is called "meta"; for instance, a language can be object of a *meta*language, or a logic can be object of a *meta*logical investigation. Given that the form is object of such "meta" investigation, this form is no longer the *condition* of both the investigation and the meaning resulting from this investigation. More precisely, the form under investigation is no longer the ultimate foundation of this meaning: it is *object* of (re)foundation. From this it follows that to question the validity of a form corresponds to change its logical status, thus, to modify this form – to *operate* upon it. As I will analyze in the book, this operation upon the forms assumes a peculiar shape in theology (at least in the theology of *De servo arbitrio*): it corresponds to the use of a form in a way that expresses this form's limitation; in particular see *infra*, Ch. 2 sections 6 and 9.

2. Absurdity and Paradox

My analysis begins with a trivial observation: *De servo arbitrio* responds to Erasmus's *Diatribē*. This means that *De servo arbitrio* does not merely repeat that *liberum arbitrium* does not exist: this was already done by Luther five years earlier, and it was already rejected by Erasmus as absurd. Therefore, Luther's work does not simply present a way of thinking about freedom that is opposed to the way that Erasmus defends (*liberum arbitrium*); rather, it must now respond to Erasmus's accusation of absurdity.

Luther's response cannot simply present a counter-criticism of absurdity against Erasmus, because thinking in terms of *liberum arbitrium* indeed makes sense. Were this not so, then no charge of absurdity could have been formulated against Luther's negation of *liberum arbitrium*.

Thus, the reply that *De servo arbitrio* presents to Erasmus's criticism is more refined. It argues that thinking in terms of *liberum arbitrium* makes sense *except* in case we aim to consider freedom theologically; it applies to all discourses except theological discourse.

This distinctiveness of theology concerns the fact that theology is the language that deals with divine revelation. As I will analyze, *De servo arbitrio* Luther warns against formulating a theological proposition on the basis of a condition assumed as axiomatically valid means subordinating divine revelation under this condition, thus lowering revelation to human discourse. It follows that a coherent theology questions the axiomatic validity of all conditions.

Thus, for Luther, Erasmus's position is not absurd, but theologically wrong, because it measures divine revelation with conditions of meaning assumed as unquestionably valid – such as the formal language (or logic) founding the meaning of *liberum arbitrium*.[4]

This validity questioning is different from invalidating a single condition and replacing it with another one, usually one considered more fitting or more effective than the previous one. Rather, the validity of every condition is at stake here. In other words, *De servo arbitrio* focuses not on *which* form of conceptualizing freedom shall be used, but on *how* this form must be used, how a form is assumed coherently with the theological presuppositions.

Given that this applies to all conditions, theological propositions on freedom are based on the same "old" conditions, *but* assumed in the theological way: as

[4] *De servo arbitrio* can be considered an occasional polemic writing (see Schwarzwäller, *Theologia crucis*: 39–40; Kolb, *Bound Choice*: 16–17), as many other treatises by Luther (see Tranvik, "Works": 603). Yet the relevance (and complexity) of *De servo arbitrio* concerns its systematic contribution (see Herms, "Gewißheit": 50). As I will analyze, this contribution is the introduction of a disruptive *quaestio juris* in theology. In other words, *De servo arbitrio* attacks indeed Erasmus's position; however, what matters is to understand the *scope* of this attack. The theological fallacy that *De servo arbitrio* criticizes does not refer to the concepts (of freedom), but to the validity of these concepts' conditions.

non-axiomatically valid. Consequently, these theological propositions are operations upon their *own* conditions. In sum, *De servo arbitrio* presents modifications of the conditions of meaningfulness from *within* these conditions.

This is evident from the title of Luther's work. The concept of *servum arbitrium* is built on the concept of *liberum arbitrium*. In *servum arbitrium*, the noun "*arbitrium*" is qualified by the opposite of the adjective "*liberum*." The result is an oxymoron, a sort of mockery of *liberum arbitrium*. Thus, *servum arbitrium* is not simply a concept of freedom opposed to the concept of *liberum arbitrium*, because the formulation of *servum arbitrium* is based on the conditions of formulation of *liberum arbitrium*.[5] Thus, it is not that there are two different conditions for the two concepts; rather, the same condition is assumed in two opposing ways: as axiomatically valid (concept of *liberum arbitrium*) and as object of operation (concept of *servum arbitrium*).

This is a situation of self-reference: a condition of meaning is used to formulate its own theological limitation. Therefore, Luther "solves" the problem of how to deal theologically with the foundations of thinking by *creating* this very problem. Thinking theologically means questioning the foundations of this thinking; it means forcing the forms of this thinking to modify themselves. The outcome can only be a *paradox* – but, as I will clarify, a peculiar paradox, a paradox that is theological, and not simply logical.

This book analyzes the paradoxical modifications of the forms of conceptualizing freedom in *De servo arbitrio*. By doing so, it confirms that *De servo arbitrio* indeed posits more than the "absurdity" of the *Assertio*. Luther's work maps out what happens to the logics that found a non-absurd proposition (and the corresponding charge of absurdity) when they are subjected to the theological "center of gravity": divine revelation. *De servo arbitrio* expresses the *freedom* of these logics to question their own postulates.

3. From a Conceptual to a Formal Approach

It follows that the distinction between Erasmus's position and Luther's position is much more complex than simple opposition of two concepts of freedom.

The two theologians do not understand each other and their collision is left unresolved because their positions do not lie on the same level. Erasmus's position lies on the conceptual level and concerns the conceptualization of freedom, while Luther's position lies on the formal level and relates to the conditions of the conceptualization of freedom. Erasmus overlooks the *quaestio juris*; he does not address the method of conceptualizing freedom. Luther's reply,

[5] This is also proven empirically. Thinking about *servum arbitrium* invariably leads to thinking about *liberum arbitrium*. But not vice-versa: we can (and do) think about *liberum arbitrium* independently from any reference to *servum arbitrium*.

on the other hand, poses and tries to answer the *quaestio juris*. The object of Luther's discourse is the *method* upon which Erasmus's position is based.[6] Consequently, it also includes the methodology of Luther's own previous position in his *Assertio*.

Thus, Luther's position lies on the *meta* level. This is why the concept of *servum arbitrium* implies the concept of *liberum arbitrium*, but not vice-versa: the concept of *servum arbitrium* is a *meta*-concept of freedom.

I would say that Luther's position includes both similarities to and departures from Cassirer's description of Goethe's scientific approach. In Cassirer's words, Goethe "hat das Problem in ein Postulat verwandelt."[7] Luther operates in the opposite way: he turns the postulate into a problem. He dares to transform what is considered unquestionable into an issue to be investigated, and thus modified, transformed from within, and turned into a paradox. This is not for intellectual *divertissement*, but because the very grasp of the relationship between human and God depends foremost on that formal questioning.

The approach discussed herein is not only based on the passage from the conceptual to the meta-conceptual; more importantly, my approach states that precisely this passage is the main contribution of Luther's *De servo arbitrio*. *De servo arbitrio* does not articulate the negation of freedom; it articulates the negation of the theological legitimacy of prioritizing the logical conditions of thinking freedom over divine revelation. Nor does *De servo arbitrio* provide for the destruction of such forms. On the contrary, it establishes a specific approach to them: a *theological* one.

As such, *De servo arbitrio* does not present a method of doing theology: it presents *theology as method*. It affirms and expresses theology's task of reconsidering the validity of the formal languages that found and validate concepts and discourses (on freedom). *De servo arbitrio* is the expression of theology *as* freedom – freedom to effect such paradoxical inversion between postulate and problem.

Hence, this book is not concerned with a prescriptive discourse about how theology should think (about freedom). Rather, I am interested in the *fact* that

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[6] Luther never wrote a proper reply to Erasmus's further response, the two books of *Hyperaspistes*. The "official" reason was bad health conditions; see Kolb, *Bound Choice*: 14. I wonder whether another reason could also be the fact that Erasmus's *Hyperaspistes* I and II are founded upon the same methodology that Luther had already invalidated in *De servo arbitrio*; see *infra*, Ch. 1 section 2, in particular note 18. Luther did reply to Erasmus in a letter, which has not survived; see Kolb, *Bound Choice*: 14; see also Massing, *Fatal Discord*: 682–683. Rosin, *Reformers*: 97–102, claims that Luther's *Annotationes in Ecclesiasten* (WA 20) contain a reply to Erasmus. I add to that Luther's commentary on the Letter to the Galatians (WA 40.1); see *infra*, Ch. 2 section 3.

[7] Cassirer, *Freiheit*: 326. Cassirer continues: "Für ihn gilt es in der Erkenntnis der Welt wie in der des eigenen Ich, daß wir sie durch Betrachtung niemals, wohl aber durch Handeln erlangen können."

there is a theological position (Luther's) which poses a problem for the conditions according to which freedom makes sense. In light of this fact, I ask *why* there is a problem, and *how* this problem relates to these conditions. In sum, my aim is to understand how a paradoxical operation upon the formal languages of freedom can be carried out. This aim can only be accomplished by analyzing the relationship between the respective outlooks of Erasmus and Luther towards the validity of the conditions of meaningfulness.

Nor I am interested in establishing who is right between Luther and Erasmus. It is irrelevant to ask whether Luther is right or wrong, because the principles that Luther reshapes are methodological, therefore they are also principles of distinction between right and wrong. Therefore, the answer to the question "Who is right?" is simply a matter of arbitrary perspective *on* the principles. More precisely, asking that question would imply that it is possible for both Erasmus and Luther to satisfy the same criterion (one negatively and the other positively), but this is impossible in light of the gap between the levels of these two positions. Thus, I am interested in analyzing how these two levels are interconnected, and how the level "meta" is theologically relevant; how another way of dealing with the meaningful conceptualization of freedom is logically *possible*, and why this other way is theologically *necessary*.

The time has come to take up the same challenges engaged by Luther's *De servo arbitrio*: to access new regions of theological speculation and new understandings of the rapport between human and God by daring to challenge the validity of our logics of freedom.

4. Three Languages of Freedom

What are these formal conditions of meaningful propositions about freedom, the methodological principles that Erasmus takes for granted, and whose unquestionability Luther rejects?

Erasmus's argument postulates the validity of thinking in terms of *liberum arbitrium*. He reinforces this position with two *argumenta ad absurdum*: if this validity is negated, then the relevance of the norms and commandments is negated (first argument), along with the idea of human self-education (second argument). So, we have a threefold argument.

I demonstrate in this book that each part of Erasmus's argument is based on a specific formal language of freedom, a specific logic of conceptualizing freedom in a meaningful, non-absurd way. The method of Erasmus's argument is to assume one of these three logics positively, and the other two negatively (as principles of the two *argumenta ad absurdum*).

The logic of conceptualizing freedom that Erasmus positively assumes is the *modal* language of freedom. The other two logics are the *deontic* language of freedom and the *typological* language of freedom. It is upon *each* of them that

De servo arbitrio operates. These formal languages are the protagonists of the three parts of this book, one for each part, respectively.

1. *Modal Language of Freedom*. According to this language, freedom has meaning as the unconstrained actual or potential realization of a possibility; or, negatively, it is the lack of impediments for realizing a possibility. The language is *modal* because it is built upon the modal operators of possibility and necessity by way of associating freedom with possibility, so that freedom is negatively related to necessity. Necessity can be understood as physical or normative constraint. In the first case, freedom coincides with the lack of impediments to a specific motion.[8] Thanks to this language, the conditions of prison and slavery are negative: both constitute deprivations of one's freedom; and running, flying, et cetera are used as metaphors of freedom. In the second case, freedom coincides with the lack of coercion towards a specific action. All political and social freedoms are based on this.[9] On the other hand, the operator of possibility introduces the concept of "choice." Choice implies the contemporary availability of a plurality of possibilities, all potentially realizable.[10] Therefore, the modal language of freedom is the condition for conceptualizing freedom as the determination of a single *reality* out of a whole system (or world) of possibilities. In other words, this language negates determinism.

2. Deontic Language of Freedom. According to this language, freedom has meaning as the realization of a norm. The language is deontic because it uses the deontic operators of obligation (deontic necessity) and permission (deontic possibility). In the deontic case, and contrary to the modal case, freedom coincides with being determined normatively. Freedom is the fact that a norm is the principle of determination of the will. Thus, the "choice" of *not* being normatively determined (that is, infringing the law) deontically corresponds to a lack of freedom.[11] However, instead of opposing modal and deontic languages, it is more correct to consider them in relationship to one another: deontic language

[8] This also includes the mechanistic conception of freedom, such as in Hobbes, *De Cive*: I–III; VIII, 2–9; IX, 9.

[9] For instance, the famous "four freedoms," freedom of speech (or of expression), freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, have meaning according to the modal language of freedom. Also, all political struggles for the equality of minorities are claimed to be fights for the freedom of such minority by the application of this language (freedom of vote, of education, of marriage, et cetera). The same is true of movements of independence, secessionism, or autonomy when they are understood as movements for freedom (or, rather, for the freedom of the party or cluster demanding its autonomy).

[10] This does not mean that all possibilities share the same degree of attainability: it may be that one possibility can be realized more easily than another; yet, all possibilities are, to some extent, within reach, so that all of them can become reality. Thus, modal "freedom" means choosing between two or more physical options, or between the accomplishment and the infringement of a norm.

[11] Unless the infringement is carried out for the sake of another norm perceived as higher than the one broken.

operates according to the model of modal language. A norm expresses a *non-modal necessity*, because according to the norm there is only one option that can be realized: what the norm prescribes. Yet, modally speaking, this "one option" is still a possibility, since its opposite (the infringement of the norm) is also possible. Therefore, the deontic language of freedom is the condition for conceptualizing freedom as "second nature," as formulation and realization of a system of laws (deontic necessity) distinct and parallel to the system of *natural* laws (modal necessity): the normative system of laws.[12]

[12] I think the highest expression of this second formal language of freedom is Kant's effort (in his second *Critique*) to approach the issue of freedom not in light of the existence of the good person (as he does in his *Grundlegung*: BA 1–2, Ak IV 394), but instead in light of the *fact* that there are principles of determination of the will (see *Id*., *KpV*: A 35, Ak V 19) – that is, in light of the *Faktum* of practical reason, the fact that there is another way of thinking *other* than the theoretical one (the normative way, or deontic language). This is a paradigmatic shift: instead of deducing the norm from the good, thinking the good from the norm (see *ivi*: A 110–111, Ak V 62–63). Freedom is the condition according to which this "second" use of reason exists, and it is known and understood as the determination of the will's necessity (as *causa noumenon*; see *ivi*: A 97, Ak V 55; see *infra*, Ch. 8 section 3). More precisely, freedom is the autonomy of practical reason in its transcendental activity, as *pure* practical reason, defined by the fundamental law of pure practical reason (or "categorical imperative"; see *ivi*: A 54, Ak V 30–31). For this reason, freedom is "transcendental" (see *Id*., *KrV*: A 803 B 831, Ak III 521–522; *KpV*: A 173, Ak V 96–97): it is the *ratio existendi* of the principles of this *noumenal* causality (that is, of norms as the sole principles of determination of the will). As such, transcendental freedom is completely "other" from nature and the system of phenomenal necessity (while *practical* freedom, the *empirical* assumption of a norm, is still a natural thing; see Schönecker, *Kants Begriff*: 85–92, in particular 86; again, see *infra*, Ch. 8 section 3). Additionally, Hegel's conception of right is based on the distinction between a legality of nature and a legality of freedom: right is, at the same time, the *logical* way according to which the will thinks about freedom (which is, in turn, the will thinking the will's *own* freedom in prescriptive terms, that is, the will *wanting* to be free will: see Hegel, *Grundlinien*: § 27, 34), and the *reality* of this thinking, the manifestation of this free self-reflection of the will upon itself (see *ivi*: § 29, 34). So, the system of right is at the same time the *condicio sine qua non* of the *reality* of freedom, and the *condicio sine qua non* of the *conceptual* expression of freedom. Right is a "second nature" (see *ivi*: § 4, 14), the "law of nature" of the freedom of the will (see Riedel, *Studien*: 63), a form of legality determined by a *negative* reference to the natural legality (see Becchi, *Hegel*: 205–207). Hence, freedom is *real* as right, that is, as a will that determines itself independently of natural determination (see Hegel, *Encyclopädie*: 415). I will also mention the concept of freedom as the *evolution* of the right towards its fulfilment: in this sense, freedom is the Constitution, the norm that founds and validates all constituted norms. Freedom is *legislation on the legislation*. This is Rousseau's conception of freedom as *volonté générale* (see Rousseau, *Du contrat social*: IV, 2), a form of "second nature" which, contrary to this or that specific system of right, is universal, not formally (as a form of thinking), but normatively, as *meta-norm* (see *ivi*: I, 7, the famous "on le forcera d'être libre"). Another step in this direction is the coincidence between the meta-normative *criteria* of validation and the meta-normative *operation* of validation: this is what Habermas proposes in his *Diskursethik* (see Habermas, *Faktizität*: 203–206). On the issue of the meta-norm, see *infra*, Ch. 6 section 5.

3. Typological Language of Freedom. According to this language, freedom has meaning as biconditional relationship between particularity and universality, between life and concept (of this life). This is the relationship: a life manifests and formulates its own concept, the law to which it belongs; and vice-versa a concept, a law, can be understood only in this living incarnation. This biconditional connection is called "type."[13] The *aesthetic* nature of this language is evident: freedom is the power of self-creation, creation of something that is the universal law of itself, as in the case of aesthetic legality.[14] So, the typological language of freedom is the condition for conceptualizing freedom as mutual conditionality of life and law, personality and destiny, existence and meaning. Freedom is being, and simultaneously stating to be, a *modus loquendi et vivendi*. I identify and discuss three sub-forms of this language: 1. Freedom as aesthetic self-education, or as the correlation between a life informed by a virtue and a virtue understandable only through its living expressions[15]; 2. Freedom as self-election, as in the existential choice (a contingent determination is chosen as the meaning of an existence),[16] or in the

[13] I refer here mainly to Kant, *KpV*: A 119–127, Ak V 67–71, and *KU*: § 59, Ak V 351–354. The "type" is the symbol that builds an analogical relationship (a proportion) between two entirely different things in light of the identity of their forms (on analogy, see Kant, *Prolegomena*: § 58, Ak IV 357–360; *Id*., *KrV*: A 179–180 B 222–223, Ak III 160–161, Ak IV 122–123). See also Lukács and his theory of the typical (*The Historical Novel*); the influence that Neo-Kantianism (in particular Emil Lask) had on Lukács's early conception of aesthetics should not be neglected. See *Id*., *Heidelberger*; see also Feenberg, "Reification": 175–177. See *infra*, Ch. 9 section 2.

[14] I follow here Cohen's conception of aesthetic legality: see Cohen, *Ästhetik*: 74–78. For an analysis of aesthetic legality, please see Vestrucci, "Music": 47–48.

[15] I refer here principally to Schiller's concepts of "Anmut" and "Würde," based on an aesthetic relationship between moral law and the will: see Schiller, *Anmut*: in particular 282–287; for a more exhaustive analysis of this issue, and its confrontation with Kantian ethics, please refer to Vestrucci, "A unidade."

[16] There is a thread that runs from Kierkegaard to contemporary positions, such as that of Ágnes Heller. Freedom is life endowed with meaning. This is based on choosing not between many options, as in the modal case, but a single option: the unchosen determinations of one's life – such as one's physical and psychological treats, or the contingencies of life. What could not be an object of a choice is now this object of choice, what was received is now transformed into a realization – into self-realization. Some examples: the election of a person as one's spouse, as the other half of one's life (a commitment, a meaning, that the Seducer will never be able to understand) (see Kierkegaard, "Diary"); the capacity of making binding choices as evidence of a fulfilled personality in equilibrium between its aesthetic specificity and its universal ethical dimension (see *Id*., "Equilibrium": in particular 482–483); the capacity to make promises and keep the given word, thus giving authenticity to one's life (see Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie*); the choice of oneself as good person, as this specific, *aesthetic*, aspect of goodness (see Heller, *Morals*: chapter 1), or as a unique person, as work of art (see Heller, *An Ethics*: part two). These themes will be taken back in *infra*, Ch. 10 sections 5–7.

retrospective self-destination[17]; and 3. Freedom as archetype, as repetition of fixed mythological-psychological-literary patterns.[18]

These three formal languages are logics of freedom because they set the rules for the predication of different classes of concepts of freedom: modal, deontic, and typological. In fact, the first two languages refer to specific branches of logic. As such, there are theorems for each language: for the modal conceptualization of freedom, necessity and freedom exclude each other; for the deontic conceptualization of freedom, a norm implies its realizability; and for the typological conceptualization of freedom, the formulation of meaning and the object of meaning are co-conditioned.

These are the logics, and the theorems, that *De servo arbitrio* questions and reshapes.[19]

5. Criticisms and Clarifications

My approach may provoke some criticisms. I will try to respond to them.

First, the criticism of anachronism. While outlining the three formal languages of freedom, I referred to authors that lived and wrote much later than Erasmus and Luther. It might be argued that it is absurd to establish a connection from these authors to Erasmus and Luther. This criticism disregards that these languages are *formal*; they are the logics of every possible discourse on freedom, past, present, and future, including Erasmus's (and, consequently, Luther's) discourse, and the discourse of those after them. Therefore, the order of things must be reversed. This or that historical discourse on freedom is not the *ratio existendi* of such forms, but their *ratio cognoscendi*, and vice-versa, the forms are the *rationes existendi* (the answers to the *quaestio juris*) of the meaningfulness of historical discourses on freedom. The forms are the functions, and the historical languages are the value of these functions.

Clearly, it is possible to ask what originates first, the forms or the "matters," the conditions of conceptualization or the historical concepts of freedom. And yet this question is sterile, because both opposing answers are based upon a

[17] I refer here principally to Schopenhauer, "Transcendent Speculation."

[18] Here, I refer mainly to the conception of freedom issued from the remarkable synergy of the geniuses of Karoly Kerényi, Carl Gustav Jung, and Thomas Mann around the connection between the typical, the mythical, and the psychological. This synergy is analyzed in *infra*, Ch. 12 sections 2 and 3.

[19] It is notable that these formal languages have different degrees of self-evidence. The modal language of freedom is certainly the most intuitive, and the typological one is perhaps the most counterintuitive because of the biconditional relationship between *who* speaks and *what* is said. This confirms that Luther does not attack an intuitive method of thinking about freedom in order to replace it with a counter-intuitive one, but it is precisely their function as methods and meters of meaningfulness to be attacked.

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