doispontos:
Revista dos Departamentos de Filosofia da Universidade Federal do Paraná e da Universidade Federal de São Carlos

Leibniz and Kant: principle of sufficient reason and the "unconditioned"

Derócio Felipe Perondi Meotti
derocio_meotti@hotmail.com
Federal University of Fronteira Sul – UFFS (Campus Chapecó)

Abstract: This article aims to show the relation between the *principle of sufficient reason* (PSR) and the idea of pure reason known as "unconditioned" based on the thoughts of Leibniz and Kant. Starting from Boehm's thesis, which states that the Kantian rationalism depends on the refutation of the ontological argument, we build our analysis by discussing the following points: i) the PSR is the principle that, in the first place, indicates an unconditioned as possible; ii) the Leibniz's PSR appears in Kant's philosophy under the name of "supreme principle of pure reason"; iii) in both philosophers it is required the self-sufficiency of the unconditioned, and iv) which is the nomological status of the PSR? After discussing these points, we take a stand for Boehm's interpretation and Kant's critique off the PSR, concluding that this principle is not a constitutive principle of reality but a merely regulative principle of reason in the experience.
Keywords: Leibniz; Kant; principle of sufficient reason; unconditioned; causality; ontological argument.

1. Introduction

In studies on Kantian philosophy, it is very common to reserve a space to present and develop the refutation of the ontological proof that Kant undertakes in the *Transcendental dialectic* of the *Critique of pure reason* [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*][1]. However, as is also common, the context of such a refutation is, in most cases, considered to be restricted to a specific field of metaphysics: *theologia rationalis*. With this, the focus always falls on certain aspects, such as the thesis that being is not a real predicate and the incongruity of the idea of God with experience in the scope of phenomena.

In this article, we aim to show that the refutation of the ontological proof undertaken by Kant plays a much more significant role than merely making a *theologia rationalis* impossible. However, to do this, we must first show that the "principle of sufficient reason" (from this moment forth "PSR"), as proposed by Leibniz, appears in Kantian philosophy under the name of the "supreme principle of pure reason".

To guide us on this path, we will use Boehm's thesis, presented in *The Principle of Sufficient Reason, the Ontological Argument and the Is/Ought Distinction*, from 2016, who argues that Kant's attack on metaphysics is largely an attack on PSR: "Kant's attack on metaphysics consists in large part in his attack on a principle that he names Supreme Principle of Pure Reason. This principle, it is not often noticed, is the Principle of Sufficient Reason [PSR]" (BOEHM, 2016, p. 556). Once the similarity between the PSR and the "supreme principle of pure reason" has been established, Boehm's thesis proposes that the "unconditioned", a fundamental element of Kantian philosophy, is a postulate intrinsic to the PSR and that depends on him what we could consider a "speculative justification" for the principle.

This justification – which we will consider throughout the article as the equivalent of a "transcendental deduction", as occur with the categories of understanding – would consist on the following: the PSR indicates an unconditioned as the only thing that could put an end to the search for conditions more fundamental. This unconditioned, in metaphysics, is identified with the concept of "God". Therefore, if it is proved that God exists, the "object" indicated by the PSR is considered to have been found; therefore, such a principle can be considered as something that constitutes experience – and not only that: it also constitutes reality.

Thus, proving whether or not God exists is not only the critical boundary between proving the constitutiveness or not of a certain principle (in this case, the PSR) but also between accepting traditional metaphysics as a valid or invalid enterprise.

That is why Boehm, when identifying the PSR of traditional metaphysics with Kant's supreme principle of pure reason, establishes the ontological argument (and, consequently, the way we treat the "unconditioned") as the main object of analysis: "my main thesis will be that the most promising Kantian counter-argument to the PSR is the refutation of the ontological argument. If existence is not a real, first-order predicate, the PSR is false" (BOEHM, 2016, p. 556). That is, Kant's best attack on PSR is his thesis that existence is not a first-order predicate, or in other words, that existence is not a real predicate, and that, therefore, if we cannot prove that the unconditioned exists, we cannot finish the "transcendental deduction" of the PSR.

According to Boehm, Kantians tend to underestimate the role of the refutation of the ontological argument in the schema of Kantian philosophy, thinking that its only function is to prohibit the possibility of a *theologia rationalis*. Therefore, Boehm's proposal consists of showing how such a refutation can be understood as the fundamental piece of the Kantian critique of metaphysical thought (BOEHM, 2016,

[1] By way of standardization, we decided to mention all titles of works in English followed by the original title in square brackets (only in the first mention of each work).

doispontos:, Curitiba, São Carlos, volume 16, issue 3, December 2019, pages 1-15
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5380/dp.v16i3.64859t

p. 557). Thus, because of what has been said so far, our general objective with this article is to defend this thesis, developing in more detail the following points: i) it is the PSR that, firstly, indicates an unconditioned as possible; ii) Leibniz's PSR appears in Kant's philosophy under the name of "supreme principle of pure reason;" iii) in both philosophers, the self-sufficiency of the unconditioned is required; and, finally: iv) what is the nomological status of the PSR? The answer to this last question depends on whether or not we accept the ontological argument. If we consider that the proof follows, the principle must be understood as constitutive of experience (and therefore of reality). If, on the other hand, we consider that the proof does not follow, the PSR must be taken as a merely regulative principle, a "heuristic principle" of reason in its search for the systematic completeness of its knowledge.

2. Principle of sufficient reason and the "unconditioned"

The first step to defending our point of view is to present the relationship that the PSR has with the concept of the "unconditioned". In Kant's philosophy, the unconditioned, as the name implies, is negatively related to the concept of "conditioned". We usually understand by "conditioned" something that, for it to occur, depends on a condition. However, if what we take as a "condition" also needs another condition for itself, we still haven't found the "ultimate condition" for the condition initially treated. Thus, "an 'unconditioned' is thus an ultimate condition, an ultimate explanatory ground, of what is given as conditioned" (BOEHM, 2016, p. 558).[2] Something unconditioned can be considered the "primary link" in a chain of conditions because, as "un-conditioned" it is already by definition taken as something that does not need a condition. As Boehm says: "it is ultimate in the sense that it does not itself require further grounds for being given (not, in any case, other than itself)" (BOEHM, 2016, p. 558). But how does the concept of the "unconditioned" relate to the PSR?

In his article, Boehm suggests that PSR, in Kant, has two versions: a subjective version (which the author calls "P1") and an objective version (P2). The subjective version of the PSR commands us to seek, for all conditioning, the unconditioned that would provide the systematic completeness of knowledge under principles (BOEHM, 2016, p. 558). This "command", which may be considered a requirement, is evident in the Preface to the second edition (1787) of the *Critique of pure reason*:

> For what necessarily forces us to transcend the limits of experience and of all appearances is the *unconditioned*, **which reason**, by necessity and by right, **demands** in things in themselves, as required to complete the series of conditions. (KANT, 1929 [1787][3], p. 24, Bxx, emphasis added)

The "requirement of reason" for the unconditioned, in this passage, is configured as the requirement of complete unity of the series of conditions – or *premises* – as a whole. Or, in other words, through the unconditioned, reason aims to find an endpoint in its search, a definitive "because" for its doubts, or a premise that dispense with the search for new premises. This is how Boehm interprets it: "[...] attempting complete unification amounts to searching for 'such completeness in the series of premises as will dispense with the need of presupposing other premises' (A416/B444)" (BOEHM, 2016, pp. 558-9). Therefore, the quest for the complete unity of knowledge is essentially a quest for the unconditioned: only the unconditioned would provide the completeness we seek and therefore exempt us from the quest for more conditions – i.e., *more fundamental premises.*

The subjective version of the PSR is considered "subjective" because it does not establish anything about the world. It is rather a fact about reason or, more precisely, an effort in search of an ultimate explanation:

[2] As Boehm points out in an endnote (2016, p. 575, nf. 13), in German "Grund" is not only a foundation in the sense of a "condition" but also an "explanatory foundation". Thus, the "principle of sufficient reason" (*der Satz vom zureichenden Grund*) can be understood as the "principle of foundation" (*Der Satz vom Grund*).

[3] We will indicate, after the year of the edition cited, the year of the original publication of the work.

"more accurately, P1 does not state anything at all but prescribes rather a task, eine Aufgabe – 'Search for the ultimate condition!', 'Eliminate brute facts!' – without promising that that task can be fulfilled" (BOEHM, 2016, p. 559). However, one should not think that the subjective character of such a formulation makes such a "task" arbitrary. According to Kant, "[...] the pure concepts of reason – of totality in the synthesis of conditions – are thus **at least necessary as setting us the task** of extending the unity of understanding, where possible, up to the unconditioned, and are **grounded in the nature of human reason**" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 316, B380, emphasis added). That is, despite not establishing anything about the world, such a task (*Aufgabe*) is intrinsic to the very constitution of reason – i.e., its *subjectivity* consists in the fact that it affirms something about the subject that investigates, not about the object of investigation.

Therefore, the subjective version of the PSR is only *regulative* and does not commit itself in any way to ontological claims, as a constitutive principle should. More precisely, such a subjective version is in no way committed to the existence of an unconditioned (BOEHM, 2016, p. 559). However, one should not think that the subjective version of the PSR is sufficient to guarantee that the search for the unconditioned is undertaken.

The objective version of the PSR, which complements the subjective, is more indicative than imperative. It establishes something about the world: given the conditioned, the complete series of conditions that condition it is also given (BOEHM, 2016, p. 559). In the *Critique of pure reason*, Kant is very incisive about this type of observation: "reason makes this demand in accordance with the principle that if *the conditioned is given, the entire sum of conditions, and consequently the absolutely unconditioned* (through which alone the conditioned has been possible) *is also given*" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 386, B436). That is, if in the relationship with the world the subject finds that "something is given" to his sensibility, reason already automatically presupposes that the totality of conditions must be presupposed as *given together*: "for in the case of the given conditioned, conditions are presupposed, and are considered as **given together** with it" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 387, B437, emphasis added). However, the simple "totality of conditions" is insufficient for a complete understanding of the given condition. The only way to consider the "totality of conditions" as a "complete unity" is if we consider that, together with the conditioned, the *unconditioned* is also given, because "[...] what reason is really seeking in this serial, regressively continued, synthesis of conditions, is solely the unconditioned. What it aims at is, as it were, such a completeness **in the series of premises** as will **dispense with the need of presupposing other premisses**" (KANT,1929 [1787], p. 391, B443-4, emphasis added). In this way, the objective version of the PSR, in Kant, is committed to the affirmation that the unconditioned exists: otherwise, the search for the "premise that dispense with the search for more premises" could not end (BOEHM, 2016, p. 559).

Furthermore, it is important that we take into account another important aspect of the objective version of the PSR: if, by taking the conditioned as given, reason already automatically takes the unconditioned as also given by the series of conditions as a complete series, this indicates that the unconditioned is at least *possible*. As Boehm states, "indeed, if reason prescribes something as a task, it may appear only appropriate – it might even seem rational – to trust that the task is possible" (BOEHM, 2016, p. 560). However, the "possibility" of the un-*conditioned*, in Kantian philosophy, is also not entirely without problems. As in Kant's philosophy we only have access to the realm of phenomena, and everything that is a phenomenon is, by definition, conditioned, there seems to be little chance of coming across something that is unconditioned. On the other hand, considering things as "in themselves" creates a more difficult problem to solve than the "conditionality" of phenomena.

In the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of pure reason*, Kant claims that if we consider objects as things in themselves, the unconditioned becomes a contradictory concept. That's because taking what is "phenomenon" for "thing in itself" does not remove the conditioned (contingent) character of everything

doispontos:, Curitiba, São Carlos, volume 16, issue 3, December 2019, pages 1-15
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5380/dp.v16i3.64859t

we see around us and, therefore, we would have absolutely no criteria to decide "what thing in the world" is non-contingent (unconditioned). Furthermore, considering things as "in themselves", there would be no realm in which the unconditioned would be possible. However, if we distinguish between phenomenon and things in themselves, the first scope restricted to the conditioned and the second to the possibility of the unconditioned, the contradiction disappears (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 24, Bxx). Therefore, the possibility of the unconditioned presupposes the separation between the scope of phenomena[4] and the things themselves, since the unconditioned cannot occur in the scope of experience, where everything is a phenomenon, that is, everything is *conditioned*.[5]

So, having shown how the PSR relates to the unconditioned, we can move on to the next point. Some interpreters understand that the PSR, in Kant's critique of metaphysics, appears under the name of "principle of complete determination"[6] or, as Kant himself suggests, "principle of sufficient reason." However, from Leibniz's formulation of PSR and Boehm's arguments, we will defend the interpretation that suggests that PSR, in Kant's philosophy, appears under the name of the "supreme principle of pure reason."

3. Principle of sufficient reason and supreme principle of pure reason

The passage by Boehm, quoted at the beginning of the introduction of this text, referring to the equivalence between the PSR and the "supreme principle of pure reason", is part of the summary of his article. In the body of the text, the author makes himself clearer about the proposed equivalence:

> Kant's critique of metaphysics consists in large part in his attack on a principle that he names 'das oberste Prinzip der reinen Vernunft' – the Supreme Principle of Pure Reason. That principle states, 'if the conditioned is given, the complete series of the conditions – a series which is itself unconditioned – is likewise given' (A309/B366). It is not often noticed that this principle is nothing but the Principle of Sufficient Reason (the 'PSR'). (BOEHM, 2016, p. 556)[7]

But is the "supreme principle of pure reason", as Boehm suggests, how Kant treats PSR in his philosophy? Considering that Leibniz was one of the philosophers who made extensive use of the principle, we can compare his version of the PSR with what we have seen so far from Kant about it and its relation to the unconditioned.

Among the various formulations that Leibniz made of the principle, we can mention that from *Principles of nature and grace, based on reason* [*Principes de la nature et la grâce fondés en raison*], from 1714, which says the following:

> So far we have just spoken as simple *physicists*; now we must rise to *metaphysics*, by making use of the *great principle*, little used, commonly, that *nothing takes place without sufficient reason*, that is, that nothing happens without it being possible for someone who knows enough things to have a reason sufficient to determine why it is so and not otherwise. (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1714], pp. 209-10, §7)[8]

[4] On the nature of the phenomenon in Kantian philosophy, *cf.*, in the *Critique of pure reason*, B55, B59, B207-8, B235, A250-2 and B594, and in the *Prolegomena*, AA 4:289, AA 4:314-5, AA 4:352, AA 4:355 and AA 4:360.

[5] *Cf.* also B559 (footnote).

[6] *Cf.* MELO, 1992.

[7] The snippet in single quotes, however, seems to refer to B364, not B366.

[8] Other definitions of the PSR, in Leibniz, also appear in Monadology, §32 (1989a [1714], p. 217); Leibniz's second letter to Clarke, §1 (1989a [1715-6], p. 321); Theodicy, I, §44 (2007 [1710], p. 150-1) and Observations on the book on the origin of evil, recently published in England, §14 (p. 420-1). A more in-depth study of PSR formulations in Leibniz can be found in HIRATA, 2017.

Defined in this way, we can say that this principle, through the search for "sufficient reason", aims to eliminate the search for more "becauses". In Kant, as we have seen, the "unconditioned" has the function of putting an end to this search for further premises. We can better understand how "sufficient reason" relates to the "unconditioned" in this excerpt from Mercer, quoted by Hirata in her thesis:

> Leibniz says [...] that the right kind of *ratio* puts an end to the search for an ulterior reason and suggests that it will alleviate our doubt about the origin of the attribute. His comments imply that a complete *ratio* will constitute the sufficient condition for the attribute so that when we understand the *ratio*, we see exactly why the attribute occurred. There will be no need for reasons, further questions, or doubts. (MERCER *apud* HIRATA, 2017, p. 88, translation of mine from Portuguese back to English)

The similarity of Leibniz's "sufficient reason" with Kant's "unconditioned" does not stop there. In the *Confession of nature against atheists* [*Confessio naturae contra atheistas*][9], of 1669, we read: "[...] for the reason for a conclusion is not fully given as long as no reason is given for the premise, **especially since the same doubt remains in this case without end**" (LEIBNIZ, 1989b [1669], p. 111, emphasis added). As in Kant's philosophy, the scope of the contingent (in Kant: conditioned) cannot provide "sufficient reason". In *On the ultimate origination of things* [*De rerum originatione radicali*], of 1697, we read: "[...] however far back we might go into previous states, we will never find in those states a complete explanation [*ratio*] for why, indeed, there is any world at all, and why it is the way it is" (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1697], p. 149). In short, "sufficient reason", which cannot be found in the realm of contingent things (which does not have the reason for their existence in themselves) or, in other words, cannot be found in an *immanent* realm, must be sought "in another place": in a *transcendent* realm. Despite the differences between Leibniz and Kant, we can consider this a point in common: sufficient reason cannot be found in the realm of things that are conditioned but must be found in a realm that transcends them.

In Leibniz, as in Kant, the scope of the contingent is, as far as the search for conditions is concerned, ruled by *causality*. In Leibniz's philosophy, the PSR is inserted in this context. In Kant, it is no different. When in Kantian philosophy, the subject is the category of causality, we have an analytical distinction between cause and effect. If we speak of the "cause", "[...] this concept makes strict demand that something, A, should be such that something else, B, follows from it *necessarily and in accordance with an absolute universal rule*" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 125, B124).[10] That is, the concept of "cause" says that the "effect" is not only posited by such a rule but *follows from it*. So much so that, if we pay attention to the definition of the principle of causality in the *Second Analogy* of the 1781 edition of the *Critique of pure reason*, we read: "everything that happens, that is, begins to be, presupposes something upon which it follows according to a rule" (KANT, 1929 [1781], p. 218, A189).

However, unlike Leibniz, in Kant, "causality" is a category of understanding and not something belonging to the dynamics of the real. This means that it, as a category of understanding, is just a *rule* for the synthesis of perceptions given to sensitivity to constitute experience within the scope of phenomena – and outside this relationship of the knowing subject with the world, it means nothing. It is in this sense that it can be said that the categories of understanding applied to the data of sensitivity are constitutive of experience. In the concept of cause, for example, the need for a result is stated under a *presupposed* condition (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 175, B168). This means that assuming that someone knocks a cup off the table without anything preventing it from falling, it necessarily follows that the cup falls to the floor. Conversely, the category of causality also tells us that, given the effect, we automatically presuppose a cause (or condition) that precedes it according to a rule: "if, then, we experience that something happens, we in so doing always presuppose that something precedes it, on which it follows according to a rule" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 223, B240). In other words, it can be said that "[...] the event, as the conditioned, thus affords reliable

[9] According to Hirata (2017, p. 69), Leibniz already makes explicit use of the PSR, even if he does not mention it.

[10] As for the fact that the concepts of "condition" and "conditioned" refer to each other analytically, cf. also B526.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5380/dp.v16i3.64859t

evidence of some condition, and this condition is what determines the event" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 222, B239). However, this is the same as saying that, in the principle of causality, "cause" and "effect" refer to each other analytically, that is, that one concept refers immediately to the other. That is: through the analysis of the category of causality, we have no reference to the unconditioned.

From this, we can point out a commonly misunderstood aspect: the difference between the "principle of causality" and the "principle of sufficient reason". The PSR, in Leibniz, has a double function: within the scope of the contingent, it is regulated by "efficient causality", which is conditioned. However, such a version of the PSR – defended by Hobbes, for example – does not provide a "sufficient reason". As it always demands further "becauses", the condition found is always partial and insufficient. Thus, from the insufficiency of the "principle of causality", Leibniz adds to it the "sufficient reason", which is transcendent and subordinates efficient causality to final causality. When Kant, in B246, mentions the "principle of sufficient reason", he is referring to this "immanent" use of the principle, but not to Leibniz's transcendent use of it:

> This rule, by which we determine something according to succession of time, is, that the condition under which an event invariably and necessarily follows is to be found in what precedes the event. **The principle of sufficient reason** is thus the ground of possible experience in respect of their relation in the succession of tome. (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 226, B246, emphasis added)

The PSR is that, but not only that, for Leibniz. In the *Critique of pure reason*, Kant presents a principle that he calls the "principle of reason in general" and defines it as the search for the unconditioned that would provide unity to the understanding (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 306, B364). As we saw at the beginning of this section, Leibniz's version of the PSR is not one that refers only analytically to the concept of cause to that of effect and vice versa. He does this, but he also refers to the concept of the conditioned (contingent) to the concept of the unconditioned (necessary), which would be his "sufficient reason".

Another indication of the similarity between Leibniz's PSR and Kant's "supreme principle of pure reason", in addition to what has already been indicated, is an excerpt from the *Transcendental dialectic*, in which Kant suggests that the *contingent* is for the *conditioned* the same that the *necessary* is to the *unconditioned*: "the conditioned in existence in general is termed contingent and the unconditioned necessary" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 392, B447). This indicates that not only the "supreme principle of pure reason" is very similar to Leibniz's PSR but also that the transcendent relation that the unconditioned has to the conditioned series is closer to Leibniz's necessary-contingent relation than in other philosophers who used some version of the PSR, as, for example, Spinoza.

Thus, if, through B246, we understand that Kant's critique of the PSR consists of only reducing it to the category of causality, we lose all the relationship that we established between the PSR and the unconditioned in the first section of this article. On the other hand, if we accept that Boehm's thesis follows and that the PSR, in the *Critique of pure reason*, receives the name of "supreme principle of pure reason", the following passage appears as a strong attack on the version that Leibniz offers from the principle: "such a principle of pure reason is obviously *synthetic*; the conditioned is analytically related to some condition but no to the unconditioned" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 306, B364), which is what Leibniz's version does. Furthermore, what seems to be indicated is that the "supreme principle of pure reason" is synthetic because, through the category of *causality*, it is said that everything conditioned necessarily refers to a condition but says nothing about the unconditioned, which does not mean that he does not say anything about the unconditioned *at all*, but that he does not do so *analytically*. What the "principle of pure reason" does – and Leibniz's PSR does too – is to refer to the unconditioned, but synthetically. Being a synthetic principle, that is, one that seeks to make possible the knowledge of objects, such a principle needs a transcendental deduction that justifies it, and such a deduction can only be undertaken if the object to which it refers is possible *in experience* – which, as we will see, is precisely what Kant says is impossible.

The constitutive use of the category of causality in experience has its justification in the *Deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding*, as long as we consider that such deduction is restricted to the analytical relationship that the concepts of "condition" and "conditioned" have. However, when the "unconditioned" is added to the principle of *causality*, the transcendental deduction made for the category of causality is no longer valid. As for the test to see whether the principle that extends the search through the series of conditions to the unconditioned is "justified", Kant says the following:

> Take the principle, that the series of conditions (whether in the synthesis of appearances, or even in the thinking of things in general) extends to the unconditioned. **Does it, or does it not, have objective applicability**? [...] To answer these questions will be our task in the Transcendental Dialectic, which we shall now endeavour to develop from its deeply concealed sources in human reason. (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 307, B365-6, emphasis added)

In other words, the task of *Transcendental dialectics*, part of the *Critique of pure reason,* whose aim is to clarify the causes of the illusions that lead reason to entangle itself in contradictions, is to decide whether the PSR is a constitutive principle of reality, as Leibniz and other metaphysicians wanted, or if it appears only as a regulative principle. As we will see in section 5, it is in the refutation of the ontological argument, in the *Transcendental dialectic*, that lies the impossibility of carrying out the deduction of the supreme principle of pure reason – or PSR. However, before dealing with this, we must briefly present how the ontological argument relates to the unconditioned in the philosophies of Leibniz and Kant.

4. Kant and Leibniz: the self-sufficiency of the unconditioned

As we saw in section 2, the objective version of the PSR commits itself to an ontological claim: given the conditioned, the complete series of subordinate conditions is also given, and through it, the unconditioned that would provide the completeness of such a series. Therefore, we can say that since the subjective version indicates a task – *to seek the unconditioned* – and the objective version indicates that this unconditioned "is given", we can say that the objective version of the PSR commits to the ontological argument. Once the objective version of the PSR is accepted, it is not enough that we have reasons to *believe* that such an unconditioned exists, but we also have to think (metaphysically) that this unconditioned must have in itself a reason for being the way it is, and the ontological argument leads us to think that the unconditioned is as it is in virtue of its concept:

> Their commitment [i.e., of the metaphysicians] to the PSR requires, as we have seen, that there be a reason for the existence of an unconditioned being (not merely a reason for our belief that it exists), and that that reason is that existence is contained in its concept. It is in this strong metaphysical sense that metaphysical rationalists must consider existence a predicate, for there can be a self-explanatory being – or a self-explanatory truth – only if something can be true in virtue of its concept, or its definition, alone. (BOEHM, 2016, p. 563, our brackets)

This is, in fact, the path that metaphysicians like Leibniz took. As we pointed out in the previous section, Leibniz infers the "necessary being" (the unconditioned) from the insufficiency of contingent (conditioned) things. In the *Principles of nature and grace*, Leibniz says:

> Thus the *sufficient reason*, which needs no other reason, must be outside this series of contingent things, and must be found in a substance which is its cause, and which is a necessary being, carrying the reason of its existence with itself. Otherwise, we would not yet have a sufficient reason where one could end the series. And this ultimate reason for things is called *God*. (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1714], p. 210, §8)[11]

However, as we can see in this passage, the argument is not yet ontological but *cosmological*: from the insufficiency of the conditioned, the need for an *unconditioned* is inferred. But the ontological argument is more radical: it requires that the unconditioned have the reason for its existence in itself, so it must also

[11] See also Monadology, §37-40 (1989a [1714], pp. 217-18); On the ultimate origination of things (1989a [1697], pp. 149-50) and the opuscle On existence [De existentia] (1992 [1676], p. 113). On the insufficiency of the analysis of the contingent (or conditioned) series in Leibniz and its relationship with "sufficient reason", cf. HIRATA, 2017, pp. 80 and 88.

doispontos:, Curitiba, São Carlos, volume 16, issue 3, December 2019, pages 1-15
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5380/dp.v16i3.64859t

be *self-conditioned* (or, in other words, self-sufficient). Such a requirement that the unconditioned have the reason for its existence in itself is, in Leibniz's philosophy, an application of the PSR since "the jurisdiction of the principle of sufficient reason is universal, being valid even for God [...]" (HIRATA, 2017, p. 22, translation of mine). In other words, it is not enough that we consider the unconditioned (God) the reason for all things; it must also be the reason for its own existence: it must be *causa sui*.

This expedient of "jumping" from the cosmological argument to the ontological argument receives treatment in the *Critique of pure reason*. In B611, Kant says that experience starts from something existing (conditioned), but this "soil" sinks if it is not supported by a being capable of accounting for all "why":

> This is the course which our human reason, by its very nature, leads all of us, even the least reflective, to adopt, though not everyone continues to pursue it. It begins not with concepts, but with common experience, and thus bases itself on something actually existing. But if this ground does not rest upon the immovable rock of the absolutely necessary, it yields beneath our feet. And this latter support is itself in turn without support, if there be any empty space beyond and under it, and if it does not itself so fill all things as to leave no room for any further question – unless, that is to say, it be infinite in its reality. (KANT, 1929 [1787], pp. 495-6, B612)

In this way, reason, through the PSR, when noticing that "something exists", postulates that something must necessarily exist (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 496, B612). And the only way to say that a being exists "necessarily" is if it exists in virtue of its concept. Then, the arguments that Kant presents in B613-5 show how reason arrives at this conclusion: from the insufficiency of the contingent, we infer the necessity of the unconditioned. We demand unconditional completeness for our knowledge, but what we have is only a kaleidoscope of contingent facts, conditions which cannot themselves be taken otherwise than as another conditioned. In this way, reason presupposes that such an unconditioned could only be a being that possesses in itself the totality of conditions – a *causa sui* being (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 499, B617-8). Therefore, in Kant's philosophy, we can take the path from the "unconditioned" to the "self-conditioned" as something embedded in the procedure of reason itself.

However, the main difficulty that the metaphysician encounters when dealing with the ontological argument is precisely the "analytical" character of the proof. In the cosmological argument, we start from the sensible experience – i.e., from the *conditioned* that is given – and we infer the necessity of something unconditioned. But for this unconditioned to end the search for more reasons, it must be self-conditioned. For it to be self-conditioned, however, it has to be the source of its own existence. Since it cannot have as the source of its *existence* another existence prior and external to it, the only way for it to exist in a self-sufficient way is if it contains in its concept existence as a predicate.

This is, in fact, the argument we see in several of Leibniz's texts. In *A definition of God, or, of an independent being* [*Definitio Dei seu entis a se*], of 1676, he says: "God is a being from whose possibility (or, from whose essence) his existence follows. It a God defined in this way is possible, it follows that he exists" (LEIBNIZ, 1992 [1676], p. 105).[12] Later in the same text, Leibniz says that an independent (or unconditioned) being is a being from whose essence existence follows or which exists under its essence (possibility, concept, etc.): "an independent being is the same as a being from whose existence follows, namely a being to which existence is essential, **or, which exists through its own essence**" (LEIBNIZ, 1992 [1676], p. 107, emphasis added). In addition, self-sufficiency as an "internal determination" or "self-determination" also appears in the philosopher's texts. In §20 of Leibniz's fourth letter to Clarke, we read: "God is never determined

[12] In the following paragraph, Leibniz states that it is the same to say that existence follows from possibility or essence. Furthermore, cf. also the statements that the philosopher makes in the opuscle On contingency [De contingentia] (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1689], p. 28), Discourse on metaphysics [Discours de métaphysique], XXIII (1989a [1686], p. 55-6) and New essays on human understanding [Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain], IV, x, §7 (1996 [1704], p. 438).

by external things but always by what it is in himself, that is, by his knowledge, before anything outside himself" (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1715- 6], p. 329).[13]

Therefore, having established the relationship between the unconditioned and self-sufficiency and accepting the objective version of the PSR as valid, we commit ourselves to the ontological argument since the only way to prove that the unconditioned exists is if it can exist under its concept. This is how Leibniz proceeds: the PSR indicates, from the contingency of the conditioned, the need for an unconditioned. This unconditioned, to be "sufficient reason", must be self-conditioned. However, the deduction of the PSR is only complete if it is proved that such a self-conditioned being exists and not just its mere idea. It is precisely this last step – the proof that the unconditioned exists outside the mere idea – that Kant criticizes and which is decisive in deciding which is the nomological status of the principle of sufficient reason.

5. The nomological status of the principle of sufficient reason

We said at the beginning of the previous section that, through the objective version of the PSR, we consider the unconditioned as "given". But is it given in experience as an object of the senses, or is it given only as an *idea* (*or ideal*)[14]? If it is in the latter sense, what guarantee do we have that such an unconditioned is anything other than a "mere idea"?

As we have seen, Boehm understands that Kant's rejection of the PSR is not exclusively because of its contradiction with the possibilities of the phenomenal experience but rather because it demands a justification in the speculative field without being able to receive one (BOEHM, 2016, p. 561). We interpret this as a requirement of a transcendental deduction which, in turn, cannot be undertaken. This justification, concerning the immanent use of categories (i.e., when addressed to the realm of phenomena), is provided, in the *Critique of pure reason*, in the *Deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding*. Such a deduction, in general terms, consists in showing how the principles of the understanding, being a set of rules provided by the understanding itself, are what first make experience possible through the concatenation of perceptions; in other words, such "rules of the understanding" are what *constitute* experience (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 171, B161). Therefore, on the one hand, such a deduction shows the applicability of such principles safely within the scope of phenomena, on the other hand, it prohibits any use of them outside such scope: "[...] the categories, as yielding knowledge of *things*, have no kind of application, save only in regard to things which may be objects of possible experience" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 162, B147-8).

However, as we also saw in section 3, the "unconditioned" is synthetically added to the concept of the "conditioned" (which, analytically, refers only to the concept of "condition"). But how to think about the "unconditioned" if everything we can think of as an object must be able to take place in a possible experience? For Kant, the feature of the concept of "cause" that allows us to think about the unconditioned is to remove from such a concept the reference to time, in which the current existence is always determined by the preceding one. That is, if we think of the concept of "condition" without reference to sensible intuition (where phenomena occur) and, consequently, without reference to *time*, the *a priori* form of this intuition, we do not "necessarily" need to take such condition as "conditioned" by another condition. That is, holding only on the *transcendental meaning* of the category of causality, we can take a condition as an *unconditioned condition*.

[13] See also Leibniz's fifth letter to Clarke, §72 (LEIBNIZ, 1989b [1715-6], p. 709).

[14] There is a distinction that, although not fundamental to this article, has an important function in the Critique of pure reason: it is between the unconditioned as an "idea" and as an "ideal". As an idea, the unconditioned is the normative horizon of a rule whose goal is the absolute completion of the ideas of soul, world, and freedom. However, when we treat the unconditioned as an "ideal", it is no longer a rule but a model for absolute completeness. It is as a "model" or "archetype" that the unconditioned is identified with God or the Supreme Being of Leibniz and other metaphysicians (cf. B597 and B606-8).

doispontos:, Curitiba, São Carlos, volume 16, issue 3, December 2019, pages 1-15
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5380/dp.v16i3.64859t

Thus, if reason, through the PSR, adds an "unconditioned" to the category of causality, the way that reason thinks the *possibility* of this unconditioned is apart from the conditions of sensibility – as a "thing in itself". However, apart from the conditions of sensibility, it is impossible to determine how an object could be given to such a concept (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 262, B301).

In the previous section, we saw that, according to Boehm (2016, p. 563), to accept the objective version of the PSR is to commit to the ontological argument. This means, therefore, that this "unconditioned" is not just a mere idea but something that must exist somewhere – and proving its existence is crucial to guarantee the objective validity of the PSR.

The importance of PSR in Leibniz's philosophy, for example, is obvious in his correspondence with the British philosopher Samuel Clarke between 1715-16. In §126 of Leibniz's fifth letter to Clarke, the German philosopher says: "I dare say that without this great principle one cannot prove the existence of God, nor account for many other important truths" (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1715-6], p. 346). "This principle" is the PSR, and the way it "proves" the existence of God is through the ontological argument. That is, the PSR indicates the unconditioned and postulates that it can only be considered unconditioned if it is self-conditioned, i.e., if it can exist in virtue of its own concept. Since saying that something exists by its very concept is an analytic (*a priori*) proof, we wouldn't need to worry about looking for God once we have sure proof that he exists. It would be like saying the following: the PSR, as a heuristic principle, indicates a hypothesis: the unconditioned. If such a hypothesis follows, the PSR, instead of being a heuristic principle, becomes a law of nature (constitutive principle). If this hypothesis does not follow, the principle remains with its merely regulatory character.

As for the actual existence of the unconditioned, Leibniz is incisive. In *A definition of God, or, of an independent being*, of 1676, Leibniz says that "if a necessary being is possible, it follows that it **exists actually**, or, that such a being is **actually found in the universe**" (LEIBNIZ, 1992 [1676], p. 107, emphasis added), a statement to which Kant opposes:

> To *think* an object and to *know* an object are thus by no means the same thing. Knowledge involves two factors: first, the concept, through which an object in general is thought (the category); and secondly, the intuition, through which it is given. For if no intuition could be given corresponding to the concept, the concept would still indeed be a thought, so far as its form is concerned, but would be without an object, and no knowledge of anything would be possible by means of it. So far as I could know, there would be nothing, and could be nothing, to which my thought could be applied. (KANT, 1929 [1787], pp. 161-2, B146)[15]

In other words, the fact that we think of an "unconditioned" through its idea does not mean that such an unconditioned exists. In the quote above, Kant claims that the criterion for deciding whether or not an object can exist is whether an intuition corresponding to it can be given in sensibility. There are, however, other passages from the *Critique of pure reason* in which Kant is clearer about this: "[...] what corresponds in empirical intuition to sensation is reality (*realitas phaenomenon*); what corresponds to its absence is negation = 0" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 203, B209-10); and also: "reality, in the pure concept of understanding, is that which corresponds to a sensation in general; it is that, therefore, the concept which in itself points to being (in time). Negation is that the concept of which represents not-being (in time)" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 184, B182). In other words, "existence" or "being" is something that can only be considered as belonging to an object of possible experience, i.e., a *phenomenon*.

Therefore, we have some restrictions that must be considered. The first is that "in the *mere concept* of a thing no mark of its existence is to be found" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 243, B272). That is, "existence", being something that is synthetically added to a given concept (through the giving of a corresponding intuition in sensibility), cannot be analytically derived from any concept. In second place:

[15] Cf. also B165-6 e B272.

> Possible experience is that which can alone give reality to our concepts; in its absence a concept is a mere idea, without truth, that is, without relation to any object. The possible empirical concept is therefore the standard by which we must judge whether the idea is a mere idea and thought-entity, or whether it finds its object in the world. (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 438, B517)

"Existence", being reduced in Kant to a category of *modality*, does not add anything to the concept of a possible object. Through the "existence/non-existence" category, we only represent how the understanding relates to the concept in question: if it is a mere thought object, if it is an object that has given itself to sensibility, or if it is an object that follows accordingly with a necessary connection *in the experience*. Therefore, the modal categories do not add any predicate to the concept that they are applied (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 239, B266)[16], since, according to Kant, "through the actuality of a thing I certainly posit more than the possibility of it, but not *in the thing*. For it can never contain more in its actuality than is contained in its complete possibility" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 252, B287, footnote). That is, if we think of a thing as possible, this means that we can think of its complete possibility – the thing with all its predicates. If the thing, when given in sensibility, gains a new predicate – e.g., *existence* –, the thing given in the sensibility and the one thought would not be at all congruent, so we would not be able to think the complete possibility of something, which is a manifest contradiction (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 505, B628).[17]

This means that if the ontological argument intends to prove the existence of the unconditioned by claiming that it exists in virtue of its own concept, that is, it exists because it is a being whose concept has "existence" as its predicate, the refutation of the ontological argument that Kant undertakes is precisely to show that "existence" cannot be a predicate of something. As we made clear in the introduction, this article does not aim to analyze whether the Kantian refutation of the ontological proof follows or not but only to indicate how crucial it is to prevent the PSR from being elevated to the status of a constitutive principle of reality, once that the unconditioned can never be the object of a possible experience:

> Carried out on these grounds, the Kantian refutation of the ontological proof results in the proof, not only that the existence of God could not be demonstrated analytically *a priori* since it is not a given property in some concept, but also that the divine existence could never be known *a posteriori* through empirical synthesis (the only means for the knowledge of any existence) since God, as the object of a rational *idea*, could not, *according to the concept we have of him*, belong to the "context of total experience". (VALENTIM, 2009, p. 205, translation of mine)

But from the fact that the unconditioned can never be given in a possible experience, it does not follow that it is not given at all. The concepts of reason (or "ideas"), such as the unconditioned, "[...] are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 319, B384).[18] In other words, the "unconditioned", as an idea that aims at the systematic completeness of knowledge, is given to reason by reason itself. That is, as an idea, the unconditioned is the idea that reason has as a normative horizon in its search for knowledge.

But if the unconditioned can never be given in an experience, how can we still use it as a goal to be pursued by reason? If it can never be found, what is the point in looking for him? It seems that when we realize that the unconditioned is something that reason itself "gives" to itself and then commands the understanding to seek it in experience, a strange conflict arises. In the fourth antinomy, which concerns the search for

[16] See also B286.

[17] Cf. also BOEHM, 2016, p. 567. This discussion was also present in the pre-critical period and can be found in The only possible argument in support of a demonstration of the existence of God [Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes] (KANT, 1992 [1763], p. 117, AA 2:72), from 1763. However, due to the complexity of the topic, we will not deepen into it in this article, only indicating some interesting works on the subject: ALTMANN, 2005 and 2007; LANDIM FILHO, 2005; NACHTOMY, 2012 and VALENTIM, 2009.

[18] Cf. also B490 and B609.

doispontos:, Curitiba, São Carlos, volume 16, issue 3, December 2019, pages 1-15
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5380/dp.v16i3.64859t

absolute completeness through the idea of the unconditioned, we realize that the conflict of reason with itself is due to the emphasis it sometimes places on the demands of understanding, sometimes on those of reason. This conflicting relationship with the search for the unconditioned is because it considers the temporal series of conditions from two different points of view: 1) from the "understanding", in which the emphasis is on the *contingency* of the members of the series, and 2) of "reason", in which the emphasis is on the unconditioned *necessity* of the series of conditions as a whole (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 419, B487).

In other words, reason provides, through the unconditioned, the "ideal of pure reason", which functions as a *normative horizon*. Through this normative horizon, reason commands us to investigate things as if we could complete such a search – even if understanding, in turn, indicates that such completion can never be given in an experience. That is, *we assume the possibility of completing the task* so that the simple attempt makes some sense. In B536, Kant refers again to the "mentioned principle of pure reason" and then says that it cannot be a constitutive principle but only a regulative one: "the principle of reason is thus properly only a *rule*, prescribing a regress in the series of the conditions of given appearances, and forbidding it to bring the regress to a close by treating anything at which it may arrive as absolutely unconditioned" (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 450, B536-7). Soon after, Kant adds that, therefore, such a principle cannot be considered constitutive since it is not a principle that aims at the possibility of experience (or objects of the senses) but only the maximum unity of the knowledge of this experience, unity which, to be complete, must be *unconditioned*. Furthermore, since the unconditioned is an object that is not congruent with possible experience, its character is, as has already been said, only that of a "normative horizon", which must be sought but without any guarantee that it can be found:

> This idea of reason can therefore do no more than prescribe **a rule** to the regressive synthesis in the series of conditions; and in accordance with this rule the synthesis must proceed from the conditioned, through all subordinate conditions, up to the unconditioned. **Yet it can never reach this goal**, for the absolutely unconditioned is not to be met with in experience. (KANT, 2015 [1787], p. 417, B538, emphasis added)[19]

Therefore, even if the unconditioned cannot take place in an experience, and, consequently, the deduction of the PSR cannot be undertaken, it still plays an important role in the speculative framework of Kantian philosophy. To simply represent the necessary complete determination of all things, reason does not presuppose the *existence* of the unconditioned but only its *idea* (KANT, 1929 [1787], p. 491, B605-6).[20] That is, for reason to reach the completion it aims for, it does not need to presuppose the existence of the unconditioned, but only the possibility of its idea.

The price to pay for this, however, is the "law" status of the PSR. From the Kantian critique, it can no longer be used as Leibniz and the other metaphysicians used it. As a regulative principle, it no longer serves to "prove the existence of God" and other important theses of metaphysics and theology but only to "guide" the search by providing a normative horizon, a rule. Thus, quoting Hirata's words, we can say that

> [...] Kant, despite maintaining it, deprived the principle of sufficient reason of its teleological and transcendent meaning, limiting it strictly to application in spatiotemporal representations and profoundly modifying the place and importance that Leibniz gave to this principle. (HIRATA, 2017, p. 250, translation of mine)

[19] Furthermore, in B545-6, Kant says that the "regulativity" of such principle consists in commanding reason so that, in addition to seeking the unconditioned, it also takes as "conditioned" any condition it finds for any conditioned in experience.

[20] See also B640. As to the function of ideas in providing completeness in the use of understanding in connection with experience, cf. Prolegomena (KANT, 2014 [1783], AA 4:331-2).

6. Conclusion

Finally, to conclude this article, as we pointed out in the introduction, we stand for Boehm's interpretation, which states that PSR, in Kant's philosophy, appears under the name of "supreme principle of pure reason", and also the critic of the philosopher of Königsberg to this principle:

> According to Kant, traditional metaphysicians affirm the PSR objectively (P2) *because* they are driven by the subjective *Aufgabe* (P1). As philosophers, they obey reason's decree to achieve ultimate explanation and are tempted to infer that the world can be in fact ultimately explained. (BOEHM, 2016, p. 560)

What metaphysicians do not do, according to Kant, is to justify this step taken almost unconsciously: from the subjective version, a task (*Aufgabe*), to the objective version, which commits itself to ontological statements. This is basically what Kant's transcendental illusion consists of: because reason demands an explanation for everything, we assume that everything can be explained (BOEHM, 2016, p. 560).

Philosophers like Leibniz found themselves in trouble when their opponents demanded "proofs" for the PSR. In §125 of Leibniz's fifth letter to Clarke, the philosopher protests:

> He claimed that I have been guilty of a *petition principii*. But of what principle, I beseech you? Would to God less clear principles had never been laid down. The principle in question is the principle of the want of a sufficient reason for a thing to exist, for an event to happen, for any truth's obtain. Is this a principle that wants to be proved? (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1715-6], p. 346)

Leibniz's esteem for the principle is understandable since "[...] it is through the principle of sufficient reason that Leibniz proves that God exists and is good, that his justice consists in his goodness guided by his wisdom, being the actual world the best of all possible worlds" (HIRATA, 2017, p. 19, translation of mine). In short, it is on the "ground" of the PSR that all of Leibniz's metaphysics is built. In the philosopher's own words, in the first paragraph of his second letter to the English philosopher, we read: "now by that single principle, namely, that there ought to be a sufficient reason why things should be so and not otherwise, one may demonstrate the being of God and all the other parts of metaphysics or natural theology [...]" (LEIBNIZ, 1989a [1715-6], p. 321). However, if the Kantian critique is correct, and the "ground" from which Leibniz builds his philosophy depends on the ontological argument, we can agree with Kant, and say with certainty that metaphysics, until then, had not justified its procedures.

References

ALTMANN, S. 2007. "A existência como categoria modal". *Analytica*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 11, n. 2, p. 13-32.

_____. 2005. "Predicação, verdade e existência em Kant". *Analytica*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 9, n. 2, p. 137-159.

BOEHM, O. 2016. "The Principle of Sufficient Reason, the Ontological Argument and the Is/Ought Distinction". *European Journal of Philosophy,* v. 24, n. 3, p. 556-579.

LANDIM FILHO, R. 2005. "Kant: predicação e existência". *Analytica*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 186-198.

HIRATA, C. 2017. *Leibniz e Hobbes: Causalidade e Princípio de Razão Suficiente*. São Paulo-SP: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo/Fapesp. (Ensaios de Cultura, 59)

KANT, I. 1929. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London: MacMillan and Co., Limited.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5380/dp.v16i3.64859t

_____. 1992. *The only possible argument in support of a demonstration of the existence of God, by M. Immanuel Kant.* The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy, 1755- 1770. Edited by David Walford, in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 107-201.

_____. 2014. *Prolegômenos a qualquer metafísica que possa apresentar-se como ciência*. Tradução de José Oscar de Almeida Marques. São Paulo-SP: Estação Liberdade.

LEIBNIZ, G. W. 1989a. *Philosophical Essays.* Translated by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

_____. 1989b. *Philosophical Papers and Letters.* Translated and edited, with an introduction by Leroy

E. Loemker. 2. ed. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

_____. 1992. De *Summa Rerum:* Metaphysical Papers, 1675-1676. Translated with an introduction and notes by G. H. R. Parkinson. New Heaven/London: Yale University Press.

_____. 1996. *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Traslated and edited by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett. Cambridge: University Press.

MELO, A. 1992. "O princípio da razão suficiente: limites e conjectura". *Revista da Faculdade de Letras - Universidade do Porto* - Série de Filosofia, Porto, v. 9, p. 149-175.

_____. 2007. *Theodicy*: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil. Edited with an Introduction by Austin Farrer, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. Translated by E. M. Huggard from C. J. Gerhadt's Edition of the Collected Philosophical Works, 1875-90. BiblioBazzar.

NACHTOMY, O. 2012. Leibniz and Kant on Possibility and Existence. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy,* v. 20, n. 5, p. 953-972.

VALENTIM, M. A. 2009. Sobre a concepção kantiana de existência: a filosofia transcendental comoniilismo. *Studia Kantiana,* n. 9, p. 201-226, dezembro.