KANT ON THE UNITY OF THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL REASON.

by PAULINE KLEINGELD

Kant famously asserts that reason is one and the same, whether it is applied theoretically, to the realm of what is, or practically, to the realm of what ought to be. His view that theoretical and practical reason are two different applications of the same reason and by stressing the many similarities between them. Without actually arguing for this explicitly, they assume that these similarities and the unity of reason are one and the same reason, applied differently.(10)

Such similarities certainly exist. The two that are most important for the purposes of the paper are the following. First, both theoretical and practical reason strive for the systematization of knowledge. Second, practical reason uses the ideas of the soul, the world, and God as regulative principles. Practical reason postulates that the ideas of nature, morality, and immortality are the necessary conditions of the unity of reason.

In this paper, I propose a new reading of Kant's doctrine of the unity of reason. I argue that this doctrine should be viewed as a reformulation of his claim that theoretical and practical reason are uses of one and the same reason. In sections 3-7, I argue that the first and the second statements are compatible if the first is interpreted as a regulative principle, and I argue that there are compelling reasons for interpreting it as such. In sections 3-7, I argue that the first two statements are compatible with the third, by showing that they bear on very different issues. In the final section, I argue that this interpretation necessitates a radical re-evaluation of the relationship between Kant's 1780's doctrine of the unity of reason and his position in the third critique.

The Failure of the Argument from Similarity. Neiman and Konhardt argue that Kant develops this account in the first two critiques. On their view, the unity of theoretical and practical reason consists in the fact that they share structural and functional features.(8) Konhardt also argues that because Kant's account of the unity of reason was in essence ready as early as the Critique of Pure Reason, the Critique of Judgment brings "no essential modifications" in this account at all.(9)

Accordingly, a second characteristic that theoretical and practical reason share is the use of 'ideas.' For its systematizing activity, theoretical reason employs the ideas of the soul, the world, and God as regulative principles.(14) Practical reason uses the very same three ideas as postulates.(15) In their systematizing activity, practical reason constructs the idea of an intelligible moral world (a realm of ends) as a systematic whole, in which there is harmony among our maxims for action. Kant assumes that a systematic order can be achieved only when one employs an antecedent principle, and I argue that there are compelling reasons for interpreting it as such. In sections 3-7, I argue that the first two statements are compatible with the third, by showing that they bear on very different issues. In the final section, I argue that this interpretation necessitates a radical re-evaluation of the relationship between Kant's 1780's doctrine of the unity of reason and his position in the third critique.

The problem at issue here is not that of the identity of theoretical and practical reason. Kant's claim is not that they are indistinguishable. As different uses of one and the same reason they are nonidentical. Rather, the question is whether or not there is one faculty (reason) that is employed in two different ways -- theoretical and practical. Kant makes this clear in the context of his discussion of theoretical reason in the first criticism, and in investigating its a priori ideas he explicitly states his practical reason's point of view. Kant means that this unity has yet to be demonstrated. According to the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, demonstrating the unity of practical and theoretical reason is one of the tasks of a critique of practical reason.(2)

The Critique of Practical Reason, Kant further postpones this task by saying that we can expect it only in the second and final part of his systematizing efforts, practical reason constructs the idea of an intelligible moral world (a realm of ends) as a systematic whole, in which there is harmony among our maxims for action. Kant assumes that a systematic order can be achieved only when one employs an antecedent principle, and I argue that there are compelling reasons for interpreting it as such. In sections 3-7, I argue that the first two statements are compatible with the third, by showing that they bear on very different issues. In the final section, I argue that this interpretation necessitates a radical re-evaluation of the relationship between Kant's 1780's doctrine of the unity of reason and his position in the third critique.

In Defense of a Regulative Reading. These problems can be solved if we take Kant's statement that theoretical and practical reason are uses of one and the same reason as a regulative claim. A regulative reading of the statement also makes it possible to reconstruct Kant's grounds for assuming the unity of reason.

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In justifying the use of regulative ideas of the soul, the world, and God, Kant generally appeals to theoretical reason's interest in systematic unity. His basic view is that the idea of a single fundamental power, in which theoretical reason would "close its borders and admit into its domain nothing from [practical] reason, while the latter would extend its boundaries over everything and, when its needs required, would seek to comprehend the former within itself"(2) is conceptually possible. Moreover, Kant's systematic knowledge of what is, would reject the normative moral claims of reason in its practical use, and thus would reject the postulates that Kant says are "in unison with the theoretical need of reason."(42) The heuristic assumption of the unity of mental powers also applies to theoretical and practical reason. Hence, Kant's claim that they are different modes of application of the same reason can be read as a general regulative idea as an explanation for the unity of theoretical reason's use of such powers. However, it is not yet shown that this is so. If the first claim is read as an expression of a regulative assumption, instead of as a claim to knowledge, it is compatible with the lack of theoretical knowledge as such in the second statement. In this situation it is natural to use a similar interpretive strategy for the synthesis of the unity of the soul.

At first glance the various appearances of one and the same substance show so much dissimilarity that initially one cannot but assume almost as many powers as there appear effects, as in the human mind there are sensation, consciousness, imagination, ... and so forth. Initially a logical maxim requires that we reduce this seeming variety as far as possible by detecting hidden identity through comparison. ... Although logic does not at all determine whether such a power actually exists, the idea of a fundamental power is at least the problem of the unity of theoretical reason's application of the diversity of powers. The logical principle of reason demands that this unity should be brought about as far as possible. But this unity of reason(29) is merely hypothetical. One asserts not that it must actually be found, but rather that one must seek it in the interest of reason, in order to set up certain principles for the many rules that experience may supply us with, and thereby to bring systematic unity into cognition when this is possible.(30)

The heuristic assumption of the unity of mental powers also applies to theoretical and practical reason. Hence, Kant's claim that they are different modes of application of the same reason can be read as a general regulative idea as an explanation for the unity of theoretical reason's use of such powers. However, it is not yet shown that this is so. If the first claim is read as an expression of a regulative assumption, instead of as a claim to knowledge, it is compatible with the lack of theoretical knowledge as such in the second statement. In this situation it is natural to use a similar interpretive strategy for the synthesis of the unity of the soul.

The answer to this question can be found by pursuing some of the questions that arise from Kant's account so far. If, in line with the results of the previous section, one assumes (regulatively) that theoretical and practical reason are two different uses of one and the same reason, it is still possible that these uses are in conflict.

Between the two principles of the unity of reason (22) and the unity of the soul, a conflict could arise if theoretical reason were to demand more than what is conceptually possible, on the one hand, and practical reason were to regard things as conceptually possible, on the other. However, it is not yet shown that this is so. If the first claim is read as an expression of a regulative assumption, instead of as a claim to knowledge, it is compatible with the lack of theoretical knowledge as such in the second statement. In this situation it is natural to use a similar interpretive strategy for the synthesis of the unity of the soul.
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The moral world is an idea of a world that ought to be. (71) This idea is constructed by abstracting from the shortcomings of humans, and it cannot be empirically

The members of such a

Like theoretical reason, pure practical reason strives for systematic unity. The categorical imperative commands us to act only on maxims that are compatible with

providing the very same teleological ordering principle that Kant later provides in the Critique of Judgment in his discussion of "culture" as the "ultimate end of

The specifics of Kant's teleological idea of history need not concern us here. In the present context, the important point is that this idea of the course of history

For purposes of this essay, however, it is important that this argument is already found in Kant's first essay on history, published a few years after the first edition

In the Critique of Judgment, Kant does not solve this problem in sections 82-4. (57) There he argues that if we assume (regulatively) that there is teleology in

The similarities between this notion of systematicity in the first critique and the concept of formal purposiveness in the third are striking. (50) For in the Critique of Judgment, Kant states that "through this concept we have already represented in the formal purport of the concept of the end of nature the teleological idea of the manifold of nature's empirical laws. (51) As in the first critique, he argues that this principle is transcendental even though it is not constitutive. (52)

Taking the use of the idea of the highest intelligence one step further, Kant also justifies a teleological view of nature, on the grounds that this makes possible the "greatest systematic unity" of things. (53) The teleological principle states that everything in nature serves some good purpose, (54) and Kant emphasizes that this principle can only be justified regulatively, not a priori. (55) The teleological idea of history, which is discussed in the "Idea for a Universal History," can also be seen as an application of the idea of a teleological natural order. In this essay, Kant presents the idea that history has a purpose and that it is possible to understand history as a coherent whole, which is the result of a teleological natural order.

In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant does not fully develop his argument regarding the use and justification of teleology. He fails to explain why teleology leads to the "greatest systematic unity" or, conversely, why conceiving of nature as a mechanistic system does not suffice. (56) Moreover, it would seem that the introduction of final causation into the sciences, whatever the merits of the argument might be, would require a different kind of view of the world. Kant's teleological view of nature is based on the idea that nature is not merely a collection of empirical facts, but rather that it is ordered in a way that promotes the development of human beings. This idea of a teleological natural order is a central theme in Kant's philosophy of history and is used to justify his project of a universal history.

In the second critique, Kant states that the concept of systematicity plays a central role in his philosophical system. Kant distinguishes between two kinds of systematic unity of nature. The first consists in the formal coherence and hierarchical order of a multitude of empirical laws, which is what he later will call "formal purposiveness" in the Critique of Judgment. The second consists in a teleological order of nature. I shall discuss each in turn.

Theoretical reason strives to bring about a systematic unity of experience, thereby combining the material given by the understanding to a higher unity. (43) The Transcendental Analytic of the Critique of Pure Reason shows that all experience conforms to a set of systematic principles a priori and that it is this experience of a single nature. (44) These results, however, do not yet explain the possibility of forming a systematic whole of empirical knowledge. For example, the synthetic a priori judgments of pure reason do not seem to have any purpose or goal. In other words, it is possible for two empirical laws to be consistent with each other, but it is not clear that they are part of a systematic whole. Kant provides the very same teleological idea of history as the "end of nature" as he does in the Critique of Pure Reason, which is a necessary condition for the possibility of a systematic unity of experience.

Theoretical reason does not operate in a vacuum; it has an internal order that provides the very same teleological idea of history as the "end of nature" as he does in the Critique of Pure Reason, which is a necessary condition for the possibility of a systematic unity of experience.

IV

In section 4, I examine the role of theoretical reason. This examination serves a preparatory role by providing some necessary elements for clarifying the nature of the unity of the two uses of reason in section 5.
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The moral proof for the existence of God is not dependent on the existence of empirical material for teleology, and that even without natural teleology we could still postulate that nature harmonizes with the laws of freedom:

"The moral proof... would still retain its force if we did not find in the world any material at all, or only ambiguous material, for physical teleology... And yet reason... would still find in the concept of freedom, and in the moral ideas based on it, a practically sufficient basis for postulating the concept of the original being, as adequate to these ideas, that is, as a deity, and for postulating nature... as a final purpose that conforms to the concept and the laws of freedom."(77)

The fact that a harmony between nature and morality does not require natural teleology does not mean that there is no natural teleology. Indeed, in the same page in which Kant says that we have grounds to believe in such a harmony, he also claims that the fact that there is "ample material for physical teleology" presents a "desired confirmation" of the harmony between nature and morality. (78)

As a result, Kant is drawn to comparisons between the role of teleology for theoretical and for moral purposes. For example, in a footnote in the Foundations, he describes the relationship between the notion of a realm of ends in natural teleology and in moral theory as follows:

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The thick account builds on the thin account. On the thick account, viewing nature as a teleological realm of ends oriented towards human rational development makes it possible to avoid such moral despair, says Kant, provides a second reason for adopting the teleological view of history. (81)

We are now in a position to draw some conclusions with regard to the unification of theoretical and practical reason. First, this unification is achieved, on Kant's view, through a teleological principle. Thus, practical reason leads to the assumption that nature is organized by a wise creator. This makes it possible to regard moral agency as able to influence the empirical world, and hence to regard practical reason's idea of the world as it ought to be as being harmonized with theoretical reason's idea of the world as it is.

Second, according to Kant, practical reason does not require that we conceive of nature, as created by God, in terms of natural teleology. He maintains that there are independent arguments that support regarding nature as a teleological system, and this makes it possible to give a teleological account of how exactly nature harmonizes with morality, namely, by promoting the rational, and especially moral development (culture) of humankind.

VI

The Primacy of Practical Reason. Kant's talk of uniting theoretical and practical reason should not be taken to suggest that they have equal standing. Kant argues that practical reason has "primacy." There are two respects in which practical reason reaches results that lie beyond the power of theoretical reason. First, from the moral point of view, the belief in the harmony between morality and nature as well as the belief in the existence of God are justified unconditionally, since these beliefs are not justified in accordance with the conscience of duty, and duty is a universal moral principle. By contrast, theoretical reason justifies merely the use of the ideas of God and the systematicity of nature to guide the study of nature and its order. Because we are not unconditionally required to examine nature, the use of these ideas is only conditionally justified. It is justified only "with respect to the worldly use of reason" (respektive auf den Weltgegenstand unserer Vernunft), namely, "when we study nature." (82)

Second, practical reason leads to much stronger assumptions than theoretical reason. It justifies the (subjectively certain) belief that God exists (as a practical foundation) and that nature is systematically ordered by a highest intelligence (as regulative principle). Theoretical reason cannot prove or disprove the existence of God, but according to Kant this is not a problem for theoretical reason. The belief in God facilitates the formation of moral judgments, and it is a moral duty to believe in God. This is why Kant writes that "our practical interest in (morality and the conditions of its possibility) is entitled to overcome our speculative interest in avoiding ungranted claims and the latter must finally commit to the former." (83)

Thus, practical reason has "primacy." (84) What Kant means by this is that theoretical reason is subordinated to practical reason in the sense that it must accept and seek to integrate certain theoretical positions justified by practical reason--such as the belief in the existence of a God who has purposively ordered nature--even though justifying these positions transcends the capacities of theoretical reason. (85)

VII

"Thin" and "Thick" Unification. There is one issue that still requires further discussion, namely, the fact that Kant in effect seems to give two different accounts of the unification of theoretical and practical reason.

There is one issue that still requires further discussion, namely, the fact that Kant in effect seems to give two different accounts of the unification of theoretical and practical reason. We should distinguish—better than Kant did—between a "thin" and a "thick" account. The thin account is more abstract than the thick account, which provides concrete details as to how this harmony is to be conceived of. The thin account states that, from a moral point of view, we need to believe that nature is the product of a wise God who has brought nature and morality into harmony. The thick account does not further specify how this harmony should be conceived of, and therefore does not include (or exclude) natural teleology. For a moral agent it is strictly speaking not necessary to provide a teleological account of nature since the mere faith in harmony can be effective in the world suffice.

The thick account builds on the thin account. On the thick account, viewing nature as a teleological realm of ends oriented towards human rational development provides a concrete representation of how nature harmonizes with morality. This teleological account of nature is defended by theoretical reason, which uses the notion of the moral vocation of humanity as a systematizing principle. The thick, teleological account is not strictly necessary to conceive of the conditions for the possibility of the moral world, and its justifiability depends on whether the empirical world gives us occasion to regard nature as a teleological order. Because Kant argues there are good reasons for viewing nature as a teleological order, he regards the thick account as justified.

As a result, Kant is drawn to comparisons between the role of teleology for theoretical and for moral purposes. For example, in a footnote in the Foundations, he describes the relationship between the notion of a realm of ends in natural teleology and in moral theory as follows:

"When the teleological natural order is conceived as oriented towards human moral development, it provides a representation of how the practical idea can be approximated, by representing nature as conducive to rational development in general and moral development in particular. At the same time, representing nature as teleologically oriented towards the rational and moral development of humans provides an organizational principle for regarding nature as a whole as a teleological system. Thus, the two uses of reason are not only not in conflict, but they lead both to the (thin) view of nature as divine design. (87) Theoretical and practical reason are unified or combined through the belief that nature harmonizes with morality. Their unification does not depend on whether there is any ground for judging nature from a teleological point of view. Kant's conviction that teleological judgments are justified (if only regulatively) enables him to defend, in addition, a thick version of their unification."
The Unity of Reason and the Critique of Judgment. Part of what the preceding discussions show is that, contrary to what many commentators assert, the famous passage in the introduction to the Critique of Judgment,(88) about the "immense gulf" between nature and freedom, does not state a new problem. Rather, it is a restatement of the problem of the unification of theoretical and practical reason in the Critique of Pure Reason. In the third critique, Kant states that while no transition from nature to the realm of freedom is possible, it is practically necessary to conceive of freedom as having an influence in the world of sense, because such a conception is demanded. Kant concludes: "It must be possible to think of nature as being such that the lawfulness in its form will harmonize with at least the possibility of the purposes that we are to achieve in nature according to laws of freedom."(89) In the rest of the introduction, he argues that the transcendental concept of the purposiveness of nature provides the connection between nature and freedom. (90) Through this concept we cognize the possibility of the final purpose of nature, which can become actual only in nature and in accordance with its laws. (91) This transcendental concept of the purposiveness of nature, however, is nothing else than the concept of nature as a product of the final causality of an intelligent designer. This concept appears already in the first critique.

Despite this and the many other continuities between Kant's account of the 1780's and that of the Critique of Judgment discussed above, there are also some very significant differences. Commentators who claim that Kant here argues for the unity of reason (either for the first time or as an elaboration of his earlier views)(91) overlook the fact that the third critique does not even offer an account of the unity of theoretical and practical reason at all. As Paul Guyer has tightly observed in reassigning the concept of purposiveness to the faculty of judgment, Kant strips theoretical reason of an important function. This reassignment, however, does not represent Kant's last step on the long road towards a coherent doctrine of the unity of reason— as Guyer suggests— but rather a radical alteration of this doctrine. After having developed the doctrine of the unity of theoretical and practical reason in the 1780's, Kant now seems suddenly to reduce reason to practical reason, erasing technical foundations of mental powers. (92) The notion that there is one and the same faculty of reason that is used theoretically and practically virtually disappears, and instead Kant now focuses on the relationship between the understanding, (practical) reason, and judgment. (93) Instead of unifying theoretical and practical reason, the concept of the purposiveness of nature now "connects the legislations of the understanding and reason." (94)

Despite the many continuities, then, the Critique of Judgment seems also to depart from Kant's previous account of the unity of reason. (95) It lies beyond the scope of this essay, however, to work out the details of the later view. I have mentioned it here to underscore the fact that if the proposed account of Kant's 1780's doctrine of the unity of reason is convincing, it necessitates a reevaluation of the relationship between this doctrine and the third critique.

Conclusion. Kant's claims about the unity of reason are consistent. The claim that theoretical and practical reason are the same and one merely applies differently, should be seen as a regulative principle based on reason's own interest in systematicity, and not as a claim to knowledge. This makes it consistent with the claim that we do not yet have insight into reason's unity. Furthermore, the claim that theoretical and practical reason are united should be read as referring to the compatibility of and connection between the two uses of this one faculty. This reading not only resolves the apparent tension between Kant's three claims, but it also brings into view Kant's account of the unity of reason before the Critique of Judgment. (97)

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(1) Critique of Practical Reason (hereafter "CPrR"). 5:121; see Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, 4:391. All references to Kant are to the standard volume number and pagination of Kant's Gesammelte Schriften. Ausgabe der koniglich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900–).

Translations are my own.

(2) Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, 4:391. Kant here speaks of "speculative" reason. For purposes of terminological clarity, I shall use the term "theoretical" throughout, although Kant uses both the terms theoretical and speculative reasons (see for example, CPrR, 5:5, 50, 54-5, 89, and 119-121). He sometimes labels the use of speculative reason as a subset of the use of theoretical reason, but this distinction is not important for the purposes of this exposition. Example, Critique of Pure Reason (hereafter "CPR"), A815/B833. All references to the Critique of Pure Reason are to the pages of the first [A] and second [B] editions); with regard to theoretical versus speculative cognition, A633-5/B661-3.

(3) CPR, 5:91.

(4) For example, CPR, A815-6/B843-4.

(5) Paul Guyer, "The Unity of Reason: Pure Reason as Practical Reason in Kant's Early Conception of the Transcendental Dialectic," The Monist 72 (1989): 139-67. Guyer nonetheless believes Kant's doctrine of "the unity of reason," but not as the unity of theoretical and practical reason. Rather, he uses the phrase to refer to a general propositional commitment to the propitiation of "the unity of reason" as a whole. girl's concept of freedom— as Guyer suggests— but rather a radical alteration of this doctrine. After having developed the doctrine of the unity of theoretical and practical reason in the 1780's, Kant now seems suddenly to reduce reason to practical reason, erasing technical foundations of mental powers. (92) The notion that there is one and the same faculty of reason that is used theoretically and practically virtually disappears, and instead Kant now focuses on the relationship between the understanding, (practical) reason, and judgment. (93) Instead of unifying theoretical and practical reason, the concept of the purposiveness of nature now "connects the legislations of the understanding and reason." (94)


(7) For example, CPR, A815-6/B833; Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, 4:393.


(9) Konhardt, Die Einheit der Vernunft, 10.

(10) Neiman, The Unity of Reason, most clearly, p. 128; Konhardt, Die Einheit der Vernunft, 11.

(11) CPR, A645/B673.

(12) CPR, A645/B673.

(13) See Konhardt, Die Einheit der Vernunft, ch. 1.

(14) For example, CPR, A682-6/B670-41. I leave aside the regulative ideas mentioned in the first part of the appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, which are based on the idea of a supreme intelligence; CPR, A642-68/B670-96.

(15) Kant is fond of pointing out that theoretical and practical reason employ the same three ideas (the ideas of the soul, of the world or freedom, and of God): see CPR, A827/B836; CPR, 5:1-2, and 134-8. There are notorious problems with this claim as well as with the (unstable) roles he assigns to the three ideas, but since these problems are not directly relevant to the present topic, I leave them aside here.

(16) For example, CPR, A808/B836; Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, 4:433.

(17) Neiman fails to recognize the importance of the concept of purposiveness, but Konhardt brings it out well. See, Konhardt, Die Einheit der Vernunft, 150-82.

(18) In his review of Neiman's book, Paul Guyer has recently made an analogous criticism regarding Neiman's discussion of the relationship between the realms of nature and freedom. See above, note 5.

(19) CPR, 5:91, emphasis mine.

(20) It might be suggested that when Kant says that theoretical and practical reason are two uses of one and the same faculty, he is merely claiming to know that this is so, whereas the admission that he must still achieve insight into the justification of the first claim. This attempt at reconciling the two statements, however, faces the problem that Kant cannot consistently claim the status of knowledge for the first claim as long as he cannot justify it.

(21) Critique of Pure Reason, A299/B356; see also Critique of Judgment (hereafter "CJ"), 5:401.

(22) Critique of Pure Reason, A329/B386.


(24) CPR, 5:121.


(26) CPR, A686/B704. See also Kant's discussion of reason's "right of need" to "presuppose and assume as a subjective ground something that she is not allowed to claim to know through objective ground," in "What is Orientation in Thinking?", 8:137.

(27) CPR, 5:91.

(28) CPR, A683/B711.

(29) "Vernunftseinheit" here refers to the unity established by reason.

(31) In his analysis of the unity of the subject's cognitive powers, Dieter Henrich has argued that this unity has the status of a subjective principle. The reading of the unity of reason I present in this essay is compatible with Henrich's analysis, although he argues for it differently and discusses all cognitive powers, not merely reason. See "On the Unity of Subjectivity" trans. Gunter Zoller, in Dieter Henrich, The Unity of Reason: Essays on Kant's Philosophy, ed. Richard Velkley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 26-33.

(32) For example, CPR, A682-3/B710-1.


(34) CPR, A649/B677.

(35) CPR, 5:121.


(38) CPR, 5:121.

(39) CPR, 5:121.

(40) CPR, 5:121. The term "cognition" (Erkenntnis) should not be read in the sense of an empirical cognition, of course, but in the sense of a conceptual cognition as explained in Critique of Pure Reason, A320/B376-7.

(41) CPR, A815/B843.

(42) CPR, 5:146.


(44) CPR, A216/B263.

(45) CPR, A650-1/B678-9, see also A653-4/B681-2.

(46) CPR, A651/B679.


(48) CPR, A678/B706.

(49) CPR, A670/B698.

(50) The fact that there is continuity between the first and the third critiques in this regard is important for the purposes of this paper. I do not wish to suggest, however, that the third critique is simply a continuation of the first. Rudolf Makkreel has emphasized the discontinuity between the roles of theoretical reason and reflective judgment, in that the latter, but not the former, includes aesthetic judgment. Rudolf Makkreel, "Regulative and Reflective Uses of Purposiveness in Kant," Southern Journal of Philosophy 30, Supplement (1991): 49-63 and Imagination and Interpretation: The Hermeneutic Import of the "Critique of Judgment" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

(51) CJ, 5:180-1.

(52) CJ, 5:181-86.


(54) CPR, A688/B716.

(55) CPR, A691/B719. Kant claims that one can make many discoveries with the help of the teleological principle. In contrast to the Critique of Judgment, however, Kant does not yet distinguish here between external and internal purposiveness. He applies the teleological principle to the shape of the earth, to mountains and seas, as well as to organisms; CPR, A687-8/B715-6.

(56) He develops the argument in the second part of the "Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic," but because nothing in the first part indicates that a systematic unity in terms of mechanical-causal laws is insufficient? the introduction of teleology comes unexpectedly. It is no surprise that it has eluded many commentators.

(57) Again, the fact that there is continuity in this particular regard should not be taken to suggest that the differences between the two critiques are negligible. Importantly, the very justification of teleological judgment changes from the first critique to the third. In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant justifies the teleological view of nature by appealing to reason's interest in systematic unity, and he immediately applies the teleological principle to all of nature. In the Critique of Judgment, by contrast, he first justifies the use of teleological judgments in the case of organisms, and subsequently broadens their scope of application.

(58) CJ, 5:427, 429.


(60) CJ, 5:431. Nature cannot be oriented toward making humans moral, of course, since morality can be the result only of a free decision by individual agents. On this issue, see Allison, "The Gulf between Nature and Freedom," 47.

(61) See CJ, 5:431, 432.


(63) "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," 8:17-18, 29.

(64) "Idea for a Universal History," 8:25; see also 30.


(66) CPR, A807-9/B835-47.


(68) CPR, A808-9/B836-7.

(69) CPR, A808/B836, see A815/B843.

(70) Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 4:433.

(71) Many problems plague Kant's account of the moral world. One difficulty is that Kant works with two notions of the highest good. In the passages quoted he speaks of it as a moral world of virtuous beings who produce their own and each other's happiness. In different passages in the same work, he defines it as happiness in proportion to virtue in an individual. Regardless of which of these conceptions of the highest good he discusses, Kant needs the assumption that nature and morality are brought into harmony by a highest intelligence.


(73) CPR, A815/B843.

harmony of the laws of nature and of morality, see Velkley, Freedom and the End of Reason, ch. 4, esp. pp. 89-95. (75) CPR, A815/B843.

(76) CPrR, 5:145.


(78) C J, 5:479; emphasis mine. Although it confirms the moral proof, the possibility of regarding nature teleologically does not itself suffice to justify the assumption of the existence of God, and hence it cannot replace the moral proof; C J, 5:479.

(79) C J, secs. 67, 82-4.


(81) "Idea for a Universal History," 8:30.

(82) CPR, A698/B726; see "What is Orientation in Thinking?" 8:139.


(84) CPrR, 5:121.


(87) Of course, it should be kept in mind that the epistemic status of this view is that of a regulative idea in one case, and of a practical postulate in the other.


(89) C J, 5:176.

(90) C J, 5:196.

(91) See notes 6 and 9 above.

(92) Kant does not discuss what, if anything, is left of theoretical reason and its three ideas. He occasionally seems to presuppose its continued existence (for example, at C J, 5:342, and 401), but he does not provide a revised account of its function.

(93) C J, 5:198; see also 20:245-46.


(95) C J, 5:195.

(96) Kant’s reorganization of the cognitive faculties may have been motivated more by his discovery of an a priori principle that could ground his aesthetic theory, and less by a dissatisfaction with his own previous theory of the unity of reason. In that case, the newly prominent faculty of judgment introduces a problem for Kant by unsettling his previous doctrine of the unity of reason. I shall not investigate these deeper motives here, however, as the main argument of this paper does not depend on the motives for the change in Kant’s view.

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