

*The starry heavens above and the moral law within: Kant's
grounding of freedom in experience by way of a
principle of intellectual causality, discovered in his
third Critique*

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

at the University of St Andrews

January 2021

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Abstract

Kant claims in his third *Critique* (1790) to have proven that the idea of freedom is *scibillum*, known with certainty. My aim is simply to take his claim seriously. This involves the attempt, which Kant himself suggests in the first *Critique* is key to properly understanding a philosopher, to form a plausible ‘idea’ of his system. I do so by interpreting it according to the *end* that he claims. I contend that Kant realises this claimed outcome by demonstrating the necessary effects of a purely intellectual causality in a certain kind of experience in inner sense: pleasure in beauty. This, I argue, then allows him to complete his proof of the reality of freedom. I also present evidence to suggest that Kant knew what must be involved in this proof much earlier than is generally conceded. It is also my view that this interpretation is of no detriment to the consistency of his philosophical system as a whole; in fact, it allows an understanding that fits with his claims. The arguments involved in this thesis involve opposing the majority view that certain concepts appeared first in Kant’s third *Critique* and must also challenge accepted perspectives on parts of Kant’s other relevant works. It will be necessary to examine aspects of Kant’s epistemology and metaphysics, his empirical psychology, aesthetics, and his moral and theoretical philosophy. In such a broad body of work as Kant’s, it can be easy to become overwhelmed and lost, or even to find corroboration for views that are at odds with the general trend of his thinking. In a best attempt to avoid this, I will throughout regulate my own idea of his system and constrain my investigations by remaining conscious of his claims, i.e., by way of a thread tethered to Kant’s own claimed conclusion.

Acknowledgements

I must first acknowledge the humility, advice, encouragement, time, and patience gifted to me by my first supervisor, Prof. Jens Timmermann and my second, Dr. Simon Hope.

It has been a privilege to have been supervised by Prof. Timmermann. His scholarship, authorship and quite awesome breadth of knowledge is humbling and inspirational. I know that I'll undoubtedly wonder for however long I happen to be writing: *Would Prof. Timmermann like it?*

Dr. Hope's guidance helped me to ground my plans and work harder to ensure that my research and goals remained focused. My grateful thanks for conveying a genuine interest in this project alongside the generous practical advice.

I would additionally like to thank the philosophy departments at St Andrews and Stirling. The academic staff work so very hard to make the course interesting, challenging, and broad. They achieve all this and more. Their enthusiasm for their students is genuine and generous. My gratitude goes also to the administration staff in philosophy and across the universities, who provide such wonderful and varied services and advice.

I would like to thank Dr. Antonino Falduto, who guided me through the maze of Hegelian morality and political philosophy, broadened my knowledge of German Idealism, and helped me a great deal with my writing.

Thank you to the rest of the postgraduate students for having the good grace and fortitude to listen to my best efforts at the Friday Seminars. Thanks also to Kant's Scots, the Kant Colloquium, the Kant reading group, the non-Western philosophy reading group, the Edinburgh Early Modern Network, the Ancient Philosophy work-in-progress group, and others, for allowing me to learn.

My thanks (in no particular order) also go to Harley for being a good friend and a better philosopher; to Diderik for helping me better understand conceptual engineering and for showing the world that tartan trousers are acceptable; to Natalie for helping me understand many philosophical things that were beyond me; to the whole MLitt class of 2018 and to those of the MLitt class of 2019 I had the pleasure of meeting. Thanks for making an oldie feel welcome.

I am hugely thankful to my friend, Dr. Costas Athanasopoulos, for opening my eyes to the possibilities of philosophy. It is rare in this world to find someone with such intellectual honesty and deep love of knowledge in all areas.

Most importantly: Thanks to all my family and friends for being my sphere and my tether. You are insightful, interesting, ingenious, and constantly the source of far greater lessons than any book or university could offer.

Finally:

Here's to the Jacks of all Trades! (We need your irreducible epiphanies).

Purely you can claim to take aim at truth,
while others worship the egoist's sharpening competences.

That naïve vanity: a contracted image, it engenders
folly, and faith without lashing reason.

Faith, virtually, in nothing: a strange nihilism.

I hope we realise

in time.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used to refer to Kant's works (chronologically arranged):

<i>UNH</i>	Universal natural history and theory of the heavens or essay on the constitution and the mechanical origin of the whole universe according to Newtonian principles (1755)
<i>Inq</i>	Inquiry concerning the distinctness of the principles of natural theology and morality (1764)
<i>ID</i>	On the form and principles of the sensible and the intelligible world [Inaugural Dissertation] (1770)
<i>AnthC</i>	Anthropology Collins (1772-1773)
<i>BL</i>	The Blomberg Logic (early-1770s)
<i>ML₁</i>	Metaphysic L ₁ (mid-1770s)
<i>MMrong</i>	Metaphysic Mrongovius (1782-1782)
<i>Pro</i>	Prolegomena to any future metaphysics that will be able to come forward as science (1783)
<i>G</i>	Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785)
<i>MFS</i>	Metaphysical foundations of natural science (1786)
<i>CPrR</i>	Critique of Practical Reason (1788)
<i>OTPP</i>	On the use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy (1788)
<i>AnthB</i>	Anthropology Busolt (1788-1789)
<i>CoJ</i>	Critique of the Power of Judgment (1790)
<i>TPP</i>	Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch (1795)
<i>AnthP</i>	Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view (1798)
<i>JL</i>	The Jasche Logic (1800)
<i>LPDR</i>	Lectures on the philosophical doctrine of religion (1817)

The following further abbreviation is used:

OLD Glare's Oxford Latin Dictionary

Introduction

i. A note on method

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, at the beginning of the transcendental dialectic, Kant counsels those who wish to understand the works of Plato. The guidance extends to reading any philosopher. Philosophers are not always in perfect command of their own concepts. Nor are their concepts always determined to the extent that they can function as static points to which we can fix our interpretations. An example adduced in Guyer's and Wood's introduction to the 1998 Cambridge edition of the first *Critique*, is applicable. They note that in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770), Kant 'indiscriminately' mixes regulative and constitutive principles, signalling that this distinction was not yet fully determined at this time (p.45). The reader, therefore, must look ahead and take a broader overview to understand what Kant was trying to capture with the distinction. Philosophers err, forget, contradict, revise their view, and discover new connections. Should a concept seem confused, it behoves us to gain a broad overview to discover the general trend in its application and its fit with the whole picture. It is useful to 'compare the thoughts that an author expresses about a subject, in ordinary speech as well as in writings', and in doing so, perhaps 'it is not at all unusual to find that we understand him even better than he understood himself' (*CPuR*, A314).

In the 1787 B-Preface of this work, Kant implies that a similar methodology should be applied to understanding his own philosophy, albeit while responding to those who have criticised the 1781 A-edition. We should not arbitrarily individuate concepts from the system and try to analyse them in isolation before concluding that the system fails. It is plainly possible that his system may fail, but a correct interpretation of its components is unlikely if devoid of systematic context. Kant writes that,

‘in any piece of writing apparent contradictions can be ferreted out if individual passages are torn out of their context and compared with each other, especially in a piece of informal discourse that in the eyes of those who rely on the judgment of others cast a disadvantageous light on that piece of writing but that can be very easily resolved by someone who has mastered the idea of the whole.’ (*CPuR*, Bvliiv)¹

A durable philosophical system, he continues on the same page, is only strengthened by finding and resolving these contradictions. This ‘effect of action and reaction [...] will serve only to polish away its rough spots, and [...] produce the required elegance’.

¹ Kant’s *Correspondence* (1999) includes letters during the period following the publishing of the A-edition which may suggest targets of Kant’s comments here, perhaps including Mendelssohn and Tetens who were not forthcoming in their reviews. See also Sassen’s *Kant’s Early Critics: The Empiricist Critique of the Theoretical Philosophy* (2000) for additional discussion.

This state of *elegance* is, of course, where all parts of the system form a complete and coherent whole.² Now, to represent every component of Kant's philosophy in the same thought in anticipation of judging its coherency is humanly impossible. Neither would I expect every detail of such a Gordian systematic artefact to be perfect anyway. There are undoubtedly rough spots in any system. Still, I would not deny myself the possible acquisition of an *idea* of Kant's philosophy, happily under ongoing recalibration, to refine in years to follow through collaborative to-and-fro with historical and contemporary others. Acquiring such an idea is necessary even to recognise where the rough spots are.

We can more easily grasp an overall idea in cases where we cannot get to grips with every detail. The same is true in any such domain of experience. For example, it is a much simpler task to get an idea of a friend's character in general than to cognise every action. Are they a beneficent, honest, cruel, or careless character? Once we have an idea, each subsequent observed act can be judged as more or less in harmony with it. Isolating actions and examining them could never produce a definition of this character. It is not required, nor is it likely, that any single act perfectly conform to it. Similarly, a societal leadership may claim grand utopian, libertarian plans yet revert to cruelty, misrepresentation, and coercion in the face of crises. Therefrom, the 'societal character' an individual has acquired an idea of will not match the stated intention. There will be disharmony between the stated 'end' and the generalisation we form from our experience. We should revise our idea of that society's character and its goals if this is a regular occurrence.

² Kant often speaks of a complete idea, concept, genus, or domain as a 'sphere' (e.g., *CPuRB*112; *CPuR* A655-6/B683-4). I do intend to encourage the image of the *idea*, concept, or domain as a sphere undergoing a continuous process of polishing or refining.

A difficulty can arise here, however. An individual may have sufficient reasons to think the character (whether a friend's or a society's) they represent to themselves is correct. Moreover, these reasons can have objectively sufficient grounds, meaning that any other subject would produce this same representation under the same conditions if we all share the same cognitive processes. Yet it is also certain that every individual will have different experiences of the same person or society, likely resulting in differing ideas of which they have both subjectively and objectively sufficient reasons to be convinced. This must result in disagreement between equally valid-seeming positions.³ Something further is needed if we are to have agreement from every possible rational perspective, i.e., if we are to have genuinely universal and objective truth that is valid for all, rather than contingent truth affected by subjective preference and experience.⁴

Things like 'characters' are perspectival and dynamical; ideas subjectively produced according to subjective experience, tending toward a certain harmony. Nobody could truly claim to have 'complete' knowledge of the character of any target-object. *Stated* intentions, clearly, are never truly verifiable for an observer of actions. The motivations *we* attribute to observed acts are also impossible to verify and vary depending on our own experience. However, we are able to pick out *patterns* of activity and generalise so that we can form an idea of a character, a general direction of travel.

³ Our predicament is the same as with the blind men and the elephant in the well-known Indian fable; the subject of Saxe's (1816-1877) poem *The Blind Men and the Elephant* (1872 [1992], pp.150-1)

⁴ The sense of agreement I intend to capture in this thesis, is also found in Chignell's discussion of what it is to have an objective ground: "the fact that a ground is objective means that it is something that all rational inquirers in the same situation could take to be indicative of the truth." (2007, p.41). Chignell's paper also considers the probabilistic flavour of Kant's epistemology which I also go on to briefly reflect in this example.

We can, with practice, even make predictions based on this. My own predictions are confirmed or otherwise in experience, but this only proves or disproves *my* prediction and allows me to refine *my* idea of the character at issue. The more experience of the object of my character-judgment I have, the more probable it may be that *my* idea will track the true character of the object.

I might even, by luck, have the representation correct, but unless I am omniscient, I cannot know that. We lack the certainty of something truly objective that would allow all to agree. It seems that anyone who assigns a character to something has *a truth, perhaps an increasingly probable truth, but not the whole truth*. It is interesting to note that, for Kant, developing a character trait such as beneficence (such as I wondered about my friend) is an *imperfect* duty. *Perfect* duties define those acts that are obligatory under all circumstances, normally expressed as duties of omission. Imperfect duties, in contrast, are those such as the development of talents or certain character-traits where the action is itself not specified. A beneficent character can be expressed, refined, and strengthened through a vast range of optional actions in a vast range of contingent contexts—and perfect conformity of actions with character is not necessary (c.f., *MoM* 6:390, 6:421ff.).

I will now return to Kant's advice on approaching philosophical systems. He makes a case for a probabilistic hermeneutic approach of sorts to his philosophy. Moreover, he says in the first *Critique* and elsewhere that we must free ourselves of dogmatism, i.e., the philosophical bias of his empiricist and rationalist critics.⁵ These individuals

⁵ See Sassen (2000) for a broad discussion of both attitudes of criticism.

rely on the systems they already subscribe to when assessing individuated parts of Kant's system; perhaps an impossible trap to avoid fully. If I judge your idea of my friend's character against my own as the standard of truth, I may well appraise yours as simply wrong. The hermeneutics Kant recommends allows for confirmation or revision of our general idea of the philosophical system (or indeed a particular concept) as we encounter new information.

The process is the same whether we consider philosophy, a human character, or any other domain of experience. Thus, in approaching a philosophical system, the deeper and broader the bank of information we have, the better our ability to discover the overall trajectory of the philosopher's writing. Subsequently we could predict how they ought to approach different problems if they were to be true to their system. When we find a failure to approach a problem in a way that accords with the general idea as we envisage it, then we can consider that the probability of our envisagement being correct is lowered. Alternatively, we might revise our idea of the philosopher's intention if there are repeated divergences between our idea and the evidence⁶. It may be, though, that the philosopher has simply made a mistake. In that case, we are entitled to reframe a concept or argument in a way consistent with the bigger picture, as Guyer and Wood suggested. Kant's request of his readers, in fact, empowers us to do so.

⁶ For a discussion of the hermeneutics of Christian August Crusius and his notion of probabilistic knowledge, which is very much aligned with Kant's recommendations in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, see Carlos Spöerhase's 2010 article *A case against skepticism: On Christian August Crusius' logic of hermeneutic probability*.

These can be difficult tasks. Consider how it might feel to read a lengthy philosophy paper with no stated goal and no conclusion. Throughout your reading of that paper, you would have to revise your idea of where it may be heading, of its internal criteria for success. It is helpful if the author tells us what their goal is and better if they say whether that goal is met. This gives a head-start to building an idea of the whole since we have the target toward which the arguments ought to fly. The author may have mistakenly claimed success, but this is unimportant to the approach taken. With the end in mind, we can judge each argument as being supportive or detrimental to its achievement. We can also see whether a mistake (a rough spot) in a particular part can be refined and brought within the sphere of the idea. As students, we are advised that one mark of a good paper is that it should tell the reader what is intended in an introduction and what has been achieved in a conclusion. The reader thereby has an idea of the trajectory of the paper. In sum, it provides the end toward which the arguments (the means to that end) should be oriented and so makes it easier to understand its parts in the context of a unity.

The method I intend to rely on is broadly that recommended by Kant himself. It is the same as that which is commonsensically recommended as an approach to writing (or reading) philosophy. Therefore, I begin from stated conclusions so to consistently think the parts of Kant's philosophy as parts of the whole *he* envisages and to reduce the risk, as far as possible, of judging those parts against my own unwitting deference to other systems or interpretations. Kant's stated conclusions give us the objective 'ideal' toward which any *elegant* interpretation should tend. I will range broadly across Kant's work that I may refine my idea of his system, yet my refinements must always be guided, regulated, or tied to reality by this ideal. Without taking Kant's stated

conclusions seriously, the danger is that every reader of Kant may pick out a different idea of the system, without any way of knowing whether it is a true representation. As with subjective representations of a character, the assent of the reader to their idea of Kant's philosophy could be sufficiently grounded both subjectively and objectively, but any agreement between readers would be mere luck without something further that connects *their* ideas, necessarily, with the truth of his system. If Kant believes his system achieves something specific, then surely this serves as an objectively agreeable point of convergence, a nexus for all subjective interpretations, or ideas, of his philosophy. It tethers our ideas of his system to a static common point against which we can judge their success or otherwise.

There are, certainly, debates around whether and where Kant's intentions changed in fundamental ways during his critical period, though I believe there is a consistency as it relates to the subject of this thesis. Note, as explained, that no body of work is perfect and not every single detail must utterly conform to the overall character, or idea, of the work for us to identify that idea or compare it to a stated end; just as my beneficent friend is always more or less beneficent, never perfectly so. Rather, the *overall character* of the philosophical works should lead us to the claimed end, and we have permission from Kant himself to ferret out the interpretation that works with his system. I will, therefore, construe Kant's work so to be conducive to his stated achievement while preserving his system. So, let us begin with Kant's own claims.

ii. Kant's end and my intention

Kant writes in *What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany Since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff* (1793/1804), that there must be 'a stage of metaphysics for [the] transition' between the actuality of the highest good and pure practical reason, i.e., between the sensible and the supersensible (20:294). In the published introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) he similarly states that,

'the power of judgment, provides the mediating concept between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom, which makes possible the transition from the purely theoretical to the purely practical [...] in the concept of a purposiveness of nature; for thereby is the possibility of the final end, which can become actual only in nature and in accord with its laws, cognized' (5:196).

The purposiveness of nature, somehow, bridges 'the great chasm that separates the supersensible from the appearances' (*CofJ*, 5:195).⁷ Furthermore, he tells us here that

⁷ Kant is already clear in the first *Critique* that although the natural and the moral are 'initially in two separate systems', they are 'ultimately in a single philosophical system' (*CPuR*, A840/B868; c.f., *OTPP*, 8:159). That nature and morality must belong to the same philosophical 'system' means that, at a higher level, they belong to a single domain with its own principle. In *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795), we are gifted a further hint as to how such a correspondence works when he writes that the *end of nature* can be viewed as a *transcendental idea*, in which case it is described as the moral end that is an imperative given by reason; and from a practical perspective it is viewed as a *dogmatic idea*, which is here described by Kant as 'the concept of perpetual peace' which we thereby have a 'duty to work toward [...] by using that mechanism of nature'. Both perspectives move 'in concert' toward this end (*TPP*, 8:362). He also says that a certain *purposiveness* belonging to nature itself which works 'to create harmony through discord among people, even against their own will', and which directs us 'toward the objective final end of the human species' (*TPP*, 8:360-1). This coincides with the view of Richard Dean, who articulates Kant's belief 'that nature has as its final end the progress and eventual perfection of humans as rational

while the sensible cannot determine the supersensible, the opposite is possible, i.e., there is nothing contradictory in the thought that the practical laws of freedom can affect appearances.⁸ There can be ‘consequences of the former on the latter’ (*Ibid.*). We can expect there to be an effect in the sensible realm, produced by ‘the causality of freedom (of pure and practical reason)’ (*CoJ*, 5:196n*). Such causality, though, cannot come about via the order of efficient causes arising in nature. From this, we can anticipate that Kant needs to produce some proof through experience of the causality of freedom arising from an intelligible ground.

We receive a clue to the nature of this proof when, in discussing the pleasure in aesthetic judgment he says:

“The spontaneity in the play of the faculties of cognition, the agreement of which contains the ground of this pleasure, makes that concept suitable for mediating the connection of the domain of the concept of nature with the concept of freedom in its consequences [...]” (*CoJ*, 5:197)

The feeling of pleasure arising from the ‘free play of the faculties of cognition’ in aesthetic judgment is therefore key to the transition Kant claims to have established (*CoJ*, 5:287). In §91 of the third *Critique*, he is even clearer about the detail of his achievement. He says that the purely rational idea of freedom can claim objective

beings who, as rational, will recognise and act on the priority of rationally legislated moral principles’ (2014, p.228, p.230).

⁸ Similarly stated in the third antinomy (*CPrR*, A444/B472-A451/B479). Paraphrased in the second *Critique* (*CPrR*, 5:114).

reality and 'be counted amongst the *scibilia*' as knowledge, as a fact (5:468). It can be so considered because of some experience that concords with practical laws. In the final section of this *Critique*, the 'General Remark on the Teleology', he quite precisely tells us that 'the concept of freedom [...] sufficiently proves its reality through the causality of reason with regard to certain effects in the sensible world possible by means of it, and which are irrefutably postulated in the moral law' (5:475).⁹

The main purpose herein is to demonstrate how Kant, consistently with his system, goes about providing objective confirmation in experience of the causality of freedom, i.e., of a purely intellectual causality. Since Kant claims this achievement, we must interpret him accordingly so long as his system in general is not jeopardised. We must take care to ensure, as far as possible, not to construe him through the lens of other philosophical doctrines, as he warns. Although I will, at points, claim that Kant is operating in ways that have only more recently begun to be studied seriously, I do so only as a *consequence* of interpreting him according to his own stated end. If he is successful, he supplies objective reality for the idea of freedom and indeed the moral law. I will outline the intermediary steps I take toward the aim of this thesis at the end of this introduction. First, however, I would present some background material which grounds the arguments contained in the following chapters.

⁹ If Kant is successful, this gainsays the common assertion that the fact of reason cannot have objective sufficiency (e.g., Pasternack, 2011, p.315). In turn, this raises questions about how to reconcile the epistemological status of God and immortality with the claimed reality of practical reason and freedom. This, however, will not fall within the sphere of this thesis.

iii. Terms, conditions, entitlements, and orthodoxy

It is the standard view that Kant introduces *reflecting judgment* as a distinct power of judgment, generating a new *a priori* principle, in his 1790 work, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* [*CoJ*].¹⁰ He classifies it as distinct from *determining judgment*, which is the focus in the 1781/87 *Critique of Pure Reason* [*CPuR*] (Allison, 1990, p.77; Hanna, 2018). Kant describes judgment and its internal distinction, in short, as follows. He says that ‘[t]he power of judgment in general is the faculty for thinking of the particular as contained under the universal’ (*CoJ*, IV 5:179). This general faculty subsumes a further distinction between *determining* and *reflecting* judgment. *Determining judgment* operates where ‘the universal (the rule, the principle, the law)’, is already present in the mental toolkit we (humans) apply to experience (*ibid.*). This can relate to judgments of all kinds, whether experiential, moral, or whatever. In experience, however, it can bring particulars under the universal *a priori* conditions for all possible experience, i.e., the categories of the understanding. In this domain, general concepts are related to individual appearances via transcendental schemata (*CPuR*, A144-6/B183-5).

Simplistically, because our task is not an investigation of the categories or transcendental schemata, this expresses something like the measure and style to which the individual members—if they are to be placed under the general concept—must partake in the categories (Quantity, Quality, Relation, Modality) (*CPuR*, A80/B160,

¹⁰ Reflecting judgment is sometimes referred to as ‘reflexive’ and ‘reflective’ judgment (e.g., Meredith’s translation of the *Critique of Judgment* uses ‘reflective’, while Philippe Huneman uses ‘reflexive’ in his essay, *Reflexive Judgment and Wolffian Embryology* (2007). However, Guyer’s Editor’s introduction (2000) to the translation of the *CoJ* used in this paper notes that ‘reflecting’ maintains the sense of present activity that the German *reflectirend* does (xlvi).

A137-9/B176-8). Determining judgments are *judgments of cognition* or, specifically in experience, *empirical judgments*. It will also be important for us to gain a flavour of what Kant means by an ‘experience’. I will discuss external empirical experience and judgment in the first chapter, though inner sense-experience and moral-experience will feature in later parts.

For our more immediate needs, it is enough to consider how it is that Kant describes empirical experience in the opening to the ‘Analogies of Experience’:

“Experience is an empirical cognition, i.e., a cognition that determines an object through perceptions. It is therefore a synthesis of perceptions, which is not itself contained in perception but contains the synthetic unity of the manifold of perception in one consciousness, which constitutes what is essential in a cognition of objects of the senses, i.e., of experience (not merely of the intuition or sensation of the senses).” (*CPuR*, A176/B218-9)

Unified empirical cognitions, which are themselves particular representations¹¹, are thereby determined. Moreover, we see that the *unity* of the manifold of perceptions is not something that is *given* to us in the sense-perception of objects. Therefore, there

¹¹ Kant sometimes uses ‘representation’ also to describe the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding that are available through an act of ‘original acquisition’. He explains this in his 1790 work, *On a discovery whereby any new critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one*. Original acquisition entails that ‘the cognitive faculty [...] brings them about, *a priori*, out of itself.’ These do not exist elsewhere, as we would normally expect if we were to ‘acquire’ something. Rather, they are original in us and acquisition describes the way that they are brought forth *a priori* via our subjectively innate grounds. No representations are themselves ‘innate’. These grounds ‘[make] it possible that these representations can arise in this and no other manner and be related to objects which are not yet given’. (8:221-223)

can be *something* knowably correct about these unified manifolds in the sense that they are structured by grounding *a priori* rules that are found in *our rational nature* rather than passively received through the senses (*CPuR*, A176/B219).

An example containing an important distinction to introduce here is mathematical knowledge which Kant considers to be *certain*—a notion touched upon already and one that we shall revisit. The axioms upon which, for example, geometry is grounded and of course upon which we can all agree, come *a priori* from ourselves and require no antecedent experience (*CPuR*, B14). These definitions are precise and any difference in the magnitudes of particular instances, i.e., in their external relations, has no bearing on the definition applying. We can ‘construct’ particular objects in intuition which are fully describable by the general definition, also called by Kant their ‘characteristic marks’ (*Inq*, 2:276-7 & 292).¹²

Mathematical knowledge is *certain*, firstly, because the rules or axioms which define the general mathematical concept are precisely those which determine the constructed particular object (whether in the imagination or in the external world). They determine the possible internal relations between its parts and thereby the range of possible external relations. The precise nature of these external relations is unknowable by mere analysis of those concepts.¹³ Our assent to the truth of the axioms is subjectively and objectively sufficient and valid for all. We have a necessarily corresponding intuition

¹² Characteristic marks are equated with *universal truths* in the *CPuR*’s ‘The Doctrine of Method’: “[O]ne can derive universal truths about all triangles from such a singular display of an individual triangle since the particular determinations of the displayed object, e.g., the magnitude of its sides and angles, are “entirely indifferent” to the ability of the rendered triangle to exhibit the general concept <triangle> (A714/B742).”

¹³ For a discussion and interesting proof of how mathematical certainty is synthetic, see: (Anderson, 2004 [especially pp.517-30])

which, when produced, demonstrates their possibility and correctness, and can be agreed upon regardless of the actually instantiated external relations (which, as noted, are dependent upon external considerations that cannot be thought *a priori* in the concept). The necessary reality of the axiomata is proven *a priori* by *demonstration* in the intuition (see also Shabel, 2016).

Leaving mathematics aside for the moment, I would come to the possibility of knowledge in relation to a metaphysics of empirical experience. In the B-*Preface* to the *CPuR*, Kant explains that Metaphysics has failed in all its earlier incarnations¹⁴ because we have ‘assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects’ (Bxvi). He goes on to explain his Copernican turn:

“[...] all attempts to find out something about [objects] *a priori* through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us. This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves

¹⁴ His ‘tower of babel’ metaphor refers to this, where we have a ‘confusion of languages’ on the plain of experience (*CPuR*, A707/B735). The utility in the Copernican turn is that it allows the possibility of discovering justifications, principles, or grounds that can be universally agreed upon and considered objective. We have the possibility to communicate with each other based on these static and universal truths rather than simply talk past each other with our different metaphysical theories. For some enlightening discussions of the tower of babel analogy and its usefulness in understanding Kant, see Onora O’Neil’s 1989 book *Constructions of Reason*, specifically Ch1, pp.3-23.

around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest. Now in metaphysics we can try in a similar way regarding the intuition of objects. If intuition has to conform to the constitution of the objects, then I do not see how we can know anything of them *a priori*; but if the object (as an object of the senses) conforms to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, then I can very well represent this possibility to myself.” (Bxvi-xvii)

The light cast by the Copernican turn reveals that our own nature, organisation, or fundamental capacities are foundational to what we can possibly observe. What we bring to bear in accosting the world is formational of our experience.

With care and reflection, our observations can therefore provide information about *us*. We can consider the following plausible: if the things our representations refer to are themselves unchanging in some sense (as the stars in the Copernican analogy), then we have the opportunity to accurately discover equally static truths about ourselves. It is difficult to imagine how we could claim *a priori* cognitions were there no external regularity or constancy.¹⁵ This method, Kant thinks, may allow us to ‘provide satisfactory proofs of the laws that are the *a priori* ground of nature, as the sum total of objects of experience’ (*CPuR*, Bxix). The nature of the Copernican turn suggests that Kant means for this *a priori* ground of ‘nature’ to be discovered *within us*. It is important to note that Kant is here discussing the principles that ground nature

¹⁵ Prior to the Copernican analogy, though one can see the germ of his thinking, the *UNH* notes that the sun is the fixed point around which things revolve, even wondering whether there might be a single static centre point—or many—in the universe (1:250).

as a ‘sum total’, an arithmetical aggregate. It is these principles, as the grounds *in us* for the laws of nature, that Kant here believes that he can supply satisfactory proof of.

Later, in the ‘Critique of all speculative theology’, Kant argues the need for a systematic and rational, rather than aggregated and mechanistic, representation of nature.¹⁶ This is nature in *idea*. He tells us that ‘the regulative law of systematic unity would have us study nature as if systematic and purposive unity together with the greatest possible manifoldness were to be encountered everywhere to infinity’ (*CPuR*, A700/B728). The phrase ‘as if’ denotes the regulative function of systematic unity. Investigating nature *as if* unified in this way does not require that we concomitantly assert the reality of this arrangement. Kant does, however, identify an issue for this idea, which is that this systematic and purposive unity can lead us to mistakenly make claims about God that are beyond our ability to prove, or which are inconsistent (e.g., *CPuR*, A693/B721, A699/B727). This over-stepping of reason will be somewhat of an intermittent theme for us, though for now we shall continue by considering nature as the systematic idea, since that is how it is treated in the later stages of the first *Critique* and also in the third.

¹⁶ The distinction is explained by Kant: “For pure reason reserves for itself only the absolute totality in the use of concepts, and seeks to carry the synthetic unity, which is thought in the categories, all the way to the absolutely unconditioned. We can therefore call this the unity of reason in appearances, just as that which the category expresses can be called the unity of understanding. [...] (for the absolute totality of conditions is not a concept that is usable in an experience, because no experience is unconditioned), but rather in order to prescribe the direction toward a certain unity of which the understanding has no concept, proceeding to comprehend all the actions of the understanding in respect of every object into an absolute whole. Hence the objective use of the pure concepts of reason is always transcendent, while that of the pure concepts of understanding must by its nature always be immanent, since it is limited solely to possible experience.” (*CPuR*, A326-7/B383)

For nature as an entirety, with such variation and scope that cannot be met in experience, there can be no all-encompassing manifold of perception brought together in one consciousness. Simply, you cannot hold a representation in your mind of something so temporally or spatially expansive, or infinitely heterogeneous.¹⁷ The principles or laws that we *can* discern and generalise from our finite experience of nature are not adequate to determine all of its productions (just as analysing geometric axioms cannot determine external relations). In other words, induction is inadequate to give determinate concepts. Still, it *is* the case that we *do* think of ‘nature’ *as if* it were a unified whole. All judgments of experience overlie this background assumption. By ‘nature’, Kant means all possible objects of experience and the range of their natural relations.¹⁸ You cognise natural objects as objects-in-nature, or objects-of-possible-experience. For how, otherwise, could we place any object in the complex conceptual hierarchies that we do? As Kant says, “[W]e have an understanding only under the presupposition of varieties in nature, just as we have one only under the condition that nature's objects have in themselves a sameness of kind” (*CPuR*, A657/B685).

To think that all of nature’s objects have a ‘sameness of kind’, sharing *characteristic marks*, just is to presuppose a *whole of nature* within which genera and species are differentiated. Indeed, Kant advances to explain the systematic unity of our empirical concepts, i.e., where all concepts are interrelated under a highest concept. This highest concept marks the sphere within which there can be a ‘multiplicity of points [...] given

¹⁷ See, for further elucidation, discussion of spatial objects as extensive magnitudes (*CPuR*, A162-3/B203-4), and of how *apprehension* is unlimited, but *comprehension* can only hold so much in a single intuition at a time (*Cof*, 5:251-2). To see this discussed in the context of the sublime in nature, see Budd (1998).

¹⁸ In the *CPuR*, he explains that the material world considered as a ‘dynamic whole’ without the inclusion of spatiotemporal quantities is ‘nature’. ‘Nature’ is appearances in ‘thoroughgoing connection’ (A418-9/B446-7, A418-9/B446n*). In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (1786), Kant describes ‘nature’ as ‘the sum total of all things, insofar as they can be *objects of our senses*, and thus also of experience’ (4:467)

to infinity’, each partaking in various interconnected conceptual arrangements so that everything is, at some level, related by subordination or coordination (*CPuR*, B113; A658/B686). Without this *a priori* thought of a systematically interrelated, conceptually circumscribed world-whole, any localised conceptual-hierarchical unit is an arbitrary individuation from the rest of nature. Difference presupposes the concept of sameness. There could otherwise be no conceptualisation of the type we enjoy; the assumption demands our assent *a priori*. In such circumstances, it makes sense to wonder *why* and *how* it so happens that we must necessarily hold this presupposition. Kant himself tells us, both in the *Prolegomena* and in the third *Critique*, that where we have a ubiquitous idea or assumption that every subject must necessarily assent to, we are entitled to seek a justification in objective grounds (*Pro*, 2001, 4:327n31; *CoJ*, 5:280). Doing so allows a shift in the kind of truth-claim that one makes about the judgment.

Some judgments may not be objectively justifiable. One with only subjectively sufficient grounds, i.e., a merely subjective assent grounded in the ‘particular constitution of the subject’, Kant refers to as ‘persuasion’. This might be a subjective desire, for example. Where the judgment is ‘valid for everyone merely as long as [they have] reason’, i.e., objectively valid for all rational beings, then the ground of assent is objectively sufficient. Kant calls this stronger truth-claim ‘conviction’ (*CPuR*, A820/B848). The assumption of a systematic world-whole is universal in the sense that it appears in every subject, but only where this comes about solely on account of the nature of reason can the assumption claim objectively sufficient grounds. Yet we have seen that this can still leave us in disagreement, without a commonly agreeable objective justification that guarantees truth. The key to discovering such a justification lies in the maxim that ‘[t]ruth [...] rests upon agreement with the object, with regard

to which [...] the judgments of every understanding must agree' (*CPuR*, A820/B849). There must be an experiential and objective justification that all beings with a discursive intellect can *agree* upon, i.e., we must seek this agreement in common experience. Agreement is possible in empirical experience because of the formational effect of our common primitive mental powers. It is in these, known reflexively through experience, that we find our objective principles *a priori*.

In addition to our *entitlement* to seek objective justification, the faculty of reason in its unremitting pursuit of completion *demand*s that we search for the objective principle that would explain the subjective universality of a judgment/assumption (*CPuR*, A409/B436).¹⁹ Thus, we are also somehow driven to seek the principle(s) under which we subsume and unify nature's appearances. This principle must be necessary for any particular experience of the sensible world to be cognised as part of the system of nature. It represents a fundamental, universal characteristic mark that signals membership of the domain of nature. It should be the reason that we experience the natural world as a unity. The *reflecting* power of judgment, Kant claims in the third *Critique*, provides this principle *for itself*, i.e., autonomously, so that it may ground all further judgments of experience (IV 5:179). *Reflecting judgment*, therefore, must operate independently of, and prior to, particular determining judgments.

If this can be evidenced, i.e., that reflecting judgment is independent of subjective and contextual concerns, then this principle that grounds these judgments may claim universal validity and play the role Kant requires. This principle would be something

¹⁹ See also: (*CPuR*, A413/B440, A416/B443, A583/B661, A649, B677)

fundamentally brought to experience by us, grounding the *determining* judgments of the faculty, which require the systematic unity of nature to even get going. The understanding gives laws to the determining power of judgment because these judgments require sensible [inner or outer] experience which must be conceptualised, but reflecting judgment produces its own prior to any received extrinsic influence. The principle we seek must unite the whole possible manifold of nature even though this unity cannot itself be an object of experience (because (i) it is merely a kind of rational formal structure which is necessitated by the fact that (ii) nature is beyond our ability to comprehend empirically) (*CoJ*, IV 5:179-80). We shall see how this rational form performs its role as we traverse the first chapter.

It is important to note also that there are intricate differences in the ways that Kant uses the terms: *rules*, *laws*, and *principles*. Although I do not intend an exhaustive taxonomy, a little detail is useful to evince relevant points from the complexity. A *principle* is a universal *law* that can serve as a ‘major premise in a syllogism’ in theoretical reason, but in practical reason (in morality) there can be practical *laws* that also serve as the comparator, i.e., by way of a judgment, for the formation of our moral maxims (*CPuR*, A300/B357). Very basically, we have two kinds of *laws*—those of nature and those of morality. Natural law constitutes how things are and must be, while practical law captures how things *ought* to be (Thorpe, 2015, p.129). Apparent simplicity misleads, of course, as a limited survey of Kant’s work shows. There are different sorts of principles relating to both formal and transcendental logic, which involve either analytic or synthetic judgments, respectively. The principle of analytic judgments is the principle of contradiction, while that of synthetic a priori judgments is that

‘conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience’ (*CPuR*, A158/B197).

The principle of synthetic a priori judgments is intimately related to mathematics, which Kant considers synthetic, i.e., the general definition (axiom) is precisely the conditions of possibility of the constructed particular. The axiom contains the rules used to construct the mathematical object. Reversing this principle as it applies to the world of appearances, we see that the same justified claims that are made about the possibility of particular objects in nature should be available and applicable to empirical experience in general, considered as the whole of nature. Principles of mathematics are *intuitive* principles, while philosophical principles cannot be so intuited and are never completely determinate (*BL*, §23, 24:53). Intuitive principles can be referred to as ‘axioms’, while philosophical principles are *discursive*, meaning they ‘may be expressed only through concepts and can be called *acromata*’ (*JL*, §35, 9:110). We become aware of philosophical principles through the conceptualisation of our experiences, while intuitive principles ground our experiences and the ability to conceptualise them at all.

On the practical side, Kant speaks of practical principles and laws, the supreme principle of morality, the formal practical principle of reason, and others (e.g., *CPrR*, 5:41). Kant interchangeably uses *Princip* and *Grundsatz* (principle and ground, both *beginnings* of sorts), and refers to freedom being the *ratio essendi* of the moral law, while the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom (the *ground of existing* and the *ground of knowing*, respectively) (*CPrR*, 5:4, 5:7n¹). Simply, this means that it is through our freedom that we come to know the moral law, but without the moral law we would

have no awareness of freedom in the first instance. Additionally, the *Jäsche Logic* tells us that principles in general are ‘[i]mmediately certain judgments *a priori*’ that ‘cannot be subordinated to any other’, and that the correctness of our further judgments are based on these (*JL*, §34, 9:110). This anticipates the relationship between the principle provided by reflecting judgment and subsequent determining judgments, and that between intuitive and philosophical principles. He refers at various points to basic logical principles: excluded middle, identity, or contradiction. Kant has a *principle of specification* in opposition to Leibniz’s *principle of continuity*.²⁰ There is, furthermore, an empirical maxim of specification alongside the transcendental law of the same. The empirical maxim is ‘a principle of reason [that leads] to seeking disclosures’, i.e., to continually specify concepts (*CPuR*, A656-7/B684-5). This is the subjective drive to specification rather than the universal principle that grounds this in each subject.

There is, in the opposite corner to specification, the law of homogeneity. This, rather than directing us to disclose subspecies within concepts, seeks to homogenise all specifications under a highest possible concept, ‘the universal and true horizon,

²⁰ Leibniz’s law of continuity states that changes in nature are continuous (see, e.g., Leibniz, 1695, p.447). Kant’s law of specification states that any of our concepts of nature ‘must at every time contain other concepts, i.e., subspecies, under itself’, which means there can be no lowest concept. The phrase Kant gives to express the principle is, ‘*entium varietates non temere esse minuendas*’ (i.e., *The variety of entities should not be rashly diminished*) (*CPuR*, A655-6/B683-4). In essence: continuous change is a product of *our nature*, not of external things. Allison describes the law: “this process of specification is ideally infinite, since it is always appropriate to search for further sub-species” (2012, p.179n⁴). In the first *Critique*, Kant reads Leibniz as claiming that there is an *actual* infinite variety of things. However, by the time of his 1790 essay, *On a discovery whereby any new critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one*, he sees Leibniz’s law of *continuity* as being more in line with his own view of specification (8:247-51). Yet it seems to me that Leibniz’s law of *order* from which continuity follows is already suggestive of the Kantian principle, claiming, ‘the more things are analyzed the more they satisfy the intellect’ (Strickland’s commentary in Leibniz’ *Monadology* (1714 [2014], p.66) [at the time of writing I have been unable to source the letter itself in English translation: Leibniz to de Volder, 3 April 1699, A II 3, 545/LDV 71]). Interestingly, in his May 26th, 1789 Letter to Marcus Hertz, Kant describes Leibniz’s principle of pre-established harmony as ‘not the harmony of two different natures, namely, sense and understanding, but that of two faculties belonging to the same nature, in which sensibility and understanding harmonize to form experiential knowledge’ ([1999], 11:52). In a similar vein, the other faculties are, for Kant, subordinate to the pure rational faculty.

[...] comprehending all manifoldness, as genera, species, and subspecies, under itself (*CPuR*, A659/B687). Specification directs us to articulate concepts to infinity within a conceptual sphere whereas homogeneity directs us to seek the unconditioned—the conceptual horizon which is itself an unbounded highest concept containing *ideally* infinite specification. There are *regulative* principles and *constitutive* principles, though since these will be discussed later, I will refrain from describing these.

Rules, on the other hand, often belong to the understanding, also called by Kant ‘the faculty of rules’. This is once again not always quite straightforward. In the *CPuR*’s ‘Doctrine of Elements’, he writes:

“That there are principles anywhere at all is to be ascribed solely to the pure understanding, which is not only the faculty of rules in regard to that which happens, but is rather itself the source of the principles in accordance with which everything (that can even come before us as an object) necessarily stands under rules, since, without such rules, appearances could never amount to cognition of an object corresponding to them. Even laws of nature, if they are considered as principles of the empirical use of the understanding, at the same time carry with them an expression of necessity, thus at least the presumption of determination by grounds that are a priori and valid prior to all experience.” (A158-9/B179-8)

Clearly, the understanding applies rules, yet Kant considers it also to be the structural basis of the manner of our rational thinking such that we require and recognise principles and rules.

The needs of reason are, effectively, shaped by the hierarchical form of our understanding. The conceptual-hierarchical structure is mirrored in the need for highest principles that subsume further secondary laws, maxims, judgments, or instances. A recursive form is clear in both, as it is in mathematical definition. We shall begin to see during chapter 1, nevertheless, that the true *a priori* ground of all experience—even of the ability to employ the understanding in that domain—is supplied via the systematic regulative idea of the whole of nature. Yet we are now aware that the understanding is engaged in making this idea necessary; a complex picture that I shall unravel somewhat during this investigation. Guyer notes that by the time of the third *Critique*, the systematic form is given over to the faculty of (reflecting) judgment whereas it belongs under theoretical reason in the first *Critique* (2005, p.11). We can see how this is possible now that we are aware of the role of the understanding in shaping the needs of reason. The talk of *belonging* to certain faculties here is misleading, however. The systematic form is, rather, patterned on the understanding and belongs to reason which underwrites all faculties. If this form is available to the faculty of reason, then it is unsurprising that it can be available to the faculty of judgment. One might consider it unusual if it were otherwise.

In the earlier parts of the first *Critique*, however, Kant is considering the categories and forms as the principles which ground experience. He is clear, though, that there is also a supreme principle of reason which is ‘only a logical prescription in the ascent

to ever higher conditions to approach completeness in them and thus to bring the highest possible unity of reason into our cognition' (*CPuR*, A309/B365). This seems quite straightforwardly to refer to the operation of homogeneity, but of course also relates to the ideal of systematicity which we shall visit in detail in short order. This logical supreme principle, additionally, seems to perform the role we had just ascribed to the understanding. Yet I believe we can clarify by saying that although the understanding supplies the requirement for homogeneity through its exemplary form, it is reason that *undertakes* to provide this highest unity in conformity with those requirements. While the application of the principles of the understanding are 'immanent', i.e., for use only within and only activated in experience, reason underwrites the very possibility of these principles and therefore of experience itself by actively undertaking this homogenising role (*CPuR*, A295-6/B352-3, A308/B365).

In this sense, pure reason is a fundamentally active power. We saw this notion of activity suggested too in the empirical maxim whereby we are *led* to seek specification. In the introduction to the B-edition of the *CPuR*, he tells us that 'reason adds something entirely alien to given concepts and indeed [*und zwar*] does so *a priori*' (B10). Reason actively contributes to the admixture of 'given' or passively received elements in all concepts, and this would be at odds with the notion that the supreme principle is a merely logical prescription. There is, though, both a logical prescription and an active power at work and we saw this in the introduction to this thesis, in footnote 7. There, I noted that in *Toward Perpetual Peace* Kant distinguishes between a purposiveness described as movement toward correspondence in form between nature and morality, which we could also refer to as an asymptotic convergence since it is never perfect, and an active drive to achieve this harmony.

When Kant himself speaks of ‘power’ [*Kraft*], he describes the causalities which inhere in a substance as accidents of that substance. The ‘substance acts’, we are told in the *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (1782-3), ‘insofar as it contains not merely the ground of the accidents, but rather also determines the existence of the accidents’ (29:822). Relatedly, each cognitive faculty is a ‘possibility of acting’ and we find several of these within us, yet to think a substance unified there must be a single basic power (*Ibid.* 29:772; 29:822). Difference, we know, presupposes background sameness. The faculties (or causalities) he identifies as belonging to the human mind in the first *Critique* include ‘sensation, consciousness, imagination, memory, wit, the power to distinguish, pleasure, [and] desire’ (A648-9/B676-7/A649-50). Each of these manifestations of power can appear to us as if they are distinct causalities. Kant follows by saying that they are in fact ‘nothing but various expressions of one and the same power’, reflecting the *Mrongovius* notes. Pure reason underwrites all faculties. If pure reason is to be thought a fundamentally active power, then we can identify this with the power that grounds the active nature of the other faculties. The powers of the faculties are mere expressions of this fundamental power as applied in different domains.²¹

One such faculty is the faculty of judgment whose function is—as we know—to decide to what, and the extent to which, rules, principles and laws apply. There must also, we may infer from our discussion so far, be some parameter that sets the proper

²¹ There are unresolved discussions ongoing regarding the distinctions between, and the nature of, spontaneity in terms of the understanding (the power to determine itself to produce representations) and transcendental/cosmological freedom (the ability to instigate a novel causal series in the world) (see *CPuR*, A444-6/B472-4, A533/B561). See also Ellis (2017) who argues for the involvement of absolute spontaneity in cognition and knowledge.

sphere of the functions of judgment. Without this, there would be no consistent application. All judgments would be nothing more than absolute freedom of acceptance or rejection (though 'acceptance' and 'rejection' would be empty terms), no less unfathomable than truly given elements in experience. What we would have called judgment would be arbitrariness and without constraint. In essence: though judgments can only be made where there exists the possibility of some regularity so that it can determine which sub-concepts should be filed under what general concepts and so on, there must also be some prior regularity that polices the boundaries of *its* deployment across domains.

Kant tells us as much while describing how we can fall into illusory claims of knowledge outside of experience, i.e., making false determining judgments outside of experience by treating the regulative as constitutive. He explains:

"[T]he transcendental use or misuse of categories [...] is a mere mistake of the faculty of judgment when it is not properly checked by criticism, and thus does not attend enough to the boundaries of the territory in which alone the pure understanding is allowed its play" (*CPuR*, A296/B352).

The suggestion here is that criticism should mark out the domain of application of the faculty of judgment in its different uses, though Kant is specifically discussing the use of judgment in experience here, i.e., in relation to the understanding. The principles for the determining use of judgment are supplied by the understanding, so we can make sense of the idea that the principles of that faculty, i.e., the categories, are

required for any judgments of experience. Yet there is also pure reason, which underwrites the use even of those by undertaking to attain a highest unity within which the understanding may 'play'.

This last point returns us to the path briefly abandoned: the principle sought by Kant in the third *Critique* which provides for the systematic unity of nature in idea. We can see how this principle, which he is entitled and driven to pursue, may be understood as performing the function of a major premise. The idea of all particulars being part of a systematic unity of nature, and thus of bearing common characteristic marks, is carried through as a necessary background assumption into judgments of experience. We might also identify how this principle will function to delimit the territory over which the faculty of judgment is allowed to range in its empirical use. Since reason seeks highest unity, corresponding to the requirements provided by the understanding, we can see how it is that the domain of judgment is at the same time marked out. Judgments of experience are constrained by the systematic unity provided by reason and are made according to the correspondence between the understanding and our sense perceptions within this special rational unity.²² However, in the first *Critique*, as I have mentioned, Kant leaves us in the position where we are led to make overreaching judgments about the status of God when He is installed as supreme cause of the world. The limits for empirical judgment, it seems, had not been properly drawn by this point. Doing so, we shall see in due course, requires teleology, pure practical reason, and the idea of the highest good.

²² In the 'Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic', Kant says that 'the categories lead to truth, i.e., to the agreement of our concepts with their objects' (*CPuR*, A642/B670).

I shall now briefly outline the coming chapters before moving onward. Freydberg, a proponent of the prevalent attitude that reflecting judgment is brand new in Kant's third critical work, *further* believes that using the insights of the third *Critique* in attempting to comprehend the earlier critical works is misguided. He believes that the secondary claim follows from the orthodox view about reflecting judgment (2005, pp.133-4). It is, nonetheless, my contention that reflecting judgment and the principle it makes available can legitimately be analysed to inform our understanding of Kant's moral philosophy and his overall project. While Kant may not have had what he considered adequate proof of this principle until around 1787, when he wrote a letter to his contemporary K. L. Reinhold describing his discovery, I contend that he was quite aware of the purpose it must serve earlier and had been working towards this proof for some time. Some authors, e.g., Beck and Meerbote, turn to the third *Critique* to remedy what they see as shortcomings in Kant's conceptions of freedom in earlier critiques (Allison, 1990, pp.70-81). I will not follow suit by beginning from purportedly insoluble problems in Kant's preceding work and then seeking remedy in the *CoJ*. This, to my mind, treats the third *Critique* as if it were a mere afterthought and palliative project for prior mistakes. While it is generally accepted that parts of this work can be considered to replace parts of earlier works, this is not its primary function and it would inflict *a priori* dogmatic constraints upon further investigation were I to begin from this presupposition. I intend to argue, firstly, that Freydberg's secondary claim is not sustainable even if the orthodox take on reflecting judgment's extraction is accepted.

In chapter 1, we shall see that the orthodox view represented by Freydberg relies, in part, on a translation of Kant's letter to Reinhold that I find problematic. I will

show, through analysing updated translations, that the method of discovering the principle of the faculty of pleasure and displeasure (or the faculty of ‘feeling’) relies on concepts available to Kant in the first *Critique*. This opens the possibility that the examination of relevant aspects of the first *Critique* may shed light on the third, and vice versa. Following this, I shall discuss the details of systematicity and scientific cognition and take an expository look at regulative and constitutive ideas and ideals, highlighting their relevance for empirical cognition. I will reintroduce the idea of the whole of nature and trace some of its properties. Since I will have shown that the third *Critique* relies on antecedently available concepts, i.e., systematicity as it appeared in the first *Critique*, I will continue to analyse the idea of nature as a fusion of its appearance in both. In the closing section of this chapter, I will show that a spontaneous causality of reason is enabled in ideas and is essential to empirical cognition generally. Furthermore, I will explain how ideas delimit the domain for empirical judgment.

In the second chapter, we shall see how Kant goes about claiming real possibility and even reality for the idea of the whole of nature/world-whole. I will introduce the idea that Kant was aware significantly prior to his letter to Reinhold that the discovery of the principle of the faculty of feeling must be the work of empirical psychology. Moreover, I will reintroduce objective and subjective sufficiency. I will discuss purposiveness, as the causality of reason in ideas, and see that it bestrides both the theoretical and practical employments of reason. I will demonstrate that Kant already had most of the elements necessary for discovering the principle of the faculty of feeling in his empirical psychology. He knew it involved proving an intellectual causality by a free play of the faculties and even had a fairly determined idea of

reflecting judgment. Due to the dating of Kant's lectures on empirical psychology, I will also consider whether this really does constitute a proof of earlier appearances of these elements. I will, furthermore, examine his criticism of Baumgarten, offer a non-traditional interpretation of a famous footnote concerning aesthetics in the first *Critique*, and examine a passage from the *Groundwork* for a second time with a slight difference in translation.

In the concluding chapter I will show how the *Groundwork*, second *Critique*, and the third *Critique* play *their* parts in proving an intellectual causality and supplying a necessary connection between the idea of freedom and an experience that can be agreed upon from all rational perspectives. In this, we shall see why Kant believes that the idea of freedom can be considered *scibilium*. Moreover, I will add some extra weight to the possibility that the second *Critique* was the missing step that made the discovery of the principle of feeling in the third *Critique* possible.

Chapter 1: Something old, something new.... the discovery of a new principle and the rediscovery of an old systematicity

1.1 Lost in translation: the method of discovering a new principle in the third *Critique*

Besides relying on the fact that reflecting judgment first appears in the third *Critique*, Freydberg additionally supports his position by reference to Zweig's 1967 translation of Kant's letter to Reinhold. In this, Kant tells Reinhold that he has 'discovered a kind of a priori principle different from those heretofore observed' in working on his new *Critique* (10:514). Despite Freydberg's belief, Kant conspicuously does not claim that this principle was something he had never considered as possible or required. He only claims that he has 'discovered' and 'observed' a different *kind* of principle. It is conceivable that this different 'kind' refers to a unique way in which he discovered the principle, a distinctive function or property, or both. It might even refer to something else entirely. We do not know, however, that this principle was unknown to Kant prior to 1787. Thus, there is yet no interdict against being open to the possibility that he was acquainted with it. It is likely, however, that the difference

in *kind* must somehow relate to the *a priori, regulative* nature of this principle (*e.g.*, *OTPP*, 8:160; *CoJ*, 20:251). The meaning of ‘regulative’ will become clearer as we progress.

Kant, in the same letter, explains the process of discovering this distinct kind of principle:

“...when sometimes I cannot see the right way to investigate a certain subject, I find that I need only look back at the general picture of the elements of knowledge, and of the mental powers pertaining to them, in order to discover elucidations I had not expected. I am now at work on the critique of taste, and I have discovered a kind of a priori principle different from those heretofore observed. For there are three faculties of the mind: the faculty of cognition, the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. In the *Critique of Pure* (theoretical) *Reason*, I found a priori principles for the first of these, and in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, a priori principles for the third.” (Kant, 1787 [1967], 10:514)

We should, uncontroversially, understand this to mean that Kant has discovered *elucidations* by applying his existing understanding of what is required for the claim of knowledge in general to a new domain.²³ The principle that Kant feels entitled and driven to seek is this *a priori* principle of the faculty of feeling, the second in his list.

²³ Kant defines knowledge: “[...] when taking something to be true is both subjectively and objectively sufficient it is called **knowing**. Subjective sufficiency is called **conviction** (for myself), objective sufficiency, **certainty** (for everyone)” (*CPuR*, A822/B850). Chignell (2007, p.40) tells us that, in Kant, “[t]he standard against which objective probability is measured is “fully sufficient” grounds—i.e., grounds which render the proposition 100% probable, or certain.’

Discovering this principle leads, I will argue, to the claim of certainty for the idea of freedom, though there is much preparation required before this can be made clear.

Freydberg does not consider the ambiguity in the wording of the Reinhold letter as he fixes upon the accepted view. It is, furthermore, salient that although Freydberg refers to the 1967 version of Zweig's translation in his 2005 book, a newer version was available in 1999 that has a particularly noteworthy revision. This revision appears during Kant's disclosure of the heretofore undiscovered *a priori* principle. The earlier version states:

"I tried to find [a priori principles] for the [faculty of pleasure and displeasure] as well, and though I thought it impossible to find such principles, the systematic nature of the analysis of the previously mentioned faculties of the human mind allowed me to discover them [...]. So now I recognize three parts of philosophy, each of which has its a priori principles [...]." (*ibid.*, 10:514-5)

Contrastingly, the 1999 revision presents the same passage as follows:

"I tried to find [a priori principles] for the [faculty of pleasure and displeasure] as well, and though I thought it impossible to find such principles, the analysis of the previously mentioned faculties of the human mind allowed me to discover a systematicity [...]. This systematicity put me

on the path to recognizing the three parts of philosophy, each of which has its a priori principles [...].” (Kant, 1787 [1999], 10:514-5)

First, it is important for us to note that to think these principles are ‘impossible to find’, *Kant must really have been thinking of such principles*. Trying to find something requires at least a basic notion of what one is looking for. Kant clearly enjoyed *some* level of detail about the object(s) of his search, though we cannot yet confirm how well those details were formed. Notwithstanding, it is not unreasonable to seek evidence of any efforts to secure the proof of these principles in his earlier works. Of course, the conventionalist might still stress our ignorance as to how long this ostensive impossibility had bothered him by this point. Yet it would be an odd turn of phrase if this hopelessness had been a recent state to settle upon him and the problem quickly solved. We would tend not to employ such a noun as *impossibility* in such a case—instead, we might label it a difficult puzzle, effortfully unravelled. To think something impossible, we would normally have reached a prior stage of *giving up* after a process of trying. Speculation aside, there are more technical connotations of Kant’s mention of impossibility that I will return to in due course. Meanwhile, let us examine the implications carried by the quite straightforward difference between our two translations.

Zweig’s 1967 translation suggests that the new principle is discovered by a *systematic analysis* of the faculties, while the 1999 translation claims that Kant refers to the discovery of a *systematicity* that leads him to ‘recognise’ the three divisions of philosophy. As we shall see, discerning an *a priori* principle is integral in identifying such a systematicity. Though we can consider both translations as saying something

true about how Kant's principle is ascertained, the later version offers a clue to understanding this process that is absent in the earlier one. However, even this later translation is slightly misleading. The reader might think that the systematicity itself was a new discovery in the writing of the third *Critique*. This is not, though, quite correct. A more literal translation was provided, in personal correspondence by Prof. Timmermann of the University of St Andrews, which offers yet greater clarity. The relevant part of this translation states:

“I looked for [a priori principles] for [the faculty of pleasure and displeasure] as well, though I otherwise considered it impossible to find such principles, yet the systematicity—which the analysis of the faculties examined previously had allowed me to discover in the human mind [...] yet put me on this path [...].” (Kant, 1787 [2020])

The discovery of systematicity is indeed central to this picture, yet it was not a new to the *CōJ*. The systematicity, it seems safe to say, is the self-same systematicity discussed in the first *Critique*. This is advantageous since we can now justifiably apply our understanding of one to the other. It is also quite instinctively true since ‘systematicity’ is a universal formal property of pure reason in discursive intellects and so not obviously mutable according to its domain of application (connections between the form of our reason and our conceptual faculty is highlighted in my introduction). It is, moreover, notable that both published translations of the letter take *erkennen* to mean simply ‘recognise’, though it may also be interpreted as ‘cognise’ (Caygill, 2000, p.113). It is my view that in the context of this quoted passage, ‘cognise’ should be equally, if not principally, emphasised. To see why, I will now seek to understand the

role of systematicity in the empirical cognition of nature specifically. Furthermore, I will expose a particular property of the systematic form of reason that will fuel our overarching investigation.

1.2 A thoroughgoing systematic community: the regulative ideal

In the first introduction to the third *Critique*, Kant clearly equates the *systematic* approach with *scientific* thinking and as necessary for *a priori* cognition (*CoJ*, XII, 20:247). *Systematicity* is considered, in the *CPuR*'s 'Doctrine of Elements', to be a regulative *ideal* necessary for objective empirical cognition (scientific cognition), for determining empirical particulars as a unity of experience (A88/B120-1; Guyer, 2005, p.16).²⁴ In the 'architectonic of pure reason', we are told that systematic unity 'makes a system out of a mere aggregate', is the basis of scientific knowledge, and the way that we unify a manifold 'under one idea' (*CPuR*, A832/B860). Kant's Copernican turn, we know, proposes a metaphysics which takes as one starting point the fundamental nature of the observer. This system-building is just such a feature of our fundamental nature. *Systematicity* is the *ideal* toward which the generation of any *idea* must endeavour. Kant describes *ideas* as,

'the rational concept of the form of a whole, insofar as through this the domain of the manifold as well as the position of the parts with respect to each other is determined *a priori*. The scientific rational concept thus contains the end and the form of the whole that is congruent with it. The unity of the end, to which all parts are related and in the idea of which they are also related to each other, allows the absence of any part to be noticed in our knowledge of the rest, and there can be no contingent addition or undetermined

²⁴ See also: (*CPuR*, A159/B198, A211/B256)

magnitude of perfection that does not have its boundaries determined a priori.' (*CPuR*, A832-3/B860-1)

In the *Prolegomena* (1783), in answering the question, '*How Is Metaphysics in General Possible?*', Kant explains that reason demands 'completeness in the use of the understanding in the connection of experience' (*Pro*, §44 4:332). Since we cannot have empirical experience or knowledge of certain 'objects' that lie beyond the human ability to experience (e.g., God, the soul, freedom, heteronomous concepts like happiness, or the undeterminable whole of varied nature), reason achieves this completeness via representing a 'completeness of principles' (or laws) as the proper cognition of, and determinant of, the object in question (*Ibid.*). This is a concept of pure reason. Since its determination through experience is not possible and yet it guides our thinking, it is both a transcendental and *regulative* idea. These regulative ideas are not used *constitutively*, which for Kant is where appearances are brought 'under rules *a priori*', i.e., to subsume contingencies under concepts, principles, or rules that we possess and necessarily bring to bear on experience. Constitutive ideas, concepts or principles are those that determining judgments categorise particular instances under.

Regulative ideas are the representation, by the faculty of reason, of the connection of the principles or laws that we generalised of the essences²⁵ of individual experiences. We represent the inter-relatedness of all lawful particulars *as if* they were a systematic whole. We allow ourselves the opportunity to account, in this concept, for every

²⁵ By 'essence', Kant would refer to the logical, rather than natural, principles of possibility of something (*MF*, 4:467). It is the universal truths or characteristic marks of our concepts rather than of the natural objects in themselves.

relevant relation that individual parts are involved in. Each part is held in place by its connection to every other part in the system, each necessary in determining the others and the whole. These relations are internal to the idea. In essence: in regulative ideas, we put in place a conceptual horizon (the metaphorical sphere) such that it is a logically closed system of necessary relations. Without this, we are denied the possibility not only of cognition over the whole, but of determinate cognition of particulars because we cannot otherwise hope to account for all the relations that determine them. As we saw Kant describe it: it is in this represented idea that we achieve the 'unity of the end'. Thus, in a regulative idea, we can account for all necessary relations that are sufficient for the 'end' contained in it. Contrastingly, constitutive ideas subsume parts that could have been otherwise, i.e., contingencies, appearances.

The following passage tells us something essential about the unity in regulative ideas:

“The whole is therefore articulated (*articulatio*) and not heaped together (*coacervatio*); it can, to be sure, grow internally (*per intus susceptionem*) but not externally (*per appositionem*), like an animal body, whose growth does not add a limb but rather makes each limb stronger and fitter for its end without any alteration of proportion.” (*CPuR*, A833/B861)

This tells us that by bounding this whole, this system, we do not in any way stifle *internal* growth. Kant is talking about an articulation of concepts *within* the domain-horizon that the idea represents, as per his principle of specification. It cannot be the

case that we add other concepts of natural things *onto* our regulative idea of the whole of nature—it could not, in that case, be an idea of the *whole* of nature. It would not be an ideally *closed* system. Rather, we seek *within* the concepts of our experiences so that new concepts and connections are *articulated*, which consequently allows the formation and coordination over time of new hierarchies and connections. We add detail and determine from within nature, not from without.

Electron microscopy or the L. H. C. at CERN are useful examples here. Scientists can observe previously inaccessible levels of detail. New concepts of subatomic particles and their interactions arise, with new hierarchies of nature thought. None of this has externally expanded our concept of the whole of nature. A room does not grow because one counts the threads in the rug, yet our concept of it is enhanced. The closer we look, the more detail we find, the more complex our conceptualisation becomes. The regulative idea is not externally added-to by this increase of conceptual detail. Just as with the L.H.C., what Kant is describing is the increasing internal complexity of our idea of nature, its increasing determination. New sub-concepts and hierarchical relations remain contained under this highest concept as per the principles of homogeneity and specification. Accordingly, each level of detail still exhibits whatever characteristic marks entitle it to membership of the highest concept (the idea). The rug, and each one of its threads, are still contained within the room. The new internal determinations of the animal are still, by their relationship with the whole animal itself, *part of the animal*.

Since pure reason and its operations are common to all rational beings, and since this is a purely rational and closed system, we can claim that this regulative use of ideas

in accordance with the systematic ideal is universally valid for all rational beings with discursive intellects (*CPuR*, A179-180/B221-3).²⁶ By this property of reason, experience in general can be unified, and thus cognisable as a whole through the transcendental regulative idea: <world-whole>. Kant's notion of a 'world' in general has connections with the category of 'community'. This describes objects as being in 'thoroughgoing connection according to necessary laws, and hence in transcendental affinity' (*CPuR*, A114; A211/B256). For Kant, a 'world' is the delimited set of things in fully determining reciprocal relations of interaction and influence.²⁷ The idea of the <world-whole> is itself simply a representation of all natural objects in thoroughgoing interaction, i.e., within a closed system where each is lawfully interconnected with every other object so that a movement or change in one must influence the others immediately, and vice versa. This is a closed interactivity because there can be no members of the 'world' whose capacity for relations is not represented as exhausted by interactions with the other members and the whole. The natural world itself must be thought fully determined; it must be causally closed.

If there were an influence on the world which were not itself reciprocally determined as part of it, then it would not be part of this thoroughgoing systematic community. It could not be thought part of this 'world' because the causal relationship is unidirectional: a simple cause-to-effect, mechanistic, relation.²⁸ This picture is

²⁶ See also: (*CPuR*, A327-8/B384; Geiger, 2003, p.274; Geiger, 2009, pp.533-4)

²⁷ While a world of appearance describes the '*comercii* of substances as phenomena' (*CPuR*, A443n^b), it also can refer to a 'world in general' or the intelligible world. This is a represented ideal, once again, of systematic interactivity: "The *mundus intelligibilis* is nothing but the concept of a world in general, abstracting from all conditions of intuiting it, and in regard to which, consequently, no synthetic proposition at all, whether affirmative or negative, is possible." (*CPuR*, A433/B461)

²⁸ This has similarities with the notion of a purely given element in experience, i.e., a unidirectional influence on the subject.

captured in the thought of ‘an entirety of things’, where Kant explains that God could only be thought in this unidirectional causal relation to the world. He says,

‘one is not subordinated, as effect, under another, as the cause of its existence, but is rather coordinated with the other simultaneously and reciprocally as cause with regard to its determination (e.g., in a body, the parts of which reciprocally attract yet also repel each other), which is an entirely different kind of connection from that which is to be found in the mere relation of cause to effect (of ground to consequence), in which the consequence does not reciprocally determine the ground and therefore does not constitute a whole with the latter (as the world-creator with the world).’

(*CPuR*, B112)

An apt and simplified analogy to consider is a spider’s web, thought in complete isolation and drawn into a sphere while retaining its tension. Each nexus where multiple strands meet can be thought a concept/object for our current purposes; the connecting strands as representative of and exhausting the variegated relations that connect them. Each nexus is in *thoroughgoing connection* with all others. We can think of the whole web as the *idea of the web-whole*. If a change were to occur in one web-nexus, the connected strands would instantly carry that information to all other nexuses, resultantly altering them. (Although the changes may not be ‘immediate’ in the usual sense and would vary according to conducting medium, the process of change would begin at once). Each change in the locally connected nexuses would instigate a cascade of change among their neighbours and onward, and so on until the web-whole settles once again, in an equilibrium determined by its organisation.

Moreover, we can see that Kant was seeing these kinds of complex systems in nature even in 1755 when he wrote the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*. Of course, there was no Copernican turn or *CPuR* until later, but he certainly recognised this systematic community in nature as we experience it. In describing the constitution of the cosmos, he says:

“The fixed stars, as we know, all relate to a common plane and thus constitute an orderly whole, which is a world of worlds. One can see that in the immeasurable distances, there are more such star systems, and that creation in the entire infinite scope of its size is everywhere systematic and interrelated. One could also speculate that these higher orders of worlds are not without connection to one another and that, through this mutual relationship, they constitute in turn an even more immeasurable system.”

(*UNH*, 1:255)

Kant recognised an analogy between the structure of our own cosmological neighbourhood and the larger universe (*UNH*, 1:250-5).²⁹ By the critical period, however, Kant’s clear position was that it was our own faculty of reason that delivered us the experience of this systematically interrelated universe.

²⁹ An ‘analogy’ denotes a ‘perfect similarity of relations’ (*Prn*, 2001, 4:357-8 & n⁴³)

An essential point in critical-period Kant is that the regulative systematic *ideal* is the supreme goal of the faculty of reason which thereby allows the understanding to perform its conceptualising role. It codifies an ideal organisation in comparison to which the principles or laws that pertain to a specified domain are subjectively represented as *ideally* unified, complete, and necessarily interconnected. This representation itself is a regulative *idea*. It delimits a topology over which we can have, or at least investigate, the possibility of cognition. Systematising is that function of reason that allows thoroughgoing community to be thought as a property of an otherwise empirically undeterminable whole. Kant follows his explication of a concept of the ‘entirety of things’ with the example that the understanding also represents an exhaustive interconnectivity ‘when it represents the divided sphere of a concept’, which is just the same as the process involved in thinking of something as divisible. He says that ‘just as in the first case the members of the division exclude each other and yet are connected in one sphere, so in the latter case the parts are represented as ones to which existence (as substances) pertains to each exclusively of the others, and which are yet connected in one whole’ (*CPuR*, B113).

Kant presents for us here a clear image of systematic and closed interconnectivity (also necessary for substances and worlds), and its relevance to the division or distinguishing of a conceptual domain. To divide a conceptual domain, one represents each division as relationally closed, in thoroughgoing internal interconnectivity. Yet this act does not deny any newly demarcated sphere (or its parts) membership in the whole. Therefore, sub-concepts contained under some closed concept, idea, or even in one ‘world’, can retain membership in another, even though the relations involved in each may be quite distinct. Each of the divisions I mentioned continues to fall under

the higher concept. Closed interactive systems which are entirely sufficient in themselves, fully describable or analysable by their internal relations, may yet partake in something higher so that they are both subsumed by this third concept, term, or idea which may not itself be available through simple analysis of its members.

1.3 Teleology, the purposiveness of regulative ideas, and their necessity for empirical knowledge and action

Transcendental regulative ideas,

‘[direct] the understanding to a certain goal respecting which the lines of direction of all its rules converge at one point, [...] although it is only an idea (*focus imaginarius*) — i.e., a point from which the concepts of the understanding do not really proceed, since it lies outside the bounds of possible experience’ (*CPuR*, A644/B672).

We see it here confirmed that the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, is directed by the systematic ideal to recognise ‘one point’; the highest concept which encompasses the whole domain and its sub-concepts. This allows our nesting of represented particulars within a homogenised conceptual-hierarchical structure. Additionally, Kant is telling us here that the *ideally* internally consistent, transcendental regulative idea cannot straightaway make the claim to *reality* (c.f., *CPuR*, A596-7/B624-5). This would be possible only where there was a necessarily corresponding sensible intuition. This intuition would (and must) be agreeable by all discursive intellects as it would be grounded in the categories (the *constitutive* concepts of the understanding) and so *tethered in reality*.³⁰

³⁰ I use this phrase to encourage an analogy. I reference Daedalus’ statues in Plato’s *Meno* (96d-98c), where the statues are considered to be like *true beliefs* which require to be tethered to something concrete

This suggests, *prima facie*, that it is not possible for something like the regulative <world-whole> to be proven real because (i) there is no *experienceable* object that corresponds to the whole of nature, and (ii) it is merely an ideally consistent fabrication of reason which allows cognition. As he affirms in the third *Critique*, ‘*a posse ad esse non valet consequentia*’, or, ‘[t]here is no valid inference from possibility to actuality’ (*CoJ*, 5:296, 5:296n^b).³¹ Though we will further discuss ‘possibility’ and ‘reality’ in §1.4, the gist is that just because something is logically possible does not mean that there can be an object that accords with it; and real possibility does not entail that there exists such an object even contingently. Moreover, *that* an object exists does not entail necessary existence unless this existence is logically necessary (in the sense of being analytically posited in the concept). Real possibility added to logical possibility meets the conditions for empirical existence in that it is consistent with the forms and the needs of the understanding (*CPuR*, A596/B624n*).

Kant’s warning against inferring concrete actuality from possibility is reinforced in the *Prolegomena* where we are reminded that regulative ideas should not be presumed to represent how the world is actually constituted. Rather, they are the way we think

to become fixed knowledge, for there to be a necessary connection between the belief and its truth. For Kant, a *belief* alone is subjectively sufficient yet lacks objective sufficiency (*CPuR* A822/B850).

³¹ *Consequentia* is also suggestive of logical and existential necessity, not only actuality (c.f., *OLD*, 2012). In the *CPuR*’s ‘Doctrine of Elements’, Kant gives ‘[t]he postulates of empirical thinking in general’ (A218/B266). He says that *possibility* is when something ‘agrees with the formal conditions of experience (in accordance with intuition and concepts)’. The *actualis* when the thing is ‘connected with the material conditions of experience (sensation)’. Necessary existence is attributed when ‘the connection with the actual is determined in accordance with general conditions of experience’, i.e., when its existence is posited as a logical necessity in a concept or idea. Thorpe (p.52, 2015), furthermore, notes that *actualisation* may describe the actualising of a possible concept, or it may also describe the actualisation of a sensation that precedes a concept.

the world causally closed and the way by which we limit reason to experience. Kant writes:

“ [...] if we assume this unity of the mode of cognition to pertain to the object of cognition, if we regard that which is merely *regulative* to be *constitutive*, and if we persuade ourselves that we can by means of these ideas enlarge our cognition transcendentally far beyond all possible experience, while it only serves to render experience within itself as nearly complete as possible, i.e., to limit its progress by nothing that cannot belong to experience if we do all this, then we suffer from a mere misunderstanding in our estimate of the proper application of our reason and of its principles and suffer from a dialectic which confuses the empirical use of reason and also sets reason at variance with itself.” (*Pro*, §46, 4:350)

The idea, as *focus imaginarius*, we can surmise, also acts as a placeholder for what we would normally expect in experience to perceive as the antecedent causal ground of a particular effect or effects. Since we can have no such experience of an antecedent cause in cases where we are considering, for example, the entirety of nature, we instead form a closed system of necessary conditions that reciprocally imply one another, and we entertain this idea as a basis for the possibility of further cognition.

It is essential, however, to note that it would be entirely wrong-headed to apply temporal concepts as with my usage of ‘antecedent’ to the notion of such a world-

cause.³² First, since the whole of nature encompasses the whole of time, it makes no sense to think of anything *prior*. Space and time are, for Kant, not even *in* external nature. They are the ways in which we behold and arrange the world rather than properties which belong to the objects themselves to which our representations refer. Second, to apply temporality to the concept of a world-cause is to treat it as an object of possible experience. This is, of course, not the case. In fact, it contradicts our experience to think that it is. This is the source of ‘dialectic’ Kant refers to above.

Guyer describes the difference between the regulative ideal and ideas in broadly the following way. The *ideal* is the regulative principle which is represented as a determinate system of laws in perfection whereas the *idea* is a less determined notion of this organisation (1987, p.188). He identifies what he believes to be a problem with this distinction between determinate and less-determinate. He equates this distinction with the difference between constitutive (determined) and regulative (less than determined) principles. This, he explains by saying that *intensive magnitude* is considered, by Kant, to be a constitutive principle because it is a *mathematical* principle (he designates *dynamical* principles, which relate to causality, as regulative). Mathematical, constitutive principles are determinate because ‘the way that something is apprehended in appearance can be determined *a priori* so that the rule of its synthesis at the same time yields this intuition *a priori* in every empirical example, i.e., can bring the former about from the latter’ (*CPuR*, A178/B221).³³ The example Guyer gives which he thinks makes a problem for the distinction is Kant’s discussion of how the magnitude of the sensation of the luminosity of the sun can be constructed

³² ‘Antecedent’, of course, does not necessarily denote a thing that precedes in *time*. It also has logical, mathematical, and grammatical usages. Yet here I use it in a temporal sense as a preceding event.

³³ As per our discussion of Kant’s philosophy of mathematics.

(determined *a priori*) by applying some system of mathematical measurement to it, e.g., by constructing ‘the degree of the sensation of sunlight out of about 200,000 illuminations from the moon’ (*CPuR*, A178-9/B221). Guyer makes the point that it cannot be considered *a priori* to apply such a measurement to sunlight, since we cannot know except through experience whether the measurement would be ‘199,000 or 201,000 times as intense’ (Guyer, 1987, pp.188-9). This, for Guyer, cannot possibly be in our mental toolkit prior to, and constitutive of, our experience. As *a posteriori*, a form of *measurement* of a *sensation* (only knowable in experience), it cannot be the *basis* of further determining judgments.

The elements of this are true but I think it rests on a misapprehension. What is in fact *a priori* here is the principle that ‘all objects of perception, insofar as they contain sensation, must be ascribed an intensive magnitude, i.e., a degree of influence on sense’ (*CPuR*, A165/B208).³⁴ It is *a priori* knowable that any experienced sensation must have a magnitude of intensity simply because of the ways in which we experience the world through the categories and the forms of intuition. It is, furthermore, a *constitutive* principle because we can judge all sensational experiences as falling under it and it tells us how they are necessarily constituted. Whether the intensity of the sunlight is measured in terms of a comparison to moonshine, candlelight, or the whitened teeth

³⁴ See also in the *Metaphysik Vigilantius*: “One calls this *degree* of sensation *intensive magnitude*, in order to distinguish it from the extensive magnitude with quantity, and says: everything sensible has intensive magnitude, or = a degree of sensation; that is: it can be represented that from zero = null = which has no sensation at all, the sensation can climb, or again decrease from a certain measure until = 0. But it is understood as a magnitude whereby the parts are not cognized previously in order to determine the magnitude, rather they must be cognized as unity, and the parts drawn out from the unity. Thus, e.g., a line, which must be composed, differs from an extinguishing light: with the latter there is only a unity of sensation, but in each following state a different degree of this” (29:999). Therefore, intensive magnitude describes a quality of a unity, and this unity of the representation must be presupposed since these magnitudes are degrees internal to the unity. There is analogy here to be had between the principles of specification and homogenisation and with the subjective experience of pleasure and the principle of that faculty.

of a Hollywood star, this particular judgment is only performable in experience. The comparator of measurement is just an arbitrary way of observing; a contingent, subjective, and context-dependent perspective. It is the principle which underlies and allows the possibility of applying this kind of observation to our sensations that is constitutive, since all appearances are judged to fall under this rule *a priori*. All judgments falling under this constitutive principle are determining judgments. This is a verity about our universally human, fundamental nature. It is therefore something that is knowable about experience since it is not an externally *given* element.

Yet when this *a priori*, universal principle is applied to particular experiences, it is there that its application appears less-than-determined since the principle itself only governs the range of our operations which are manifest in contingent circumstances. A real-world measurement depends on the experience, intentions, and choices of the observer, on their context-dependent perspective, and in the case of sunshine; on the sensitivity of their skin, on air humidity, on the density of hair follicles and melatonin, the measurement scale used, and so on. A host of events and circumstances affect the application of the principle, yet this takes nothing away from the fact that we are pre-equipped with the ability to apply this principle of intensive magnitude to all sensory experiences. Kant already knew that we cannot separate the observer from the thing observed. In fact, Kant's Copernican critical task *requires* that the observer becomes the observed through the medium of our experience. Our conceptualisations are not straightforwardly a mirror of nature; our conceptualisation of nature is a mirror held up to us.

There is something important in the determined/less-than-determined distinction as it pertains to regulative principles, but there is detail to be evinced. Kant says that regulative principles ‘seem to be transcendental, and [...] contain mere ideas to be followed in the empirical use of reason, which reason can follow only asymptotically’ (CPuR, A663/B691). The concept of asymptotic movement here tells us that the idea is interminably in approach to ideal perfection, complete determination. Being finite creatures cast hither and thither by external influences beyond our control, we can never truly achieve such completion. I have already explained that our regulative ideas are able to accommodate new experiences not already nested within their known internal relational structures. As we gain more experiences, our ideas must continually reorganise internally to accommodate them (revisiting an earlier analogy: it is as if a new nexus appears on the <web-whole>). These ideas are continually *in the process of determination*. The *ideal*, in contrast, exemplifies the termination of this process.

I would now paraphrase and thereafter build upon Kant’s own words to re-emphasise how the idea is driven toward this perfection (c.f., CPuR, A832-3/B860-1). The image elicited here is already familiar. Each element in an *ideal* organisation must, through its relations to all other internal elements, be completely determined by those elements and vice versa. The whole must be determined by the parts, and the parts by the whole. It should be a completely closed system. Since it exemplifies a perfect internal consistency, no external considerations can affect its internal relations. No internal change can occur without there being an immediate cascade of compensating change throughout the system because of these relations; each part implies the others. No part is redundant nor unequal in its import to the whole.

Some suggest that Kant's system building via regulative ideas constitutes his answer to the Humean problem of induction³⁵. Those that would reject the notion that this systematicity is necessary even for knowledge of empirical concepts need to answer for the problem of an entirely given element in experience; the apparent unity of nature (Allison, 2001, p.35; Geiger, 2009, p.533-4). Having already made the case that it follows from Kant's perspective that all possible empirical knowledge fails without the use of the regulative idea of the whole of nature (and by implication, the principle or regulative ideal), the reader would be correct to assume that I think the former position is correct. To explain further: induction is impossible without the ability to pick out regularities in our experience. We entertain these regularities as lawful generalisations that serve to guide our expectations in action and in general and allow our cognition of experiences. This ability to generalise says nothing more or less than that we possess a regulative idea, continually evolving from the generalisation of these experienced regularities, as I will now explain.

Contained in the description of induction is already the suggestion of an asymptotic movement toward an ideal because our generalisations are, as with hypotheses in any science, refined as our data set grows. The ideal toward which the refinement forever tends may be considered the 'end' and it is the increasing complexity of the overall picture that animates the refinement. All new data increase this complexity, produce this refinement, and so are means to that end. There may be data that do not conform perfectly to our understanding of these regularities, but this is fine and to be expected. Generalisations by their nature tread a middle path, representing something like an

³⁵ See: (Hume, 1739-40, 1.3.6; Hume, 1748, 4.2.21). I include Hume's *Treatise* here because some relevant discussions of this were to be found in James Beattie's 1770 book, *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism*, a German translation of which was available to Kant after its publication in 1772 (see Wolff, 1967, pp.123-4; Wolff, 1960).

overall trend. As with individual acts and imperfect duties, it would be possible for a different group of particulars to ground the same general law. Thus, it is not possible for us to analyse a generalisation and thereby back-engineer a description of the complex of individual events or concepts thereof, even though that general law is ontologically dependent upon them. Due to the discursive (and temporally unidirectional) nature of our intellect, humans must begin from the particular and ascend toward a representation of the universal. To immediately grasp a universal in such a way as to also perfectly comprehend all particulars is the work of a purely intuitive intellect such as one would ascribe to God. General laws are, therefore, *explanatorily autonomous*, to use a modern-day phrase (e.g., Bedau, 2002, p.13).

Kant uses similar terminology to describe the relationship between the categories (as general laws) and particular experienced instances:

“Particular laws, because they concern empirically determined appearances, cannot be completely derived from the categories, although they all stand under them. Experience must be added in order to come to know particular laws at all [...].” (*CPuR*, B165)

But we must take care. Note, as I did earlier, that Kant is here in the first *Critique* considering the categories and therefore dealing with the ‘sum’, an aggregate, of experiences. It is at this stage a mechanistic explanation dealing with an efficient, linear causality only. It is later that he identifies the antinomies for us and introduces the

need for the systematic regulative idea of God before delineating the issues related to this.

Since these ‘particular laws’ from which we generalise are considered at this stage aggregated, there would be no *true* explanatory independence at the general level, such as we found in the notion of a regulative idea. I mean *true* in the sense that when we consider an aggregate it is still the case that any description of the general laws could *in theory* (i.e., whether a finite being can perform the task or not) be entirely exhausted by a description of the particular laws (c.f., Bedau, 2002, p.37). Nevertheless, we humans cannot have an exhaustive, mechanistic description of all particulars in nature. ‘The antinomy of pure reason’ demonstrates that we come up against infinite regresses if we attempt an aggregated explanation of general laws due to our finite cognitive and temporal perspective (*CPuR*, A517-8/B545-6). Therefore, *we* cannot explain or determine the whole in this way because *we* cannot determine the host of parts. There really is, for us at least, no adequate explanation for either the macro or micro levels of lawfulness in these circumstances.

Yet *we do*, in fact, pick out regularities, *we do* produce generalisations from them, and *we do*, it seems, do so with increasing reliability as far as our experience and the sciences can show. As we have already understood, something else is required to determine both particular and general: the regulative idea and its systematically ideal form. This solves Kant’s problem by conceptually removing the regress. Instead of searching unfruitfully after relations that continue infinitely into vanishing descriptive histories, we must instead consider that all properties of particulars are determined as part of a system. We explain all relations in terms of interactions with other members

of that whole (c.f., *CPuR*, A832/860). This is no arbitrary circumscription of a group of particulars. There are clear and necessary reasons for the employment of ideas. The fact that we *do* regularise is evidence that we have them, as is our subjective drive for greater and greater determination. Our regulative idea of nature saves us from overreaching, as noted above by Kant, by restricting our search for completion to experience: it constrains us to search in the sensible realm, in effect. Furthermore, since we cannot explain our generalisations by reference to the particular lawful instances either; (i) in the case of a mechanistic nature, or (ii) in the case of a systematised whole, then there is no detriment to our possible cognition in the use of regulative ideas.

We could not even hope for a determined cognition of a particular object if we sought to cognise it as a member of a linear series. With a regulative idea, we have ontological dependence of the general laws upon the particular laws of the members of the system, i.e., members of the systematic unity of the whole of nature. Yet we can also see the reason that these general laws are *genuinely* explanatorily independent of those particulars. The general cannot be descriptively reduced to its members in the case of a complex systematic unity. It is not even necessary that any particular actually conforms to the general law perfectly. By accepting that we cannot have cognition over the true causal history of any part of experience, which is essentially what we implicitly accept in employing a regulative idea, we concede our cognitive limitations. We also guarantee that we are interminably engaged in determining any particular; there is always more to know. We must constantly search among the possible connections between members of our systematically unified <world-whole> for

further determinations, yet we are fated to never have a fully completed description of any one thing. It is a process we *cannot* complete.

This is precisely Kant's message at the beginning of 'The ideal of pure reason' in 'The Second Book of the Transcendental Dialectic':

"Ideas, however, are still more remote from objective reality than categories; for no appearance can be found in which they may be represented *in concreto*. They contain a certain completeness that no possible empirical cognition ever achieves, and with them reason has a systematic unity only in the sense that the empirically possible unity seeks to approach it without ever completely reaching it." (*CPuR*, A567-8/B595-6)

We are in a hopeless predicament, which is yet the only predicament that even allows us such a thing a hope. While fated to a never-ending search for determination, the search is itself absolutely possible, and the end representable in the ideal. Contrastingly, in the case of an apparently infinite linear causal series we must *a priori* accede that there is no possibility whatsoever that any particular could be fully determined by us. We can never account for the causes and effects that lie outwith our spatiotemporally enframed experience. The search is impossible; denied before it begins. With this understanding, let us return to our discussion of asymptotic movement and what that means for our thinking about Kant's systems.

As our generalisations are refined with further experience, our ability to make predictions improves. As our predictions are more-or-less confirmed or falsified, our comprehension of particular events and objects improves. Consequentially, we are better able to generalise, better able to predict, and so on in a ‘feedback’ process. This process is clearly suggestive of an innate *direction of travel* toward greater and greater comprehension. It is a never-completed movement toward a harmonisation with the *ideal* which, if it were possible for us, is where our idea (as a lawful generalisation) of the whole would be in complete agreement with our concepts of the lawfulness of the parts and therefore our understanding of it would fully determine our understanding of them and the other way about (c.f., Guyer, 2003b, p.4). This completion, the perfect agreement between the lawfulness of the whole and its parts, it follows, would be the termination of this asymptotic movement in our cognition. A state of cognitive equilibrium would be reached and our regulative idea, which—while always ontologically dependent upon its parts—would now, in its general laws, be entirely and *ideally* aligned with the laws of its members. Whereas the general, or universal, was explanatorily autonomous and ontologically dependent, it would now be ‘dependent’ in both senses. Like in mathematics, the general definition, as conditions of possibility and actuality, would also describe the particulars.

Furthermore, up to this point we can see that Kant’s view offers a form of answer to a malignant difficulty in philosophy and indeed in the sciences: the problem of downward causation (which we may also call final causality). This is the difficulty in explaining how it is that emergent properties at the macro/general level, can have a causal effect on the lower levels, i.e., on particular instances or events. In what has preceded, the answer available to us in relation to the whole of nature is in fact the

answer to the question of *how* the problem comes about. In Kant's philosophy as described thus far, it is our own rational nature that gives rise to the very issue of downward causation. It is only because of the systematic nature of our reason that downward causation, demonstrated by the abovementioned *direction of travel*, appears to us. The causal influence comes from the high-level arrangement of the parts within the whole and is manifest in the refinement and determination of the lower levels. While this, being a product of reason, can be assented to on objectively sufficient grounds, we cannot, however, just go ahead and attribute reality to it. We have yet no justification to think that the world is actually constituted in the systematic way we represent it and so no reason to think downward causation, this direction of travel, is real. All we can say currently is that it arises through the form of our rational systems, through a fundamental property of reason.

Kant confirms this inherent purposiveness of regulative ideas in his essay, *On the use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy* (1788)³⁶. For reasons I hope are by this point clear, I equate *purposiveness* with the *direction of travel* toward the ideal-as-end, i.e., the apparent *downward causation* in Kantian regulative systems. In this 1788 essay, in speaking of teleological principles that govern ends, which we can now understand to be principles connected to systematic ideals, he says that 'principles of this kind [...] concern the very method of thinking, prior to the determination of the object' (8:160). The 'end' is the state that *would* (though the process is interminable either within any temporal frame or by any discursive intellect) complete all determination of the domain. Regulative *ideas* are therefore teleological in their very nature for Kant. It is

³⁶ The essay was sent to Reinhold with the letter on 28th and 31st December 1787 in which he heralded the discovery of the new principle in the third *Critique*, though was not published until January 1788.

in this way that the idea of the whole of nature, as a concept *forever* in the process of determination, is driven toward its own final end: its equilibrium in ideal harmony. This equilibrious state would be where the idea is, in addition to being ontologically dependent upon the particular laws which it subsumes, explanatorily dependent in the sense that the universal law would exactly match the laws governing any particular we chose to examine and so vice-versa. The characteristic marks of the whole would match those of the parts. This would confer axiom-like status upon the principles as we saw with geometric definitions. As an (ideally) closed system of laws where all relevant relations are internally accounted for, it could not be *thought* to have an externally supplied purpose. Otherwise, this would cast us back into the mire of infinite regress or of claiming God as an object of possible experience and thereby contradicting our own experience. The *purpose* exhibited by such systems is its continuous striving to realise the perfect equilibrium of the *ideal*, the systematic exemplar.³⁷ Thusly is our very way of thinking prescribed, our ways of observing the world regulated.

There is, to be clear, nothing magical or unnatural here. This are parallels here with a description of the second law of thermodynamics. The processes described are not, in any sense that I think discounts a comparison, different from the processes described by contemporary thinkers in *complex systems* theory (e.g., Ellis, 2009).³⁸ There

³⁷ It is generally considered that Kant's *purposiveness* describes the notion that the form of the system presupposes a purpose or design (e.g., Huneman, 2007, p.79). Therefore, we think of it as *purposive* because it seems to have a purpose or design. This, to my mind, does not capture the detail of the picture at all. We must capture the fact that these systems, even as rational presuppositions, do manifest a direction of travel toward an 'ideal', equilibrious state; the aetiological mechanism of which—as downward causation (or even final causality)—remains as inexplicable and problematic now as it did then. The *purposiveness* Kant discusses is something tangible, effective, and active.

³⁸ In fact, the similarities between Kantian systematicity and contemporary complex systems theory is remarkable. I highlight some of those similarities here. Ellis explains that, '[t]o enable true complexity to emerge, there will be numerous quasi-independent modules at each level of the hierarchy, interacting with each other in a network'. He goes on to explain that the interconnected structure itself is an

must, as in organisms, be some inner purpose, regulative function or normativity that holds the boundary between chaos and order, i.e., which regulates the integrity of the whole in the face of external perturbations, alongside a consideration of the system as an interrelated entity. In Kant, there is an inner drive and an inner constraint involved in the relationship between the regulative idea and its ideal that prevents our experiences from seeming entirely indeterminate to us. Without this there would be no discernible order. It is the form of these systems that somehow supplies this purposive property and constraint. The realisation of the form of the ideal is the impossible-in-reality state where a description of the essential laws which form the <world-whole>, match exactly the same kind of description of our concept of a particular. This I would also describe as the form, or characteristic marks, of the particular instance being the same as those of the general, in line with Kant's view of mathematical certainty (c.f., *Inq*, 2:276-7 & 292).

Since the innate *purposiveness* of our ideas refer to and describe a movement toward this *ideal* systematicity, we can easily understand Kant's claim that this purposiveness directs our thinking toward *something* even though 'no appropriate objects can be given in experience' (*CoJ*, §77 5:405). If one understands regulative ideas in this way then

irreducibly 'higher-level characteristic', therefore we have the explanatory autonomy of the systematic structure. The particular modules have their own properties, but additionally there are 'relations between units as well as local causal motifs, that [are] crucial in building up complexity. Kant has particular concepts and differentiated conceptual hierarchies under a highest concept wherein all parts and whole are interrelated in such a way as to determine each other. Ellis has units, local motifs, and a high-level network of interactivity. Ellis additionally notes that these 'high-level entities', i.e., the systematic unity, 'need not have a material nature'. This is because they describe the network of relations, not the material properties of the parts (Ellis, 2009, p.65). I fail to see the any vast difference between this and Kant's systematic *Ideal* and *ideas*. Ellis goes on to describe downward (top-down) causation in a way that corresponds to my own description and Bedau's (*Ibid.*, p.66). Kant's complexity corresponds closely to aspects of Ellis's *Adaptive Selection, Adaptive Information Control*, and especially *Intelligent Top-Down Causation* (*Ibid.*, pp.66-73). For further discussions of biological complexity and the different philosophical and scientific attempts to describe and understand this, see (Van de Vijver *et al.*, 2003). However, based upon this brief comparison with Ellis' work on complexity and the interpretation I have offered of Kant's use of regulative ideas and ideals, I think Kant's contribution to the debate is massively underestimated.

one might accurately describe the regulative idea of the whole of nature, or at least its *systematic form* in relation to the ideal, as the driving force in the human search for experience, exploration, and knowledge. Somehow, here is the ground of reason's continual search for completion. Somehow, here is the causal power of reason in its pure form. We must, still, continually remind ourselves that we are not immediately entitled to claim that the idea represents how the world really is, that the systematic ideal is anything other than a cognitive heuristic of sorts that even tempts us to make illusory claims about the world. It may drive our subjective cognition, but we may not leap to the claim that there is anything objectively real about the purposiveness we perceive in our conceptualisation of nature.³⁹ It is quite possible that the human mind simply arranges information into complex systems entirely independently of the organisation of reality and that this evolved capacity is also what animates our cognition. Justifying objective reality would require an experience demonstrating this that all discursive intellects could agree upon, surely. Yet purposiveness is clearly a property of the power of reason in Kant's view.

In the *CPuR*, during his *Critique of all Speculative Theology*, Kant discusses just this purposiveness in our idea of the whole of nature. He is also concerned with how it can lead reason to speculate upon a supreme intelligence whose intention it is that the world follows the path that it does. He says,

³⁹ In the third *Critique*, Kant differentiates between the internal purposiveness that 'organized beings' have and an external purposiveness that other objects have. Internal purposiveness is also referred to as 'a formative drive' which is internal to the organism. External purposiveness describes a purposiveness that relates to the usefulness of the object as relative to other parts of the world (5:424-5).

“This highest formal unity that alone rests on concepts of reason is the purposive unity of things; and the speculative interest of reason makes it necessary to regard every ordinance in the world as if it had sprouted from the intention of a highest reason. Such a principle, namely, opens up for our reason, as applied to the field of experience, entirely new prospects for connecting up things in the world in accordance with teleological laws, and thereby attaining to the greatest systematic unity among them.” (*CPuR*, A686-7/B714-5)

We can make sure sense of this idea of apparent ‘intention’ by referring back to my exploration of purposiveness, above. Where we have *purposiveness* as an innate quality in a system such as I have outlined, and which I contend is the type of purposive system Kant intends by his use of *systematicity* and regulative ideas, then this can seem to us entirely akin to an intentionally guided process. Yet, there is no possible subject to which this ostensible ‘intentionality’ can be attributed in experience. Resultantly, in order to conceptualise the whole of nature and satisfy the demands of reason for objective justification, we might presuppose ‘a supreme intelligence, as the sole cause of the world-whole, but of course merely in the idea’ (*CPuR*, A686/B714). As regards the impossibility of experience, the reader will recall that there can be no temporally antecedent ground for the world that can fall within the bounds of experience. In the early parts of the first *Critique*, the idea that is the placeholder for this causal ground is God and His intention. This thought comes quite naturally to us because of the purposiveness we find in our idea of the world-whole, though also quite mistaken because it contradicts our self-sufficient idea.

Kant goes on to say that this idea can do no harm to our cognitions so long as it remains a regulative one. We should not make the mistake of attributing reality to the idea of God and considering it as constitutive. If we avoid this then there is no harm since, as we know, regulative ideas are amenable to, i.e., pose no barrier to, adjustment in the face of added information. With a merely regulative idea we can continue to expand, via specification/articulation, our cognition of the world, in other words. I have also shown that that this added information must come to us through experience, and Kant cites this as a condition for the regulative use of ideas (e.g., *Pro* §46 4:350). Furthermore, I have argued that we can explain our human hunger for knowledge and experience by this rational structure. At the same time, ideas supply us the ability to think the world as potentially determinable even if the process remains unfinished. We saw earlier that the end for a regulative idea is an ideal completeness, yet the innate purposiveness of the idea forces us into a certain kind of *openness* where we are pushed, or perhaps drawn, to seek in experience for the cognitive ‘fuel’ required to achieve the internal equilibrium of our idea.

However, I wrote in §1.1 that Kant does identify some issues with having God as the beginning and end of our system of nature. He reiterates the same in the third *Critique*, saying that each system, each part of philosophy must remain a ‘freestanding building’ (§68, 5:381-2). Therefore, the idea of the world-whole, as the rational aspect of physics, should stand alone. To reiterate in terms that will now be familiar; it must be a closed system. In fact, reason demands this. If we were to admit God’s intention as *real*, as the foundational cause and end, then we find ourselves denied this possible closure. We are denied the ambition of fully determining even one part of nature by our idea, since this itself requires that we maintain the possibility of conceptualising

the entirety of its relations. This cannot be done if we permit a causal relation to a *supernatural* (external and unknowable) entity to enter into our scheme. When we do this, we end any search for knowledge. There is no possibility of cognition, so no drive to cognition. The system must stand alone to this extent, or at least be considered capable of standing alone, if its 'end' were to be attained.⁴⁰

This is entirely similar to what has been the problem, as Kant informed us, for past metaphysical systems. Were our cognition merely to passively conform to what is *given* to us in perception, we could not maintain the notion that we have the ability to secure determinate knowledge. We could not pretend to have the chance to account for all the relations in which any object partakes, because we receive only what is given and could have no way of knowing that which is not. We could never account for the conditions of possibility of any given object because these conditions must antecede what is given. There would, besides, be no possibility of judgment; only dumb acceptance. Such a metaphysics cannot be freestanding in the sense Kant demands and supplies, and it cannot bring the benefits of the Kantian system as described. Moreover, we know from the *Preface* to the *CPuR* that Kant's intention is to find 'satisfactory proofs of the laws that are the *a priori* ground of nature, as the sum-total of objects of experience'. This, of course, requires that we find the ground of these lawlike generalisations in ourselves, otherwise Kant's Copernican turn would be arbitrary.

⁴⁰ In the *Analytic* of the third *Critique*, Kant tells us that judgment can represent the effects of purposiveness in two ways: either as the means toward some further end (i.e., as relative to an external end), or as an 'internal' end (i.e., not represented merely as means toward any further end, but as a freestanding end in itself) (*CoJ*, §63, 5:366-7). With God as end, the purposiveness of nature can only ever be considered relative to some further external and unknowable end.

To claim that God-as-cause is merely an innate or *a priori* principle of our reason would be to make God, and therefore nature, relative to *us*. Such a claim would contradict the concepts of God, nature, and of ourselves. God is necessarily external to us and to nature, thus we cannot claim God as the subjectively sufficient ground for the idea of nature (nor of purposiveness). Kant knows all this; these are some of the reasons he recommends a systematic idea of nature. He knows that the systematic form of pure reason is part of our fundamental nature and the ground that allows and drives our lawful generalisations. When we arrange the entirety of nature *in its image*, then we save for ourselves the hope that we can know something of it.

Chapter 2: Possibility and impossibility

Thus far, I have sought to capture relevant aspects of regulative ideas, systematicity, and their relationship. I have also briefly discussed constitutive ideas and principles. The *Ideal* of systematicity, we saw, acts as the principle, exemplar, and goal of ideas in general. We know that a regulative idea is a subjective representation of this purely rational ideal as it pertains to a specific domain that cannot be fully determined in experience. I have illustrated that these ideas result in a subjective drive to further determination of their domain. There are various interrelated functions or properties that can be attributed to the idea of the whole of nature and to regulative ideas generally; some of which have been highlighted. Yet I begin this chapter by attending to another feature of the idea of the whole of nature. This feature, Kant believes, is that the idea of the whole of nature can claim reality because of its necessity for any empirical experience whatsoever. Initially, however, I will return to the Reinhold letter and the question of cognition. In §2.2, we will look again at the impossible principle and consider whether it was already available to Kant in his empirical psychology.

2.1 The possible reality of the idea of the whole of nature and the purposes of purposiveness

Clearly, *cognition* is entwined with the nature of systematicity. In telling Reinhold that he is applying the previously known systematicity to a new area, Kant means that he has identified an internally consistent and closed system of conditions that offer the possibility of cognition over some different domain. It seems reasonable to think that Kant is concerned with *cognition* if he is occupied with the role of systematicity in the production of a new kind of *a priori* regulative principle. I would yet raise one more point in support of this view, however. The three parts of philosophy which Kant claims *now* to ‘recognise’ in his letter to Reinhold are ‘theoretical philosophy, teleology, and practical philosophy’ (Kant, 1787 [2020], 10:514). If we think that Kant simply means this in the ordinary sense that he *acknowledges* them, then we fail to capture the fullness of his aim since it is clear that he recognised teleology long before this. This again becomes clear in the preface to the *Groundwork* where he describes the three parts of Greek philosophy: logic, ethics, and physics. Kant affirms these divisions and admits an aspect of his task is to seek *principles* for each, ‘partly so as to assure oneself in this way of its completeness, partly to be able to determine correctly the necessary subdivisions.’ (G, 4:387-8).⁴¹

This notion of ‘completeness’ is captured by the thought of a closed, consistent, freestanding idea which, through its purposive striving for ideal systematicity, contains its end. *Logic* is the formal, purely rational aspect of philosophy prior to empirical

⁴¹ See also: (G, 4:436, 4:436n*)

concerns, disclosing the universal rules permeating all other parts. *Physics* is the science of the laws of nature, with both *material* and *rational* aspects. *Ethics* is the science of the laws of freedom, the ‘doctrine of morals’, again with *material* and *rational* aspects. The material and rational aspects of ethics equate to the sensuous and the rational aspects of determining moral action, respectively. Kant tells us precisely this when he says that ‘the empirical part might in particular be called *practical anthropology*, the rational part actually *moral science*’ (G, 4:388). We can consider *teleology* as the application of a rational procedure—not deployed under the false belief that we really can achieve the complete determination of nature, but to allow the possibility of ‘scientific’ cognition over this domain. It then seems uncomplicated to equate this with the rational aspect of physics. Nature considered as subject to the empirical and mechanistic laws of sensible nature in the earlier parts of the first *Critique*, rather than to the rational laws of systematicity, would constitute the material aspect. If so, then Kant already *recognises* teleology as the rational subdivision of physics in the ordinary sense.

Though I claimed earlier that we cannot know what details Kant knew of the principle that it seems he had tried and failed to find at some earlier point, I believe we can now fill in some further detail. Note that Kant refers to *Ethics* as the *doctrine of morals*. *Physics*, likewise, is the *doctrine of nature* (or its first part, as we shall see). In the second section of the *Groundwork*, he explains his present task of investigating practical philosophy in its rational sense as pertaining not to ‘grounds of what *happens*, but to what *ought to happen*, even if it never does, i.e., objective practical laws’ (4:427). He goes on to say that,

‘we do not need to investigate the grounds of why something pleases or displeases, how the gratification of mere sensation differs from taste, and whether the latter differs from a universal delight of reason; on what feeling pleasure and displeasure rests, and how from this there arise desires and inclinations, and from them, by co-operation of reason, maxims; for all of that belongs to an empirical doctrine of the soul, which would constitute the second part of the doctrine of nature [...]’

The second part of the doctrine of nature refers to empirical psychology, which we shall investigate more closely in due course. We know that the principle of pleasure and displeasure was not found in the first *Critique*. We know that the third *Critique* deals with taste, teleology, and the discovery of this impossible principle. We shall see in chapter 3 how the *CoJ* engages with the possibility of a purely rational pleasure, here called ‘a universal delight of reason’. The conclusion we might draw is that in 1785, Kant knew that discovering the objective and purely rational ground or principle of feeling required an investigation of taste. I will revisit this passage in §2.2, though with a translational insight that substantiates this possibility. Desires, he says here, arise from that upon which ‘feeling pleasure and displeasure rests’. Desires are of course subjective interests, and we know that Kant considers himself to have found the principle for the desiderative faculty in the *Critique of Practical Reason* [*CPrR*]. In 1785, Kant’s comprehension of the ‘impossible’ principle, and even perhaps the route to its discovery, may have been fairly extensive.

I will return to the importance of his empirical psychology in the next section but presently will continue along the path of interpreting *erkennen*. The process of

completion for Kant indeed involves the recognition of a systematically conditioned domain, by discovering its principle. Yet, as noted earlier, it is fundamental to emphasise that *cognition* is key to comprehending what Kant is trying to achieve. In the *Preface* to the B-edition of the first *Critique*, Kant's footnote reads: "To cognize an object, it is required that I be able to prove its possibility (whether by testimony of experience from its actuality or *a priori* through reason)" (*CPuR*, Bxxvi n*). This highlights the distinction between grounding our assent to the possibility of an object in either experience or in the universal nature of reason. If something is an object of veridical experience it is really and logically possible. If merely grounded in reason, we may grant logical possibility, but real possibility does not automatically follow.

While the 1967 and 1999 translations of the Reinhold letter I quoted above use 'recognize', they are both clear that each part of philosophy must have its *a priori* principles. This is entirely in line with the quoted footnote because the production of an idea is, as we know, our method of representing rational *a priori* principles of some domain over which we therefore can have *systematic* cognition. In the same footnote Kant goes on to say,

'[b]ut I can think whatever I like, as long as I do not contradict myself, i.e., as long as my concept is a possible thought, even if I cannot give any assurance whether there is a corresponding object somewhere within the sum total of all possibilities'. (*Ibid.*)

We have seen that an aim for regulative ideas is this perfect consistency, exemplified in the systematic *Ideal*. However, here Kant is highlighting that it is possible to hold an entirely consistent, complete, and closed system in one's thoughts that meets the conditions of ideal systematicity, yet which cannot be real because it is inconsistent with the rules or laws that govern empirical experience, i.e., natural laws. This would have *logical* possibility only.

A pertinent example is discussed by Friedman, who notes that Kant's philosophy leaves room for non-Euclidean geometries, being internally coherent axiomatic systems that can yet never be found in any possible experience, i.e., it is not a *real possibility* and cannot be demonstrated in intuition. "[R]eal possibilities are a subclass of the much wider class of logical possibilities", Friedman informs us (1990, p.219). For an *idea*, and indeed any concept, to meet the conditions for being a *real possibility* it must be groundable in the categories of the understanding and must be intuitable in space and time. In other words, real possibility requires that the object must be consistent with the *constitutive* principles of our experience and this presupposes logical possibility (Thorpe, 2015, pp.162-3). The fact that regulative ideas are already grounded in the universal systematic nature of reason may be enough for objective and subjective sufficiency and logical possibility, but it is not enough to guarantee *real possibility*, nor reality.

Yet the *idea of the whole of nature* is needed for the employment of the understanding itself, i.e., it is *a necessary a priori condition for any experience whatsoever*. Consequently, one would naturally expect it to be the case that any individual experience demonstrates the *real possibility* of this idea. To be sure, there is no empirical cognition possible over the entirety of nature—no empirical object corresponds to the whole. Though if all

empirical judgments and even actions are impossible without this idea, where does that leave us? The regulative idea of God as supreme cause, for example, is also one for which no corresponding intuition is possible. God cannot be thought under the categories (or ‘under’ anything) or known through experience. There is no scope for His having *real possibility* as no part of Him can be known.⁴² Presuming God as first cause, moreover, contradicts our having empirical cognition or reliably acting in the world.⁴³

Toward the end of the third *Critique* in the ‘General Remark on the Teleology’, Kant straightforwardly tells us where we are left regarding the regulative <world-whole>. He says that ‘the concept of nature [...] proves its reality in the objects of the senses that are given (or can possibly be given) prior to all concepts of nature’ (*CoJ*, 5:475). Therefore, we are correct that the idea of the whole of nature contains its real possibility because it is *a priori* necessary for even the generation of our empirical concepts. It is, in fact, the exemplar of the general definition of their possibility. All possible experience is grounded in this idea. It is this fact which allows that the principle of ideal systematicity is knowable as an *a priori* truth about our essential nature *through our experiences*. After all, we *do* have experiences of parts of nature, and we *do* pick out regularities and generalise, and we *do* make and correct predictions, and we *do* act in the world. This is the Copernican turn in action. Note that Kant could not have made this claim about the real possibility of the idea of the world-whole while at the same time holding that God was the causal principle of nature, i.e., without

⁴² The apodictically certain nature of God ensures that he is considered the head of all domains including that of morality, and we cannot pretend to have systematic knowledge over God, as a constrainable domain, since He can be subsumed under no higher principle, i.e., reason can provide ‘no insight into an existence which is absolutely necessary’ (*LPDR*, 28:1063, 28:1067).

⁴³ The concept of God-as-cause can, at best, be merely a ‘most reasonable opinion’ but never knowledge (*CPPrR*, 5:142). An opinion is ‘taking something to be true with the consciousness that it is subjectively as well as objectively insufficient’ (*CPPrR*, A822/B850)

the idea being complete and closed. The idea, in that case, could not have contained the complete definition of the possibility of its parts since all possibility would ultimately originate beyond nature. Nature could not be causally closed and hope of determinate cognition would be dashed.

I am, however, somewhat engaging in poltroonery here. Kant is actually making a braver claim than I have admitted. He is claiming something beyond mere real 'possibility'. This is indicated in the differentiation between objects of sense that are actually given and those that can possibly be given, but he also unambiguously uses the word 'reality'. The claim of 'reality' for the world as a systematic whole is explained by Guyer. He says that,

'we can reconcile what is in fact the transcendental principle of the empirical realism of systematicity with transcendental idealism by supposing that the things that really do exist independent of our representations of them also really do have systematic relations among their powers, although those powers do not really have the spatiotemporal forms that they appear to us to have' (2017, p.62)

Basically, Guyer is saying that Kant is *supposing* that there is some kind of formal isomorphy in the way that we arrange the world according to our ideas and the way that the world is interrelated. More, however, can be told.

First, the fact that we can predict, act, and cognise with increasing reliability—all of which require the systematic form—suggests that there is a congruity, whatever form it

may take, between mind and world. Another interesting point is, as we saw in the representation of a person's character, that the generalisation is built from particular instances. General laws are ontologically dependent upon particulars (even where they cannot be explained by or deduced from them). It is therefore possible to claim that the systematic generalisation is ontologically dependent upon particular lawful systems in nature which are within the scope of experience. These systematicities have reality; complex systems exist in nature, e.g., in 'organized beings' (*CoJ*, 20:228). Therefore, we can interpret Kant as thinking that we may claim the reality of the general systematic interrelatedness of the whole of nature with the same kind of assuredness that we may claim the reality of other kinds of natural laws. This fits with the converse of the principle of synthetic a priori judgment, delineated in my introduction, which states that 'conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience' (*CPuR*, A158/B197). When it comes to conditions of possibility: what's good for the universal <GOOSE> is also good for the geese, and so too vice versa.

There is, admittedly, still something uneasy in claiming real possibility and reality because of the triunity of conditions which say that (i) this idea is merely a construction of reason, (ii) this whole can never itself be an object of experience, and (iii) that it is never completely determinable by its very nature. To consider it a logical possibility is entirely comprehensible, but it still seems uncomfortable to claim reality on a par with particular experiences for something that is inherently undeterminable. Yet we should respond to this worry by reminding ourselves that the <world-whole> is not unknowable by *its* very nature; rather, it is unknowable *for us* by *our* very nature. It cannot be an object of experience *for us* in our finitary predicament. Yet each of its

parts and systems thereof, even though we may never encounter them, can be attributed reality. If we are to take our idea of nature seriously—and we have no choice—then we must allow it the same status as its sub-members.

Kant tells us exactly this when he goes on to say that this ‘metaphysical concept of nature [...] is therefore ontological’ (*CpJ*, 5:475)⁴⁴. He can consistently hold that we cannot have an empirical representation of the whole of nature while claiming that its higher-level, lawful organisation *can* be represented in idea, or that this whole is ontologically dependent upon the parts. Furthermore, the systematic form of reason is something we can discover about ourselves through an examination of our experiences, as has been discussed. This regressive kind of proof of our systematic reason aligns with the nature of transcendental deduction as laid out in Ameriks’ paper, *Kant’s Transcendental Deduction as a Regressive Argument* (1978).⁴⁵ The point is that we experience the world in certain ways. For us to experience it in those ways, certain necessary conditions must hold. One of these is the representation by reason of the whole of nature as a systematic, purposive, and freestanding unity.

Our brief foray into possibility and reality has reiterated for us that the regulative idea of the world-whole exemplifies the necessary conditions for the possibility of determinate theoretical cognition. We know that it grounds the drive for the practical activity of empirical cognition and the possibility of prediction and action. Kant’s

⁴⁴ Reason has two aspects: methodological and ontological (Zammito, 1992, p.163). The ontological sense refers to objectivity, yet objectivity has a further ambiguity in Kant since it can relate to the objectivity of pure reason or actuality (or both where objective reality/necessary existence is required).

⁴⁵ Ameriks says that ‘it is necessary and profitable to understand the deduction as moving from the assumption that there is empirical knowledge to a proof of the preconditions of that knowledge’ (1978, p.273, p.287)

published introduction to the third *Critique*, quoted in the introduction, confirms that we are on the right track in having realised this. It bears re-reading at this stage:

“[...] the power of judgment, provides the mediating concept between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom, which makes possible the transition from the purely theoretical to the purely practical, from lawfulness in accordance with the former to the final end in accordance with the latter, in the concept of a purposiveness of nature; for thereby is the possibility of the final end, which can become actual only in nature and in accord with its laws, cognized.” (*CpJ*, 5:196)

Still, some further mental crotchet is needed to bring together some threads of thought and clarify where exactly we have alighted along our path. I have explained why I believe that *purposiveness* is naturally inherent in the processual and asymptotic movement of a regulative idea toward complete determination. The idea of the world-whole bestrides both the theoretical and practical aspects of metaphysics in that it is a necessary condition for the possibility of all objects in nature and for the actualisation of any objects that could come about from our activity.

While discussing *purposiveness* in the regulative idea, I explained that this grounds our subjective human drive to *know*, to seek further details (and take new perspectives), to seek reasons, to expand our conceptual hierarchies at lower levels and seek completion in the highest. The end for the idea of the world-whole was the regulative ideal, a perfect systematicity of principles, complete determination, an equilibrium between the particulars and lawful representation of the whole. Yet Kant is clear in

the quote above that purposiveness plays its part in moral, practical activity. In action, *our* end is the effect that we *will* in the world. By the regulative idea of the world-whole, we can form expectations about what particular actions might achieve in the world. This is, of course, needed to make any ends actual by our activity.

However, this regulative <world-whole> only seems to ground a subjective purposiveness that drives the search for cognition, conceptual determination, and which helps us figure-out the best way to achieve our goal. It does not obviously extend into the world to motivate or produce practical activity outside of the mind. But there is no reason that the formal properties that this idea exemplifies cannot perform this function. Purposiveness is inherent in the interplay between the organisation of parts in a system and the ideal; it does not rely on the subject-matter itself. The ‘parts’ in an organisation could be desires, concepts, bananas, solar systems, things-in-themselves, or whatever. Before we consider further, I will add that it is important to understand that our idea of the whole of nature is required for thinking of ourselves as being possibly effective at all. This is because ‘the concept of the faculty of desire as a will must [...] be given empirically’, i.e., as *a part of the world* (*CoJ*, V 5:181). This empirical will is therefore only ‘determinable through concepts’ because to consciously perform an action just is ‘to act in accordance with the representation of an end, which would be the will’ (*CoJ*, §10 5:220). The idea of the world-whole is necessary for us to think of ourselves as having an empirical will at all, which again firmly corresponds to its necessity for all action.

With all this in mind let us consider how this might work in practical activity. In willing an object to come about, our end is the object or effect as we envisage it *should* be. The ability to act pursuant to this represented end just is, as Kant says, the will. In

this sense, the end takes the place of the ideal. As we work to make this real in the world, we act, we correct, we try again, we account for other influences (though there are innumerable influences we cannot know or account for), and so on. We forever move toward what we can analogically think of as ‘perfection’, i.e., the effect we envisage as it *should* be. This normativity is not alien to the purposiveness we have considered so far either, though we rightly spoke of its *regulative* rather than normative nature. The systematic ideal in straightforward empirical cognition exemplifies how perfect *we would wish our cognition to be*. There is, therefore, a ‘normativity’ even there. In action, as with cognition of the whole of nature, it is unfathomably unlikely that an effect we envisage is perfectly achieved. There are too many external influences and obstacles that also have a say in how our desired effects turn out. Unless, that is, all externalities aligned with our intention by luck.

To make this clear, let us imagine that we could construct a complex computer-model of everything done to achieve a particular end. Furthermore, this model also includes all influences outside of our control and knowledge that also affect the outcome. These include competing and congruent desires, distractions, butterflies fluttering-by in Madrid, etc. Had we the ability to model such complexity, we would be able to take *everything* and their effects into account all at once. This, however, is impossible even with modern supercomputers (it is impossible for any observer that interacts with nature). If it were possible, we would be able to know the effects of every part and event on every other part and event. We would have perfect knowledge of the consequences of each interaction. We could envisage a trajectory allowing a perfect prediction of how things would turn out. We would know how close or distant to our desired end our current efforts in combination with the extant circumstances in the world would take us. At every moment there is a current state-of-affairs which

includes *everything* in thoroughgoing interaction. Such a snapshot contains all the information necessary to construct a perfect prediction (or a perfect history), if only we were able. Alas, it would be the task of a hyperphysical deity to determinately conceive such a complex interplay of events and objects, not to speak of thereafter exerting sufficient influence to cause events to conform with an intention.

To even conceive of the possibility of successful prediction it is necessary to assume causal closure in the world; therefore (to reiterate) only possible for Kant with the barring of God as supreme cause, the Copernican turn, and the regulative systematicity of the idea of the whole of nature. The trajectory of the model-prediction though, tracking external events and course alterations made by the agent, would be always in approach in terms of an overall trend to the end that we represented. A perfect correspondence between the model-prediction and the willed end would equate to a state of equilibrium where all events and efforts align to produce the end, all conditions of possibility are met, and this outcome as we will it to be is certain, i.e., 100% probable.

Let us reintroduce some layers of realism: since we are part of a larger reality that influences how things turn out in the world, and since we are not all-powerful, our predicted outcome would never quite be as it should. The relation between the originally willed end and the changing prediction that a perfect modelling would show would be—with intentional course-corrections as we respond to external influences— asymptotic if executed well (and with some luck). In reality, of course, circumstances often simply deny us the object of our desires, but the analogy remains warranted; we could be denied further cognition of empirical objects by external circumstances too. We can, therefore, begin to see how the concept of purposiveness might also be

involved in attaining a willed effect. Though we poor humans cannot perfectly model such complex systems, we instead have a regulative idea of the world-whole, determined only according to principles. We construct a similar system according to represented ends when we will something. It is, quite seriously, our modelling heuristic. It allows us to predict what effect our actions and course-corrections will achieve in regard to an end with higher or lower levels of probability. I explained earlier that our ability to make predictions improves with practice. It is the same with our ability to produce an effect.

I will slightly shift gear here to consider, specifically, a morally relevant end, as I believe it illustrates the point quite simply that there is consonance between the purposiveness in the theoretical and the moral. It mirrors the example given in the introduction to this thesis but considered from the 1st person perspective; an internal purposiveness rather than attributed from the observer position. Consider the desire to form a disposition for kindness. If I force myself to act kindly in every situation I can, then I will gradually develop a kinder disposition. This will take time, but the more the habit is inculcated, the closer to automatic my kind responses will become, the less effort it takes on my part to act kindly in similar circumstances. It will constrain the range of my acceptable choices in a genuine sense. In this way it even reduces the effect of conflicting desires, including those that may have brought me more happiness.

Even in times of crisis, when I struggle to think clearly about my options, my responses would still be guided by my kind character. It would surely be more likely that I would choose the kinder options where they exist. This works in the same way as did the ‘feedback’ process I delineated in §1.3. The kindness of my individual

choices (i.e., considered as particular events with a lawful character) continually determine the general character of my disposition. It is ontologically dependent upon these events. The more kind the character of my general disposition, the more likely I am to act from kind motives when faced with situations where this option is available, the more my disposition is refined, and so on. There is asymptotic movement here, a purposive direction of travel toward an ideal. It is ideal because, of course, I can never reach perfect kindness. I am affected by other desires, luck, and externalities. Unfamiliar or difficult circumstances make the kind choice more difficult. In the impossible event that I attained perfect kindness, the particular character of each one of my choices would match the character of my perfectly kind disposition. As in my introductory example, we would see the same explanatory autonomy between general character and particular moral judgments—as they relate to imperfect duties at least.⁴⁶

It seems to me that had we thought no further than ‘recognition’, we would not likely have come to consider these substantive purposes of ideas and the ideal of systematicity. Neither would we have made such connections only from reading the original 1967 translation by Zweig. The 1999 translation would have left us unsure whether we were mistaken in understanding the systematicity and regulative use of ideas in the third *Critique* in reference to the first (and so also vice-versa). The emphasis

⁴⁶ The preceding discussion of modelling, though couched in more modern terminology, tracks Kant’s discussion of predicting actions and eclipses in the *CPvR* at 5:99. Kant also delineates the distinction I have tried to capture in presenting the external and internal perspectives on character generation in the introduction and in this section. In addition, Kant also captures the notions of ontological dependence and explanatory autonomy here. He states: “One can therefore grant that if it were possible for us to have such deep insight into a human being’s cast of mind, as shown by inner as well as outer actions, that we would know every incentive to action, even the smallest, as well as all the external occasions affecting them, we could calculate a human being’s conduct for the future with as much certainty as a lunar or solar eclipse and could nevertheless maintain that the human being’s conduct is free. If, that is to say, we were capable of another view, namely an intellectual intuition of the same subject (which is certainly not given to us and in place of which we have only the rational concept), then we would become aware that this whole chain of appearances, with respect to all that the moral law is concerned with, depends upon the spontaneity of the subject as a thing in itself, for the determination of which no physical explanation can be given.”

on *cognition* I have chosen here is, I believe, essential. It reflects the importance of rational systematicity to the process of empirical cognition and to moral activity which fits with Kant's claims in the third *Critique*, as given in the introduction to this thesis. It is important, furthermore, to recognise that we have the beginnings of an interesting insight into Kant's practical philosophy. We have made some headway in comprehending just how essential the idea of the whole of nature and the purposiveness (as downward causation) in ideas in general are for the possibility of empirical cognition, for practical judgment and activity, and for the actualisation of objects of our will.

2.2 The mystery of the impossible principle

To think something is impossible to find, as I have said, is not the same thing as having no knowledge of it, normally requiring a reason to look and familiarity with the object pursued. We usually would have reasons for our failure to find whatever it was, too. We know that the principle to feature in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* is the principle of the faculty of feeling and that it became available because reflecting judgment provides it autonomously. It is commonly thought that reflecting judgment does not appear until the third *Critique*, though I will suggest later why the confidence with which this position is assumed should be scaled back. Even accepting this orthodoxy there is no interdict against us looking for earlier signs of the new principle.

Kant, in the essay sent to Reinhold alongside his letter of December 1787 called *On the use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy*, wrote:

“[...] reason on the theoretical path of nature (with respect to the cognition of God) is not able to achieve its *entire* intention as wished, and that therefore only the teleological path remains for it – yet in such a way that [...] an end [...] is given and determined a priori through pure practical reason [...]” (8:159).

In this piece, Kant addresses a response to two other works from Forster—these works being *Determination of the concept of race* (1785) and *Conjectural beginning of human history* (1786). Kant felt that Forster’s criticisms of these arose from a misunderstanding. The

misunderstanding, Kant explains, was that he ‘came under suspicion for wanting to answer a question of the *physical* investigation of nature through documents of religion’ (i.e., that Kant was accepting the truth of *Genesis*) (OTPP, 8:160). In other words, Forster criticised Kant for wanting to gain *theoretical* knowledge over nature in its ‘outer connection’ to something supernatural, meaning God as first cause. Kant was aware of the impossibility of appealing to God in this manner while maintaining the coherence of our experience back in 1781. We will see that Kant was already of this opinion, even in 1772.

In the translator’s introduction to *Conjectural beginning*, Wood tells us that Kant is critical of Herder’s claim that the *fall* and the *Garden of Eden* were true elements of the otherwise allegorical book of *Genesis*. These claims arose in Herder’s *Oldest Document of Humankind* (1774) and *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774). Kant, correspondingly, explains in a letter to Hamann from April 6th 1774, that he understands Herder to be making these claims plus the claim that God installed in us an innate, fully formed concept of humanity (10:154-5). Kant’s response in *Conjectural beginning* is that making such a claim denies us the possibility of a complete idea of humanity since (as with the idea of the world-whole) adding a hyperphysical cause leaves us with an unknowable relation that cannot be accounted for in any aspect of experience.⁴⁷

We ought, Kant says, to begin from our current concept of humanity, assume that there must have been an antecedent state wherein we did not possess this, and then

⁴⁷ Compare with Kant’s discussion of the ‘finality of nature’: “[...] even the wildest hypotheses, as long as they are physical, are more tolerable than a hyperphysical hypothesis, i.e., the appeal to a divine author, which one presupposes to this end. For that would be a principle of lazy reason [...]” (CPuR, A772-3/B800-1).

form a conjecture about the intermediate events that would explain our current position (8:109). The conjecture we make must be guided by a thread ‘attached by reason onto experience’ so that we do not fly too high (i.e., overstep the bounds of experience) (8:110). This is a statement of epistemological conditions, referencing the *Meno* and the story of Icarus. The lesson is that we should explain our possession of this idea in experiential terms, not by miracles.

Kant’s position is that *Genesis* supplies a narrative adequate to explain the intermediate stages between lacking and possessing our current concept of humanity (8:110-4). We should realise, amiably with earlier proceedings, that Kant knows in 1786 that God should not be thought as having direct causal influence on the world of appearance. All outer and inner experiences must be considered naturally determined. The implication is that both inner and outer nature are only investigable as a closed system, as also per his reference to ends and teleology. It is not so clear that this is the case in the 1785 *Determination of the concept of race*, yet he does make an equivalent point in his *Lectures on the philosophical doctrine of religion* (see 28:1063), which gives us a period of between 1783 and 1786 for this kind of thinking even had we not observed the same in the earlier first *Critique*. In fact, suggesting an earlier date again, in his letter to Marcus Hertz of February 21st, 1772, he rejects the theories of Plato, Malebranch, and Crusius, whom he believes seek to explain the pure concepts of the understanding by differing approaches to divine intervention, as *deus ex machina*. He calls this ‘the greatest absurdity one could hit upon in the determination of the origin and validity of our cognitions’, noting that ‘it encourages all sorts of wild notions’ (10:131). Some principle other than God was required even then.

To continue this investigation of Kant's missing principle, I will next turn to a famous footnote in the first *Critique* before progressing to his empirical psychology with reference to the quotation from the second section of the *Groundwork* introduced earlier. The final sentence of this footnote from the *CPuR* was added in the 1787 revision, the rest left unchanged. It reads:

“The Germans are the only ones who now employ the word "aesthetics" to designate that which others call the critique of taste. The ground for this is a failed hope, held by the excellent analyst Baumgarten, of bringing the critical estimation of the beautiful under principles of reason, and elevating its rules to a science. But this effort is futile. For the putative rules or criteria are merely empirical as far as their sources are concerned and can therefore never serve as a priori rules according to which our judgment of taste must be directed, rather the latter constitutes the genuine touchstone of the correctness of the former. For this reason it is advisable again to desist from the use of this term and to save it for that doctrine which is true science (whereby one would come closer to the language and the sense of the ancients, among whom the division of cognition into [*aisthéta* and *noéta*] was very well known).” (A21/B35-6)

There is a relative consensus among Kant scholars which corresponds to the traditional approach exemplified by Freyberg. The consensus is that in 1781, Kant means that it is simply impossible to find a priori principles for judgments of taste.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ (e.g., Allison, 2001, p.3)

The final sentence is thought more hopeful due to the discovery of the impossible principle. There is, though, another plausible possibility.

Baumgarten, very basically, thought that beauty was a perfection in sensory perception that gives us pleasure because of how it corresponds to an objective perfection found in objects, also garnered through the senses.⁴⁹ We subjectively build a picture of this perfection through a generalisation of particular sensory experiences. Kant is, I contend, disagreeing that there can be any kind of a priori objective rules produced through subjective and *given* sense-perceptions with regard to taste because any general rules thus formed can only be *a posteriori* and without hope of universality. Hence why such principles cannot pretend to be the ‘touchstone of correctness’ for judgments of taste. For Baumgarten, Kant objects, the judgments must come before the rules. This destroys any possibility of consistency in judgment. It contradicts the concept of judgment *simpliciter*. In such taste-‘judgments’, we would be accosted by random waves of pleasure and displeasure. Experience becomes chaotic. This makes sense of Kant’s claim that Baumgarten’s thesis can only refer to ‘taste’ rather than a science of ‘aesthetics’, because the latter requires a priori rules for judgment. Any *science*, as we know, requires a priori principles. In 1781, Kant does not say that a science of aesthetics is impossible. In line with his philosophical system, he asserts that Baumgarten’s way fails because his thesis cannot explain how a judgment of taste is possible in the first instance. Kant knew, of course, that a principle was required for a science of aesthetics and that it cannot be a principle of sensibility.

⁴⁹ See (Baumgarten, 1735 [1954]), and especially the introduction to the argument by the translators at pp.17-32.

The 1787 addition of the final sentence is less consequential than believed. It echoes Baumgarten's 1735 doctoral thesis *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus*, which says that the ancients were careful to distinguish between *aistheta* ('things perceived') and *noeta* ('things known').⁵⁰ This is the distinction between sense representations and objects of thought or, in Kantian terms, the distinction between phenomena and noumena, the world of sense and the intelligible.⁵¹ I think it plausible that the 1787 addition does no more than reiterate his point in such a way as to hint triumphally that he would soon show us how a science of aesthetics *should* be done, so we had better mind our usage of the term. This, of course, also corresponds to the dating of the letter to Reinhold. The 1781 original already does enough to say that we should not refer to subjective judgments of taste as a true aesthetics. We must have an a priori principle.

Still, we are not barred from investigating earlier origins. To direct our investigation, consider again this passage from Kant's *Groundwork*, this time incorporating a telling update in translation:

"In a practical philosophy, where we are not concerned with accepting grounds of what *happens*, but rather laws of what *ought to happen*, even if it never does, i.e. objective practical laws: there we do not need to investigate the grounds of why something pleases or displeases, how the gratification of mere sensation differs from taste, and whether the latter differs from a

⁵⁰ (1735 [1954], §116, p.78 [English translation]). The Latin text is reproduced from p.93 onward (c.f., §CXVI, p.39).

⁵¹ This distinction is made even in the Inaugural Dissertation (1770): "The object of sensibility is the sensible; that which contains nothing but what is thought to be cognized through the intelligence is intelligible. In the schools of the ancients, the former was called a *phenomenon* and the latter a *noumenon*." (*ID*, §3, 2:392)

universal delight of reason; [whereupon the feeling of pleasure and displeasure rests]⁵², and how from this there arise desires and inclinations, and from them, by co-operation of reason, maxims; for all of that belongs to an empirical doctrine of the soul, which would constitute the second part of the doctrine of nature, if considered *as philosophy of nature*, in so far as it is founded on *empirical laws*.” (4:427)

Kant is telling us that the task of the *Groundwork* is to consider the objective practical laws of morality devoid of all empirical affection. This means the subjective desires and inclinations, anything empirical and contextual, must be excluded. He also distinguishes between taste and ‘a universal delight of reason’. Now this ‘universal delight’ might refer to the practical or aesthetic sphere and in a sense, he refers to both. We must be able to take rational pleasure in morality and to do so, there must be a universal principle of the faculty of feeling that he claims to have proven through his aesthetics. Universality is precisely what Baumgarten could not provide; his judgments of taste grounded in principles which follow from subjective sense perceptions. Any consequential pleasure arises from merely subjective reasons. The judgments themselves, if they were possible, only assented to on subjectively sufficient grounds. It is clear from the updated translation given above, where I use ‘whereupon’ (in the sense of ‘in which’), that Kant already knows in 1785 that the feeling of pleasure and displeasure *in general*, which incorporates the capacity and instances, should be groundable in universal reason.

⁵² The phrase “worauf Gefühl der Lust und Unlust beruhe” is given as “on what feeling pleasure and displeasure rests” in the Gregor and Timmermann translation. However, the updated translation here was discussed in correspondence with Prof. Timmermann.

As we know, if something is universal among subjects only because they have reason then its grounds are objectively sufficient. Kant is suggesting a purely rational ground of pleasure and displeasure, recalling the empirical psychology and presaging (though we cannot yet perhaps say *deliberately*) the task of the third *Critique*. Desires and inclinations can arise from this universal and objective pleasure or displeasure, he states, and by engaging reason we may then produce maxims that guide and constrain the realisation of our desires. This would appear to hint at the purpose of the *CPrR*, which I will briefly examine in the next chapter. The ‘empirical doctrine of the soul’, I have said, is a reference to empirical psychology—the study of the inner self as appearance and therefore as subject to deterministic laws of nature. Kant’s empirical psychology appears in his lectures on metaphysics but by the mid-1770s was predominantly contained in his lectures on anthropology. The anthropology lectures, given between 1772/3 and 1775/6, were published from Kant’s own notes in 1798 in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. The first part was based on Baumgarten’s empirical psychology alongside other works, though Kant’s view prevails.

The ‘pragmatic’ part of this title referred to both the objective motivation and subjective and pathological incentives of the activity of humans. It encompasses moral motivations and desires that incentivise us to activity and relates to the study of empirical psychology for our improvement (Kuehn, 2006, p.xxi). Kant’s empirical psychology partly deals with how objective laws can have an effect in the world, i.e., how moral motivations from purely objective practical principles can be realised. This was simply not the task of the *Groundwork* in 1785. In the *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (1782-83), we see that psychology has, unsurprisingly, rational and empirical divisions.

Rational psychology deals with principles and concepts that are not taken from experience, while the empirical part ‘must presuppose observations in order to say something about the soul’, i.e., it ‘considers the soul from experience’ (20:756). Like physics, which is ‘a physiology of outer sense or of corporeal beings’, empirical psychology is ‘a physiology of inner sense of thinking beings’ (*Metaphysik L1*, mid-1770s, 28:224). It is about appearances in inner sense under deterministic natural law.⁵³ We know from our consideration of the idea of the world-whole that our observations of external nature, as per the Copernican turn, tell us things about our own *a priori* mental powers. Something similar, Kant is saying here, is true of inner experience.

There is additionally a transcendental aspect of psychology, which is a critique of the human faculties and aims to identify ‘the conditions of possibility of their legitimacy and the normative rules governing them’ (Frierson, 2014, p.2). The task of finding the principles of the faculties of cognition, desire, and feeling, are therefore tasks for transcendental psychology which yet must begin from the empirical division of this field. In empirical psychology, the task is to observe inner appearances, i.e., ‘the operation of human minds’ as caused by the ‘powers’ of the faculties. These ‘powers’ are considered properties of the object of investigation, which is the soul or the truly inner self that is otherwise unknowable in experience (Frierson, 2014, p.2).

Frierson argues that a common foundational error among those critics of Kant, who believe that Kant’s moral philosophy is so distant from reality in its ideality that it is of little pragmatic use, is that they confuse his transcendental and empirical

⁵³ (c.f., *CPuR*, B69, B153, B146, A549/B577; *CPrR*, 5:99)

psychology. They think the freedom that is a necessary part of his transcendental psychology denies the determinism of the empirical (*Ibid.*, p.3). They deny Kant the move from the intelligible to the sensible, from the purely rational to the real, from possibility to actuality. There is, we know from Kant himself, no inference from one to the other. Still, since he claims that the impossible has been achieved in the third *Critique*, we should not be so easily dismissive as these Kant-critical free will sceptics. Inner appearances are, for Kant, to be considered consequences of the active powers of the soul. Where we have a consequent, we must think an antecedent.

In the *Anthropology*, Kant reaffirms the distinction between the higher and lower cognitive faculties. Briefly, the lower are purely *receptive*, passively affected and '[belong] to psychology (a sum of all inner perceptions under laws of nature)' (*AnthP*, 7:141). This is the domain of empirical psychology: the inner as sensible appearance in the efficient causal order of nature. The higher are 'active and [exhibit] a faculty (*facultas*)'; these include the spontaneity of apprehension, the production of systematic ideas. Cognition requires both: receptivity and the active contribution of our own powers (*AnthP*, 7:140-1). There is no objective empirical cognition that corresponds to our inner intuition in the way there is with external experience, where the manifold is unified by our spontaneity according to the categories and its spatial and substantial character (*MFS*, 4:470).

With inner experience, we do not actively unify our experience because it arrives pre-unified by its very nature, being a determination of our own inner state (of which

we are conscious).⁵⁴ Inner experience appears in temporal order, but this is not something that gives objectivity since ordering is not uniform among observers.⁵⁵ No active spontaneity can be discovered by reflecting on these inner experiences because the unification is not a contribution by faculties, so we cannot have any knowledge of the soul by this route (*AnthP*, 7:142). Kant says that the only way we may know of this ‘something’, i.e., the ‘one who observes himself’, is through ‘the consciousness of one’s freedom, which is known [...] through the highest practical reason’ (*Ibid.*, 7:141n²⁴).

Kant goes on to say, as we might expect, that to gain any knowledge of the soul, we must begin by observing inner appearances before moving on ‘to the assertion of certain propositions that concern human nature’ (*AnthP*, 7:143). Key to this is his distinction between sensuous and intellectual pleasure, or as he says in the *Groundwork*, a ‘universal delight of reason’. *Intellectual* pleasure arises somehow by concepts or ideas, while *sensuous* pleasure equates to Baumgarten’s pleasure in subjective taste (*Ibid.*, 7:230; 7:239-40). Kant tells us in the *Anthropology* that there must be a rule by which judgments of taste can be made that are valid for everyone. To this end, he introduces a distinction between empirical taste that carries no universality and,

‘taste that savors, whose rule must be grounded *a priori*, because it proclaims *necessity* and consequently also validity for everyone as to how the

⁵⁴ “The ‘I’ of reflection contains no manifold in itself and is always one and the same in every judgment, because it is merely the formal element of consciousness.” (*AnthP*, 7:141)

⁵⁵ For example, our apprehension of the manifold of a house in external appearance as we approach it is given in succession. We see a corner, a wall, a window, a door, part of the roof. If we move around it, we see other parts always in succession. It is a spontaneous exercise of power on our part to unify this according to its spatial form. With inner experience only, the succession is all we experience. (e.g., *CPuR*, A189-90/B235-6)

representation of an object is to be judged in relation to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure'. (*Ibid.* 7:240)

He shortly follows by referring to this species of taste as 'rationalizing taste', and '*gustus reflectirens*'.

'Rationalizing' here denotes a use of reason that is not for a specified purpose, there is no 'end' toward which it is employed (c.f., *AnthB*, 25:1481; *AnthP*, 7:200). It is, therefore, free from the constraints of specific utility. The judgment is not formed against a fulfilled expectation of pleasure or any other consequence. Recall that in the third *Critique*, the 'free play' of the faculties gives rise to the feeling of disinterested pleasure in beauty. We here have a clue as to what 'free' might partially consist in, in a negative sense: freedom from the constraints of an antecedent purpose. Yet the word 'play' is interesting itself. In his anthropological writing, Kant says that 'the mind feels its freedom in the play of images (therefore of sensibility)', and that the *feeling* here described is pleasure (*AnthP*, 7:241). 'Play' itself refers simply to alteration over time (e.g., *AnthC*, 25:181). There is, therefore, a positive aspect to this freedom in that the mind exhibits an active power in producing a succession of images. This elicits pleasure in us and is without some prior purpose or end, or incentive.

Kant is describing, in this pleasure, a consequence of an autonomous (not determined by anything other than itself) activity of the mind involving the faculties. It is different from the spontaneous generation of ideas since ideas contain their own *a priori* principle or ideal end, to which their parts asymptotically conform. It is in this

movement toward an end that we can see the practical activity of reason in ideas. Here, we have no subjectively represented end, ideal, or principle. This must, as per reflecting judgment as described in the third *Critique*, come after. Thus, we have a universal ground of pleasure in our rational nature, and an objective principle for the faculty of feeling. Furthermore, we have a purely practical reason, unfettered even by the form of reason shaped by the understanding, though we apply this constraint afterwards in reflecting judgment.

I believe that associating the anthropology and reflecting judgment above is justified. The description in the anthropology matches wonderfully. Furthermore, the eagle-eyed will have noticed that Kant's use of '*gustus reflectirens*' is comfortably close to the '*reflectirend*' discussed in footnote 10 of my introduction. There, I register that Guyer's use of 'reflecting' to describe the form of judgment at work in the third *Critique* is meant to capture the sense of ongoing activity implied by '*reflectirend*'. This lends incremental support to the claim that Kant's empirical psychology describes reflecting judgment and the principle that it makes available. We are, sadly, not definitively in a position to prove an earlier origin of reflecting judgment and a principle for the faculty of feeling. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* was written from the ultimate version of his notes from the lecture series, which ended in 1796. While we cannot be certain that he added details to his theory of taste in these lectures after 1787 when he claims to have discovered the principle, we cannot be sure he did not.

Yet it is interesting that the terminology of the anthropology, e.g., 'rationalizing taste', does not appear in the third *Critique*. If Kant made changes after 1790, it would

seem highly odd, though perhaps not impossible, that he would use such different wording. Still, we do have notes taken by students. In particular, the 1772-3 *Collins* notes⁵⁶ have an interesting similarity with Kant's published lectures. However, they are not identical and so cannot validate the claim that these elements originated earlier. Even were that claim validated, I could not give details as to *when* the concepts arose based on the anthropology. However, it is my view that we should certainly not dismiss the possibility of an earlier origin for reflecting judgment, etc., so readily as has been done, for I see no better evidence preferring the orthodox view as we will later see.

In 'Beauty, Freedom, and Morality', Guyer dates the first appearance of certain necessary elements of his mature theory of aesthetics in his anthropological lectures. One of these is the idea 'that our pleasure in beauty is the product of a harmonious interaction between sensibility or imagination on the one hand and understanding on the other' rather than a harmony between the beautiful thing and universal laws of the faculty of sensibility (2003a, p.138). He dates this change to the mid-1770s. Moreover, he claims the connection between aesthetic experience and morality only appears properly from 1788-9. I oppose this last point, for it is clear that Kant was well aware of a connection between taste, intellectual pleasure, and morality when he wrote the *Groundwork* (the manuscript was sent to the publisher in September 1784, to be published in 1785). We know that he was advocating the active causality of the faculties and therefore pure reason at least from the time of writing the first *Critique* (though also earlier, as we shall see in the next paragraph). What is clear, as Guyer confirms, is that Kant knew even from the early 1770s that there must be a universally

⁵⁶ See section 'Conditions of Taste' (*AntbC*, 25:176-227)

valid pleasure that could a priori ground judgments of taste (*Ibid.*). We can see the involvement of the understanding in the *Lectures on Metaphysics*, where in the mid-1770s (as per Guyer's claim) Kant says that pleasure consists in the agreement of our representations with the 'entire power of the mind'. By this he means all the faculties (the active powers of the mind). He equates this with the 'principle of life', which is the fundamental active power in beings that act according to representations, i.e., who have a will (*ML*, 28:247).

We do not, though, have any satisfying answer to the question of *what* Kant found to be 'impossible' about proving an objective principle for the faculty of pleasure and displeasure in 1787. It is true that Kant sometimes uses the word 'impossible' in relation to something defined negatively, with a lack of predicates (e.g., *CPuR*, B424).⁵⁷ Interestingly, we saw that the *Groundwork* seeks to define the idea of freedom without empirical predicates.⁵⁸ Yet the Reinhold letter does not obviously reflect anything other than the everyday meaning of 'impossible'. I made clear in the introduction that there are mistakes and revisions in any system, and there are undoubtedly missed opportunities. In such an undertaking as Kant's critical philosophy, it is possible that he just did not see that he had already all the elements in place to provide his transition. This may be such an instance as Kant envisaged when he said that we might know the mind of the author better than he did himself. Hindsight is terrific. He wrote, after all, in the Reinhold letter that he simply had to revisit the elements of knowledge to solve his problem, implying that the answer was there all along. Notwithstanding, I will take the opportunity to consider the technical use of 'impossible' in the next chapter as

⁵⁷ See also (*CPuR*, A417/B444, A480/B580)

⁵⁸ In the 'paralogisms', Kant says in relation to the idea of the 'I', that 'the least empirical predicate would corrupt the rational purity and independence of the science from all experience' (*CPuR*, A343/B401).

there is no great corroboration for relying on such a presumed omission. Returning to Guyer's point about the involvement of the understanding in judgments of beauty: in relation to this, we may say that involving the understanding allows the possibility that judgements as they pertain to a felt pleasure can be something that 'the judgements of every understanding must agree' (*CPuR*, A820/B849).

We find ourselves, and Kant, in an interesting position. He was able to describe, in the first *Critique*, a subjective purposiveness in the sense of an active power of reason that strives to cognise according to rational norms. It is ends-oriented, teleological. He also believes, or supposes (perhaps with good reason), that the same formal properties of our rational organisation of nature in idea are real. By the third *Critique*, Kant claims the ability to show that the purposiveness in our ideas—this rationally-produced downward causality—is *objectively real*. It is not yet clear how this claim is substantiated, though some connection between reason and the real world is already suggested in the necessity of purposiveness for action and empirical cognition. Unless some necessary relation can be shown, however, the connection could still be luck, correspondence. Yet we may have the starting route by which to provide this necessary connection from his anthropological works, where Kant suggests a universal pleasure in inner sense can be accounted for by an autonomous activity of the soul, or reason.

Recall that Kant claimed in the *CoJ* that purposiveness, the concept of which will be generated by reflecting judgment, will unite the speculative and practical systems. This is the only way that we can cognise the 'possibility of the final end'. The *final end* referred to here is the 'highest good', where nature and morality come together in one idea to be actualised in the world. But if we first consider only the willed end of the

subject, since the transition can here be thought in microcosm: he is saying that he can provide the mediating concept between ourselves, as free-willed rational beings, and the actualisation of our causality in the sensible-world. The concept of purposiveness must be part of speculative and practical metaphysics. I have shown how it can be thought to be so without issue. Nevertheless, the real-world effects of purposiveness cannot be proven by a simple inference; it cannot be proved only by reason. It must be proved in experience if it to be a static point of universal agreement.

In the *Anthropology*, Kant achieves this through a self-determination resulting in the experienced feeling of pleasure. I have previously described purposiveness as the causality of reason in ends-directed ideas, but in rationalising free play there is a pure causality, purposiveness without purpose. By this, he can claim that pure reason can freely instigate an effect in inner sense in response to objects in nature, signalling a possible real and necessary connection between reason, or the soul, and the world of appearance. Necessary connection, though, must be posited as logically/conceptually necessary, as we saw in chapter 1. This is not available to us in aesthetics since we do not begin with concepts here. This, we will see in the next chapter, is a point made again in the *CōJ*.

A similar transition, though in terms of the empirical human, is treated in the *Metaphysik L₁* (mid-1770s). The ‘transition’ noted here is one between the higher cognitive faculties which deal with concepts, ideas, etc., and the lower, i.e., making sensation-based distinctions (28:844). This is, again, hinting at the transition between the intelligible and the phenomenal and even our two divisions of judgment, whether framed in quite the same terms or not. It is a question, as ever, of how we can be freely

active in a causally closed universe. It is to this problem, and the problem of necessary connection, that we now turn. We shall see that an integral step in the solution occurs in the *Groundwork* and another in the *CPrR*. Following this, I will supply some further detail regarding how Kant claims in the *CoJ* to have found a transition between the realms of freedom and nature in intellectual causality/purposiveness.

Chapter 3: The purpose of the idea of freedom in *Groundwork* and how it gains its place among the *scibilia*

In this concluding chapter I intend to first give an interpretation of the task and achievement of the *Groundwork* that is conducive to the idea that Kant provides us certain knowledge of (positive) freedom in the third *Critique*. It will be necessary to also examine aspects of the *CPrR*. Looking at these shall help us understand how *respect* is key to the claim of certainty. Following this, in §3.2, I will discuss Kant's demonstration of intellectual causality in the *CoJ*. This, however, will be brief as the demonstration tracks that in his empirical psychology.

3.1 Respect for the idea of freedom

Speculative and practical reason, Kant tells us, must be united under a common principle since 'in the end there can be only one and the same reason, which must differ merely in its application' (*G*, 4:391). In the introduction to this thesis, again in footnote 7, we saw that this already figured in the first *Critique*. It is re-stated in the

second (*CPrR*, 5:121).⁵⁹ I have earlier supplied evidence for the claim that there is one fundamental power of reason for Kant.⁶⁰ It is a continuation of this thought to unite the speculative and practical aspects. Unification would require ‘introducing considerations of a wholly different kind’ which, we know from the *Groundwork*, might confuse the reader (4:391). Rather than unification, the task of his *Groundwork* is to find the conditions of the supreme principle of morality, i.e., the supreme principle of practical reason (*G*, 4:392). The moral system itself must be complete before he can progress to a unification of the moral metaphysical system (the practical) and the metaphysical system of nature (the speculative). We must isolate morality in its purely rational state, devoid of all empirical matter (*Ibid.*)⁶¹. The similarity is obvious here with the method of considering a science of aesthetics, though the next point does not so clearly correspond.

Additionally, morality must be free of the specifics of the manifestations of reason in humanity, which is also to consider reason apart from its applications through the human-specific faculties (*G*, 4:411).⁶² The understanding, desiderative, and sensual faculties, along with that of pleasure and displeasure are among these applications of reason in which its active power is constrained by forms related to the needs of the

⁵⁹ At the stages of the first and second *Critiques*, the primacy of practical reason is ‘just an assumption’ (Timmermann, 2019, p.103)

⁶⁰ My thanks to Prof. Timmermann of the University of St Andrews for pointing out a difference between the 1st (1785) and 2nd (1786) editions of the *Groundwork*, concerning an entry at 4:391.26. The 2nd edition states: “[...] I require that the critique of a pure practical reason, if it is to be complete, also be able to present its unity with speculative reason in a common principle; because in the end there can be only one and the same reason, which must differ merely in its application.” The 1st edition, however, can be translated as saying that a complete critique of pure practical reason requires a unity ‘with the critique of speculative reason’. I do not feel that this interferes with the position I argue for since this is a requirement for the unity of the two metaphysical formal systems, the forms of which are equally generations of the same pure power of reason. I have argued in earlier chapters that there is also active, and I will venture to say ‘practical’, reason at play even with the systematic idea of the whole of nature in terms of our drive to cognise.

⁶¹ See also: (*G*, 4:394, 4:399-400, 4:401, 4:404, 4:426)

⁶² See also: (*G*, 4:425-6, 4:461, 4:463)

empirical human. To abstract from these just is to abstract from desires, expected utility, and agreeable outcomes, i.e., external relations or obstacles to the causality of freedom.⁶³ To abstract from the faculty of sense is, importantly, to drop the requirement for, or possibility of, a temporally ordered causal series.

Morality, Kant informs us, must be presented in a form which is ‘sufficient for our purposes’ (G, 4:445). This is a technical term which refers to *comprehension*. To *comprehend* is ‘to cognize something through reason or *a priori* to the degree that is sufficient for our purposes’ (JL, 9:65).⁶⁴ The example he gives of perfect comprehension, a recurring motif, is geometry. The mathematician’s definition of a circle is a universal (for the human forms of intuition) and entirely general one that applies to every instance of that shape. We saw that the demonstrations of geometry give reality to these mathematical definitions. It is sufficient for the purposes of defining the relevant characteristics of every instance that marks its inclusion in the class. We might expect something similar for morality, and Kant confirms this in the *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, saying that ‘moral imperatives [...] have as much evidence and certainty as ever could be had by mathematical propositions’ (LPDR, 28:1083).

⁶³ An interesting comparison may be had with Tetens’ description of how a sufficient determining cause can be objectively necessary and yet its effects contingent, where external obstacles limit the actualisation of those effects, in his 1777 *Philosophical Essays on Human Nature and Its Development* ([2009], pp.351-91)

⁶⁴ Kant gives seven degrees of cognition: “The *seventh, finally: to comprehend* something (*comprehendere*), i.e., to cognize something through reason or *a priori* to the degree that is sufficient for our purpose. For all our comprehension is only *relative*, i.e., sufficient for a certain purpose; we do not comprehend anything *without qualification*. Nothing can be comprehended more than what the mathematician demonstrates, e.g., that all lines in the circle are proportional.” (JL, 9:65)

We see further evidence of the connection between mathematics and morality when, in explaining that the worth of a human lies in the autonomy of its maxims (where they meet the conditions—or definition—given by the categorical imperative), he claims that ‘[t]he essence of things is not altered by their external relations’ (*G*, 4:439). I have highlighted this also in relation to his mathematics. Moreover, the mathematician has no insight as to *how* it has come to be that these definitions, the conditions of possibility, are such as they are (*JL*, 9:65). The geometer’s definition is complete and requires nothing further to define every instantiation, even though those may differ in their external properties and relations, i.e., in how they instantiate in appearance.

To be *sufficient for our purposes* is to be a cognition that is entirely sufficient for the purpose set for it. It is complete, without any *further* end. This is exactly the task of the *Groundwork*: to cognise morality isolated from all purposes and externalities, as a freestanding system in a truly universal, purely rational form, before we then consider any instance that might fall under it. Due to empirically determined influences upon our activities, we cannot identify pure⁶⁵ moral principles by observing particular actions. Here, we cannot disentangle them from all other influences, i.e., external relations, and discern a general definition (*G*, 4:407). We already know about their explanatory autonomy from the character-trait example. Therefore, we must start from the general, merely rational principles, if we are to have a metaphysics of morals. This is necessary since it must be ubiquitously applicable in all subjective contexts, i.e., for there to be a *law* or principle that can all reason-capable being can agree upon. The

⁶⁵ By ‘pure’, I mean in the sense expressed in the 2nd *Critique* where he confirms the task of the *Groundwork* as explained: “[...] pure reason, without the admixture of any empirical determining ground [...]— a law completely a priori and independent of any sensible data [...].” (5:91)

purpose, therefore, that the cognition must be sufficient *for* is to supply the possibility of a supreme principle, a categorical moral imperative. We have an idea of Kant's purpose. How does he go about trying to achieve this?

Kant intends to fulfil his task through the *idea of freedom*. He declares that the question of 'how a categorical imperative is possible' is answerable by explaining the conditions of its possibility (G, 4:461). These conditions are met by presupposing the idea of freedom. The conditions of possibility of the categorical imperative are the conditions exemplified in the idea. Considering his claim about the certainty of morality being on a par with mathematics, we should expect the idea to contain the conditions for proving its own certainty, i.e., its objective reality. We should expect, as before, logical and something like real possibility. However, the 'something like' real possibility we must expect is not one which tells us that a *particular* object is possible according to natural laws. Rather, it must tell us whether it is *practically* possible in any relevant circumstance for a rational being to act from a maxim which is in perfect agreement with the moral law, prior to considering any obstacle to its actualisation. It is to give the practical possibility of an absolutely good will.⁶⁶ This requires even the exclusion of our empirical humanity; a requirement Kant accuses the ancient Greeks of overlooking.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ "A will is absolutely good that cannot be evil, hence whose maxim, if made a universal law, can never conflict with itself." (G, 4:437; c.f., G, 4:413, 4:414)

⁶⁷ "[...] it now becomes comprehensible why the Greek schools could never solve their problem of the practical possibility of the highest good: it was because they made the rule of the use which the human will makes of its freedom the sole and sufficient ground of this possibility [...]" (CPrR 5:126). Kant explains how a supreme principle of morality cannot be grounded in the subjective object of willing; the matter to which it may be applied: "Now, whether they placed this object of pleasure, which was to yield the supreme concept of good, in happiness, in perfection, in moral feeling, or in the will of God, their principle was in every case heteronomy and they had to come unavoidably upon empirical conditions for a moral law, since they could call their object, as the immediate determining ground of the will, good or evil only by its immediate relation to feeling, which is always empirical."
(CPrR 5:64)

Yet he is clear, as with geometry, that no human reason can understand *how* the conditions exemplified in the idea of freedom are themselves possible (*Ibid.*). We have no access to antecedent grounds that determine the conditions represented in this idea; no insight into how we are free or how reason is as it is. Aside from the form of reason being foundationally necessary to our experience, another way we know this is that the idea must be ‘sufficient for our purposes’ and complete (like the systematic ideal is to be complete). This means that it must be cognised without further qualification. This reflects the reason we were to exclude God’s intention and prime-causality from our idea of the world-whole. Otherwise, the idea would have to fulfil an external purpose, which then contradicts the concept of freedom as Kant conceives it. We would be back on the interminable trail of regressive grounds. By the second *Critique*, the idea of freedom is *assumed* as a ‘fact’ of reason (e.g., 5:31) and we know that by the third *Critique*, Kant claims that this idea may take its proven place amongst the *scibilia*, i.e., things that are *known* with certainty, as proven fact.

That Kant has an eye on gaining *knowledge* of morality even at the time of the *Groundwork*—though the *Groundwork* is only a step in this process—is plain in his remark that we are given ‘conviction’ of the objective validity of the categorical imperative (4:461). *Conviction*, we know, is where we have objectively sufficient grounds of *assenting* to something. We saw that Kant also says, which can seem confusing, that there is also *conviction* (for myself) which requires subjectively sufficient grounds, and that ‘certainty’ is where we have objectively sufficient grounds ‘(for everyone)’. He equates subjective sufficiency *sans* objective sufficiency with believing (*CPuR*, A822/B850). Subjective and objective sufficiency together are required for

knowing. Further, Kant thinks that any science aims for a perfected system of objective laws that defines, in general, the characteristic marks, the conditions of possibility, of any particular instance of those laws. Essentially: the ‘certainty’ he speaks of describes the sense in which the connection between belief and the truth of the proposition is necessary, i.e., knowing as justified, 100% probable, true belief. We are not *in process of determination*, not *asymptotically moving toward perfection*; the determination is already complete. Hanna (2018) notes that ‘certainty’ describes a facet of objective sufficiency, though more can be clarified. I distinguished two senses of objective sufficiency in my introductory *beneficent character* example. We have objective sufficiency where our subjective assent to something is grounded in the nature of pure reason, yet still lack the truly objective possibility of agreement from all perspectives. This is certainty (for everyone). Something further, as I have said, is needed to achieve this.

This ‘something further’—which the reader will have guessed at from the earlier discussion of empirical psychology—is articulated by Kant in the following excerpts from the *Groundwork*:

“The subjective impossibility of *explaining* freedom of the will is the same as the impossibility of detecting and making comprehensible an interest that a human being could take in moral laws; and even so, he actually does take an interest in them, the foundation of which in us we call moral feeling, which some have falsely proclaimed the standard of our moral judging, whereas it must rather be viewed as the subjective effect that the law exercises on the will, for which reason alone supplies the objective grounds.” (G, 4:459-60)

Kant refutes moral sense theories here, e.g., Hutcheson, for broadly the same reason he criticised Baumgarten's aesthetics and the Greeks' human-centric moral principle. Subjective experience cannot be the standard for moral judgments.

In morality, in contrast to aesthetics, it is also the case that even universally human experience cannot supply the standard. He straightaway continues:

“In order to will that for which reason alone prescribes the *ought* to a sensuously affected rational being, a capacity of reason to *induce a feeling of pleasure* or of delight in fulfilling duty it is admittedly needed, and hence a causality of reason to determine sensibility in conformity with its principles. But it is quite impossible to understand, i.e., to make comprehensible a priori, how a mere thought, which itself contains nothing sensuous, may produce a sensation of pleasure or displeasure; for that is a special kind of causality about which, as about any causality, we can determine nothing whatsoever a priori, and must therefore consult experience alone. [...] here pure reason, by mere ideas (which for experience yield no object at all), is to be the cause of an effect that admittedly lies in experience, it is quite impossible for us human beings to explain how and why the *universality of a maxim as a law*, and hence morality, interests us.”

Thus, we learn that a sensible experience is needed, (i) to demonstrate that practical reason can have effects in the world, and (ii) so that our sensibly affected self can be

understood as determined to causality by the purely rational interest it takes in morality.

To understand the various forms and functions of *interest* in Kant's philosophy would require a longer study of its own, but relevant to us here is that '[a]n interest is that by which reason becomes practical, i.e., a cause that determines the will' (G, 4:459n). An interest is considered 'pure' and 'immediate' when reason takes an interest in some activity only because the universality of its maxim is sufficient to determine the will that produces the activity, i.e., the maxim, as a particular instance, meets the conditions of the general law. An interest of reason is 'mediate' where the will is determined by an empirical interest, i.e., a desire or some other end such that reason's interest is only in securing the best means to that end (G, 4:460n). This duality of motivation tracks the *Wille/Willkür* distinction.⁶⁸ Additionally, we learn that reason must by itself be able to produce a '*feeling of pleasure or of delight*'. Relevant here is the famous footnote on respect in the *Groundwork*. Following his discussion of what constitutes the moral worth of an action, Kant says that 'the immediate determination of the will by the law and the consciousness of this is called *respect*, so that it is viewed as the *effect* of the law on the subject and not as its *cause*' (G, 4:401n). The last line in that footnote explains that '[a]ll moral *interest*, so called, consists solely in *respect* for the law'.

A third detail we may glean from the above passage, confirming my earlier point, is that it is impossible to explain the determination of the subject to pleasure or

⁶⁸ For discussion of this duality of motivation in terms of acting from duty and out of respect, or for subjective inclination toward some state of affairs, see: (Timmermann, 2009).

displeasure any further than that it is determined by this moral interest. We have access to nothing prior, so we cannot know the conditions of possibility of a free will itself. The reader may recall the discussion of explanatory independence and how this is applicable to acting according to moral character-traits which arise and can be strengthened through intentionally choosing in accord with them. I explained that this continuously evolving disposition can have downward-causal effects such that concordant actions become more likely to manifest. While it was impossible to precisely explain the aetiological relationship between the actions and the disposition produced, it was clear that the disposition was ontologically dependent upon them.

I also illustrated that our actions and judgments would converge asymptotically upon an 'ideal' harmony with the disposition. The downward causality here seems to be effective, yet *how* or *why* remains inexplicable. In discussing the drive for determination as produced by the interaction between the idea of the world-whole and ideal systematicity, we saw that a cognitive drive was available on a subjective level and necessary for our experience. The idea-form of pure reason purposively tracked an ideal perfection. Again, the precise mechanisms were beyond us. In morality, it remains to be proven that a causal connection exists, but we must begin from the perfected system and move to the human-subjective level because we cannot separate out pure principles from empirical, human interests. Kant is claiming that we have a way of proving *that* there is this connection and that our assent to this is objectively sufficient—in the twin senses that it can be agreed by all discursive intellects and that it is grounded in pure reason—even if we cannot explain the *why* or *how*.

Kant believes he can prove *that* we have free will and *that* morality exists via the experienceable effect of the law (pure reason) on a subject's inner sense. This effect involves a form of intellectual pleasure and is called, as we shall see, *respect*. His proof clearly encroaches on his empirical psychology, so we can imagine the likely connection with his aesthetics. Again, this proof is not for the *Groundwork* because this would be to bring morality out of the general, and into the human, subjective, and natural realm. The *Groundwork* seeks the general conditions of possibility, but we cannot, to repeat, *infer* actuality from mere possibility. Recall, also that in footnote 31 I noted that 'consequentia' may denote 'necessary existence'. This is where objectively real consequences are logically necessary as part of a concept or idea. Now, Kant does, in the *Groundwork*, provide us with the tools needed for this proof by showing us that positive freedom, an intellectual causality, is analytically connected to the idea of freedom itself. Therefore, our assent to this fact is also sufficiently grounded objectively and subjectively.

Furthermore, Kant provides us with a necessary conceptual connection between the idea of freedom and a subjectively experienceable effect, providing the condition which must be fulfilled for certainty to be claimed. This can appear to conflict with his claim that actuality cannot be deduced from possibility. However, it seems the rule does not apply to the practical realm. This is the only instance where such a condition may be analytically attached to an idea, as we shall see. This is possible only because the idea is thought apart even from human faculties. Once again in footnote 31, I said that 'actualisation' can describe the coming-to-be of something which is pre-conceptualised, or the actualisation of a sensation prior to a concept. In the practical realm, the idea of freedom precedes the feeling, while in aesthetics the feeling of

pleasure is the judgment and is prior to any concept (*CoJ*, 5:285, 5:289). In ordinary judgments of experience, clearly, the empirical concept cannot include the necessary existence of any empirical (and contingent) object.

Returning to the footnote, quoted earlier, in the *Groundwork*. Kant describes *respect* as a ‘feeling [...] not one received by influence, but one *self-wrought* by a rational concept’ (*G*, 4:401n*). He continues to say that it ‘signifies merely the consciousness of the *subordination* of my will to a law, without mediation of other influences on my sense’. It is describable as a feeling because it ‘humiliates’ our pathological inclinations, which Kant claims is analogous to fear, or pain (*Ibid.*; *CPrR*, 5:73). It is the consciousness that our subjective choices are restricted (*G*, 4:428). This binding negatively infringes upon our other desires. The idea of freedom, in providing the conditions that any moral maxim must meet, thereby provides the limiting boundary of the domain for moral judgment. As he says in the second *Critique*,

“...we can see a priori that the moral law, as the determining ground of the will, must by thwarting all our inclinations produce a feeling that can be called pain; and here we have the first and perhaps the only case in which we can determine a priori from concepts the relation of a cognition (here the cognition of a pure practical reason) to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure.”
(*CPrR*, 5:73)

Here, Kant identifies the aforementioned, unique instance of analytic a priori connection between an idea and a feeling. We can, furthermore, see where ‘pleasure’, following pain, comes into the picture:

“So the moral law strikes down self-conceit. But since this law is still something in itself positive—namely the form of an intellectual causality, that is, of freedom—it is at the same time an object of respect inasmuch as, in opposition to its subjective antagonist, namely the inclinations in us, it weakens self-conceit; and inasmuch as it even strikes down self-conceit, that is, humiliates it, it is an object of the greatest respect and so too the ground of a positive feeling that is not of empirical origin and is cognized a priori. Consequently, respect for the moral law is a feeling that is produced by an intellectual ground, and this feeling is the only one that we can cognize completely a priori and the necessity of which we can have insight into.”

(Ibid.)

This twin effect elicited by the moral law on the subject reflects the receptivity and spontaneity required by any ‘substance’⁶⁹, and indeed by anyone claiming, as Kant does, that we are able to determine ourselves autonomously according to a law. The positive effect of the moral law is at the same time a negative and receptive state for us. Yet, as with our faculties, there is an active element. Our active contribution is the production of the idea of freedom, a concept of pure reason which represents a priori

⁶⁹ In the *Metaphysik Moronovius*: “We can never be merely passive, but rather every passion is at the same time action. The possibility of acting is [a] faculty <*facultas*>, and of suffering receptivity <*receptivitas*>. The latter always presupposes the former. Every substance is self-active, otherwise it could not be substance; it can be suffering in one relation <*respectu*>, but can also be active in the same.” (29:822)

what is beyond experience. This idea, exemplifying the conditions of possibility that our moral maxims must meet, positively constrains our own judgments. It marks out the domain of moral judgments, and standard against which they are made.

In this idea we are conscious of our positive power to act according to the law in the face of inclination, coercion, or whatever. This is because it is our own activity that bounds our judgment without any external, empirical influence. Thus, our own purely rational activity can be necessarily connected to the production of the feeling of pain and pleasure by regulating the range of applications of our moral freedom. As Kant has said, respect is ‘self-wrought’, i.e., it is an experienceable effect of our own purely intellectual causality. However, this is not *provable* in the *Groundwork* since the idea of freedom is a construction of pure reason and so subjective experience *per se* is not considered. Still, respect is analytically posited as a necessary effect of the idea of freedom. It is, I believe, clear that Kant is discussing the achievement of the *Groundwork* in the above excerpts from the second *Critique* because he refers to the cognition of a ‘pure practical reason’.

The second *Critique* is concerned with bringing the pure idea of freedom and moral laws down to the human-subjective level of the faculties. Kant needed to show that morality is *subjectively*, practically possible. This is plain in the ‘Doctrine of the method of Pure Practical Reason’, where he writes,

“Here the doctrine of method is understood [...] as the way in which one can provide the laws of pure practical reason with *access* to the human mind

and *influence* on its maxims, that is, the way in which one can make objectively practical reason subjectively practical as well.” (*CPrR*, 5:151)

The result, explaining the differing approach between the *Groundwork* and *CPrR*, is that he is barred from presupposing freedom (*CPrR*, 5:47, 5:58). Due to the faculties through which we approach and know the world, we must think all things as determined as part of an efficient causal series in time. We can only experience our moral activity through our faculties, so there must be the appearance of an empirical ‘interest’ for us in acting from the moral law or we could have no natural explanation for our activity (*Ibid.*). At the level of pure reason (the *Groundwork*’s idea of freedom), there is no temporal ordering, so no reason that respect could not be both an experienced consequence and an antecedent, purely rational, interest for our morality.⁷⁰ Yet this cannot be so for human experience, where our concept of willing must be thought empirical (*CvJ*, 5:181).

The Reinhold letter tells us that Kant claims to have found the principle of the faculty of desire in the *CPrR*. This principle describes a subjectively represented future happiness which, because it is commensurate to individual virtue, we can *take an interest* in being worthy of even if we can never attain it. This is the highest good, the concept of which was known in 1781 (*CPrR*, 5:4; *CPuR*, A814/B842). In this, as the object of the human faculty of desire/empirical will, Kant believes that he has shown how morality is possible for human subjects. The second *Critique*, published in 1788, was complete and sent for printing between 25th June and 11th September 1787, just a few

⁷⁰ For discussions of an intelligible order of things, see: (*CPrR*, 5:42, 5:49, 5:86, 5:107, 5:160).

months prior to the December Reinhold letter. The *Groundwork* gave us logical coherence, objective and subjective sufficiency of assent by grounding our presumption of freedom in pure reason. The idea did not contradict natural laws in general (*G*, 4:421), therefore it was possible that a being with reason could, in theory, determine itself autonomously from the moral law. Kant also analytically connected positive freedom and respect to the idea, which altogether supplied objective practical possibility. The second *Critique* shows that we can be the *right kind of rational being*. The principles governing our own experience, our faculties, are not contradicted by our assumption of freedom. Yet, we still cannot prove the certainty of this idea.

Kant can say that, *if* we have freedom and *if* the moral law is real, then we would experience the feeling of respect or reverence as the consequence of determining our judgments in conformity with the conditions exemplified in the categorical imperative. Yet, at the subjective level, even though we have our principle of the desiderative faculty in the highest good, the desire remains *ours* according to the object represented (which we will see is not directly the highest good), and therefore can only ever be a subjectively valid reason for acting from the moral law. Acting from the moral law can only be understood under these conditions as the means to achieving worthiness for this future happiness (*CPrR*, 5:58). Although acting according to our desired representations is considered lawlike because it is ‘subjectively necessary (as a law of nature)’, it must also be objectively contingent because ‘in the desire for happiness, it is not the form of lawfulness that counts but simply the matter, namely whether I am to expect satisfaction from following the law, and how much’ (*CPrR*, 5:25).

In short, the highest good can only incentivise relative to the pleasure it promises, which can only ever be subjective because it is proportional to one's own virtue. We are in the same position as the moral-sense models decried by Kant. Like the perspectives taken on the beneficent friend's character, we may have subjective and objective reasons for assent to the representation of the highest good; but we have no objectively agreeable justification, no certainty (e.g., *CPrR*, 5:19-20).⁷¹ We cannot tell at this point whether the judgment we make is: (i) determined by a promised reward of empirical pleasure and yet in alignment with the Categorical Imperative by chance, or; (ii) determined autonomously in conformity with these conditions and therefore *from* the moral law. A necessary connection with the conditions of the supreme moral principle is not, and cannot be, demonstrated in the *CPrR*.

Until this is demonstrated, the maxims that we produce according to our empirically conditioned representation of the highest good can be considered imperatival only in the sense that they prescribe actions to be taken in order to attain the desired satisfaction promised by the highest good. They must be thought hypothetical imperatives. We may not claim that they are *categorical* imperatives, which must be objectively necessary for all and supplied by pure reason (*CPrR*, 5:20). The nature of a categorical imperative requires that the will be sufficiently determined prior to all consideration of specific actions or obstacles to their achievement, as in Tetens. Kant says that an objectively necessary law must 'determine ... the will, whether or not it is sufficient for the effect' (*Ibid.*). He explains that objectively necessary laws,

⁷¹ See also: (*CPrR*, 5:38-9, 5:58, 5:121-2, 5:129)

‘must sufficiently determine the will as will even before I ask whether I have the ability required for a desired effect or what I am to do in order to produce it, and must thus be categorical: otherwise they are not laws because they lack the necessity which, if it is to be practical, must be independent of conditions that are pathological and therefore only contingently connected with the will.’” (*Ibid.*)

Proving that such a categorical imperative is possible, objectively necessary yet contingent at the level of the subject, requires, in alignment with Kant’s empirical psychology, that pure reason can produce a feeling in us without antecedent interest. In short, Kant must have an a priori principle for the faculty of feeling, yet the second *Critique* can provide no such thing because it deals with the hope of *subjective* satisfaction in an empirical end. This can only be thought a purely *receptive* pleasure. With any *merely* given element in experience, we have no possibility of justified knowledge of its cause. Any truths we find in experience are possible, as per the Copernican turn, only because of our active contribution. Without such an active contribution to our pleasurable (or otherwise) experiences, we would experience only random waves of received feeling. Our faculty of feeling must actively contribute to delimit what counts as pleasurable and dis-pleasurable. We saw in §1.3 that the intensive magnitudes of sensory perceptions vary subjectively, yet there is an underwriting a priori principle that can only be known because it constitutes our active contribution to experience. The situation is similar with pleasure and displeasure. The principle of this faculty is required to justify the claim, via respect, of the universal validity of morality for any rational subject with such a faculty. It is a required step in

demonstrating the necessary connection between this moral feeling and the positive causality required for morality.

Kant laid the basis for this demonstration by presenting the idea of freedom in the *Groundwork*. He reminds us of this in the *CPrR*'s 'paradox of method' when criticising those philosophers who argue for different forms of externally supplied moral principles:

“[T]hey sought an object of the will in order to make it into the matter and the ground of a law (which was thus to be the determining ground of the will not immediately but rather by means of that object referred to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure), whereas they should first have searched for a law that determined the will a priori and immediately, and only then determined the object conformable to the will. [...] Only a formal law, that is, one that prescribes to reason nothing more than the form of its universal lawgiving as the supreme condition of maxims, can be a priori a determining ground of practical reason.” (5:64)

There is a mirroring admission in the *Groundwork*. After introducing his task of identifying the supreme principle of morality, he says that an investigation of the uses of the moral principle would cast light on the system but could '[yield] no wholly reliable proof of its correctness' (4:392). I have explained why this is the case.

The second *Critique* leaves us in this situation. Kant has shown that human subjects can act *in accordance with the moral law* but cannot claim anything more. The conditions for a proof of a *necessary* connection are laid in the *Groundwork*, but something further is needed to actually demonstrate that the connection between the purely rational idea and the subjective, empirical world is not just a parallelism that could be explained away as occasionalism or luck. If Kant provides this, then he can claim that our assumption of the idea of freedom is truly and objectively justified and certain.

3.2 Intellectual causality and judgments of beauty in the third *Critique*

I intend this final subsection to be brief because many of the elements necessary to follow Kant's proof of an intellectual causality appear in the discussion of empirical psychology. A concern of this thesis has been to show that this proof has been a continuing intention for Kant throughout his critical works, and to recognise the position in the process that the idea of freedom holds. It is an attempt to interpret Kant's project in a certain way according to an idea suggested by his own claims in the third *Critique*. To this end: we can see already that Kant has the required elements to claim certainty for the idea of freedom. Furthermore, one can conjecture that the discovery of the 'impossible' principle of the faculty of feeling referred to in the letter to Reinhold remained 'impossible', in the sense of being without positive predicates until the principle of the faculty of desire was itself discovered in bringing the idea of freedom down to the level of human faculties.

In showing that humans have the kind of faculties that allow access to the moral law, Kant can claim that the subject can represent moral judgments and their effects are attributable to themselves.⁷² The timing of that letter and the completion of the second *Critique* would lend a measure of corroboration to this thought. The principle of the desiderative faculty is required to bound the domain and provide the standard for judging whether human empirical desires are appropriate to morality or can

⁷² Compare with the idea that '[t]he I think must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise [...] the representation would either be **impossible** or else at least would be nothing for me.' (*CPuR*, B131-2 [emphasis added])

correspond with pure reason generally. This principle is discoverable only due to the active contribution of that faculty, which also must be cognised as a stand-alone system. These requirements are met by the highest good; an idea whose end is beyond achievement in life and time, with no corresponding empirical object, and so generated a priori from reason.

However, this conjecture (that the idea of the highest good was the missing step that allowed the discovery of the ‘impossible’ principle) can seem to be refuted by the detailed discussion of the *ideal* of the highest good in the *CPuR* (A804-19/B832-47). That discussion outlines much of what has been written here as regards the *CPuR*. It appears to suggest the need for the pure idea of freedom and even presages autonomy. Yet, we have earlier considered the difference between an ideal and an idea which may offer a route by which the conjecture can be maintained. The implication is that Kant did not have the subjectively represented *idea* of the highest good in 1781. This also means that Kant had not shown that the faculties of human subjects allowed a feeling induced by pure reason to be represented as part of our phenomenological experience, i.e., that such a *feeling* could be possible for us as an appearance in inner sense. I will present certain elements of the deduction of pure aesthetic judgment in the *CoJ* simply to aid understanding of the procedure as outlined in his empirical psychology already.

Kant explains the need for the principle of the faculty of pleasure and displeasure:

“The claim of an aesthetic judgment to universal validity for every subject, as a judgment that must be based on some principle a priori, needs a

deduction (i.e., a legitimation of its presumption), which must be added to its exposition, if, that is, it concerns a satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the form of the object.” (*CōJ*, 5:279)

We should understand that the universal (for every subject) validity of an aesthetic judgement, a science of aesthetics based on an *a priori* principle, will be proved via a formal satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This, Kant says directly afterwards, will involve judgments of natural beauty. These, he tells us, are based on the apprehension of the form, or characteristic marks, of the object of judgment ‘insofar as it shows itself in the mind to be suitable to the faculty both of concepts and of the presentation of them’ (*Ibid.*). The form as we represent it (a collaboration of the faculty of sense and the imagination) must be judged against the form of our conceptual faculty (the understanding). Kant explains that,

‘[t]he obligation to provide a deduction, i.e., the guarantee of the legitimacy, of a kind of judgment arises only if the judgment makes a claim to necessity, which is the case even if it demands subjective universality, i.e., the assent of all, in spite of the fact that it is not a judgment of cognition, but only of the pleasure or displeasure in a given object, i.e., a presumption of a subjective purposiveness that is throughout valid for everyone, which is not supposed to be grounded in any concept of the thing, because it is a judgment of taste.’ (*CōJ*, 5:280)

Recall that where we have a subjective assumption or judgment that is universal, we are entitled and driven to seek an objective principle. Furthermore, we know that Kant claims to prove a necessary connection, the knowable transition between pure reason and the natural realm, in the *CōJ*. The reference to a pleasure or displeasure that is not grounded in the concept of a thing seems slightly odd, yet we know from Thorpe, in footnote 31, that a sensation may be actualised prior to the concept. We must understand too that subjective pleasure in an object is not a predicate of the object; rather, it is a predicate that belongs to the faculty of feeling itself (*ML*, 28:246). The feeling arises from the subject and the feeling is the judgment of beauty. This clearly differs from determining judgments where we already have the concept or principle, and the judgment of cognition decides whether the object meets the criteria for inclusion in that class. Yet, for any regularity to be possible in the pleasure we take in beautiful objects, there must be a principle of that faculty. Otherwise, our judgments are arbitrary, grounded in subjective experience.

What must be explained, Kant says, is ‘how it is possible that something could please merely in the judging [...] and that, just as the judging of an object for the sake of cognition in general has universal rules, the satisfaction of one can also be announced as a rule for anyone else’ (*CōJ*, 5:281). He must show that a ‘singular judgment [...] which can express the subjective purposiveness of an empirical representation of the form of an object’, can be universally valid for all subjects (*CōJ*, 5:280-1). The demonstration of this is found in the spontaneous free play of the faculties. We know that this means the alteration of images over time without an antecedent purpose. No prior desire or thought of utility can be connected to the judgment (*CōJ*, 5:283). The judgment is not logical, through concepts, e.g., we do not

judge a single tulip as beautiful because the general concept <tulip> defines all tulips as necessarily so (*CōJ*, 5:285). It is also important to remind ourselves again that we have precedent, although in judgments of cognition, for the proving of universal validity for externally variable elements of experience: intensive magnitudes (and also, as we saw, in mathematics and morals).

Judgments of taste are subjective yet universally valid. There is no legitimate possibility of an objective principle, in the sense of a ‘universally usable formula’, as a determining ground of aesthetic judgments (*CōJ*, 5:285-6). Kant notes that our experience of these judgments is that no other opinion can alter our judgement that something is beautiful (*CōJ*, 5:284-5). Such susceptibility would, if it were possible, mean that our own judgment of taste would rely on the judgment of others, on some other purpose. We cannot be forced to judge something as beautiful any more than we can be forced to judge something as morally good. These would be externally determined judgments, contradicting our experience of them as freely made. The object can be useless. We may never have seen such a thing before and have no clue of any utility. Again, if utility were to be a consideration, this would contradict our experience of these judgments. Without an objective principle or antecedent purpose against which the object could be compared, the judgment of beauty must concern ‘the reflection of the subject on his own state (of pleasure or displeasure)’ (*CōJ*, 5:285-6). To understand what this may mean, consider that Kant says that the critique of taste,

‘is the art or science of bringing under rules the reciprocal relation of the understanding and the imagination to each other in the given representation

(without relation to an antecedent sensation or concept), and consequently their concord or discord, and of determining it with regard to its conditions.’

(*CōJ*, 5:286)

Kant claims that we can show that aesthetics is a *science* rather than an *art*, if we can ‘[derive] the possibility’ of judgments of taste from the nature of the faculty of judgment itself ‘as a faculty of cognition in general’ (*CōJ*, 5:286). The faculty of judgment must itself supply the conditions for judgments of taste; it must provide its own rules. Put otherwise, the principle of taste must be shown to be ‘an a priori principle of the power of judgment’. By this, we can understand that whatever it is that produces the subjective pleasure in beauty is that which *a priori* underlies all judgment. We know that judgment in general concerns the placement of particulars under more general concepts. It involves comparison with a standard. In the case of reflecting judgments, which aesthetic judgments are, we begin from the judgment and seek the standard, the characteristic marks, the conditions of possibility of judgments themselves. In referencing the relation between understanding and imagination, Kant hints at the spontaneous free play of the faculties, i.e., the production of changing images and concepts in judgments of beauty. He is looking also for the active part of the principle; the power that generates this dynamic effect and so which grounds the pleasure in beauty.

An illustrative example of free play in judgments of taste, which we may also call *rationalising taste that savours*, is given in this example by the psychologist Ruth Richards. Note that her use of ‘automaticity’ refers to a state of instinctual reliance on pre-existing habits of conceptual connection. Although the following exemplifies semi-

free play in response to art objects rather than natural objects, it still aptly stands as a fruitful model for the latter.⁷³ Richards writes:

“She is struck—she just stops, she looks. This is a moment of pure appreciation. A smile comes forth on her face. She is finishing an exhibit on the people of the California gold rush, and now she imagines the sparkling blue glass in the hand of a smartly tailored California banker. He stands in an 1850s’ Nob Hill parlor far above the San Francisco Bay; she pictures him hoisting hand and glass in the elegant manner of his native Boston toward a full-skirted lady. Behind him, through the bay window, is a San Francisco panorama, with hills and harbor, expanse of blue bay, the outlet the Golden Gate Bridge will later span, and the ocean beyond. Tiny in the distance, down near the docks, are gold prospectors in tones of brown and grey, raising dust as they enter town. In the museum example above, the glass has been reframed as an art object, an elegant piece of craftsmanship that picks up the dominant blue color of a panoramic background. In using the glass this way, the curator became consciously aware and made conscious choices after initial direct awareness and appreciation of the glass. Here she escaped not only automaticity but also the usual conventional meanings and associations to a drinking glass. Here one finds freedom for creativity!” (Richards, 2001, pp. 66-7)

⁷³ In the *Monadology* (1714), Leibniz says that ‘the machines of nature, that is, living bodies, are still machines in their smallest parts, to infinity. It is in this that the difference between nature and art consists, that is, between divine art and ours’ (§64). Perhaps for Kant, nature can be specified infinitely while human artefacts, considered as human productions, can be articulated only finitely. The human end for which the art was produced gives limits to its specification.

In something like a state of thrall, the mind runs away with itself. New concepts, connections and possibilities arise, unconstrained by considerations of utility or Richards' 'automaticity'. It is this dynamic alteration over time that elicits the feeling of pleasure, signalling the judgment of beauty. The feeling thus precedes subsumption under concepts. There are no empirical determinants since purposes and desires are excluded.

This free play, Kant believes, is spontaneously produced by reason, demonstrating a purely intellectual causality. Furthermore, this causality can result in an experienceable feeling that must come only from the subject since there are no external causes available. Therefore, in this we have the active ground or contribution of the faculty of feeling exhibited alone. The faculty, therefore, has its principle. It is *a priori* certain that pleasure arises in us where there is a harmonisation between our faculties in this dynamic modification of our representations. It reveals the principle of the faculty of judgment at the same time, demonstrating that reflecting judgments can be made without prior (or innate) concepts, and so they ground the possibility of all further judgments. We can be conscious of an intellectual causality, by this pleasure, in inner sense. Where we experience an effect in inner sense, we can assert certain propositions about the inner self, i.e., that it has an active power to instigate an efficient causal series in the world. This power is the active nature of reason, unsullied by empirical determinants and human needs.

Concluding remarks

i. A loose thread

Finally, I will return briefly to *respect* to clarify why Kant needed to prove intellectual causality through his aesthetics. Respect, as we saw, is a two-tone moral feeling arising in the inner appearance of a physical subject. The pain, the humiliation of our empirical nature, comes about through the receptivity of our empirical faculties. In the *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, he refers to receptivity as ‘suffering’, the possibility of active contribution as ‘[a] faculty’. The distinction is the same as between the lower and higher faculties. Self-determined inner activity, he refers to as ‘*actiones immanentes*’ (*MMrong*, 29:823). The pleasure-element in respect comes about afterwards as an experienceable effect in inner sense. There is a sense of equal and opposite reaction here, and this receptivity and activity is, for Kant, necessary for substances to be considered substances. We cannot, however, claim this pleasurable feeling to be an effect of a pure inner activity. It must still be understood as a response to received influence on a subject. No necessary connection can be made between it and pure reason.

At the human-phenomenal level, we experience our moral maxims and activities as determined by our subjective desire for pleasure attainable in the highest good. It is accordingly impossible to separate rational and empirical pleasure. It remains unclear whether positive activity is possible spontaneously, without a preceding stimulation by another empirical influence on feeling. This is not enough to differentiate us from other substances as positively *free* in a provable sense. It cannot supply us a necessary connection between the speculative and practical systems. Something further was required, and this 'something' was originally brought out by Kant in his empirical psychology and further detailed in his third *Critique*. Here, we have the experience of pleasure in a subject brought about purely from the activity of reason. It is without a preceding displeasure that could be understood as a receptive trigger for the oppositional feeling of pleasure, or indeed any experienced empirical determination.

ii. Kant's intention and my ends

I have endeavoured to take Kant's claims—that he has united the speculative and practical systems and proven the certainty of the idea of freedom—seriously. I intend that it should form a basis for my own future attempts to refine my idea of Kant's philosophy. This task required that I did not treat the third *Critique* as a mere afterthought. It was necessary to recognise and highlight a certain continuity of thought throughout his critical works. To this end, I supplied evidence to the effect that the need for a teleological and systematic view of the world was known to Kant in the first *Critique*. Furthermore, he clearly was aware that God denied the possibility of a freestanding system of nature even in 1772. I also explained that the idea of the world-whole presented in the first *Critique* seemed only to provide a subjective purposiveness, though explained how the claim of objective reality for the idea was thought possible by Kant.

In tracing the process of attaining this claimed certainty through the *Groundwork* and second *Critique*, I showed that Kant was aware, in 1785 (though the *Groundwork* manuscript was complete in 1784), that proving freedom required both teleology and a principle of the faculty of pleasure and displeasure. I explained that the idea of freedom as described in the *Groundwork* gave objective sufficiency for our subjective assent to this idea, to our assumption of freedom. Here, Kant was also able to analytically connect this idea to an intellectual causality and its effect on the inner sense of rational beings with empirical wills. This effect was respect. We saw that the second *Critique* showed that it was indeed possible for human subjects to determine their

maxims in accordance with the moral law, yet there was thereby no path to show that this was anything other than determined by the empirical hope of pleasure in attaining the highest good. There was no way to suggest that we could determine our maxims autonomously *from* the moral law. I suggested, moreover, that the idea of the highest good may have been necessary to make the ‘impossible’ principle of the faculty of feeling, possible. The *Groundwork* had posited the effect on feeling only negatively, while the idea of the highest good provided the empirical predicates (the matter) needed to discover it by giving access for pure reason to the human subject.

Without a necessary connection between the purely rational idea and the empirical willing, any maxims could only be considered hypothetical imperatives. A necessary connection could not be shown simply through respect, because of its two-tone nature where pleasure arises following the humiliation of subjective empirical incentives. This necessary connection, Kant told us in his empirical psychology, was possible to prove in the felt pleasure in judgments of beauty, since this demonstrates a pure activity, unidirectional in the sense that it comes from us unelicited by a preceding receptivity. We saw that Kant’s empirical psychology already contained the concepts of ‘free play’ and reflecting judgment. While it was not possible to say with surety that this represented an earlier origin of reflecting judgment, I noted that the language did not reflect that used in the same discussions in the third *Critique*. It seems unlikely that Kant would have updated his anthropology lectures using such different terminology after writing the *CoJ*, yet I cannot be sure, of course. Still: recall that Kant felt that the elements needed for his proof of the impossible principle were to be found in the first *Critique*—as he writes in the letter to Reinhold. Furthermore, it seems quite plausible that missing stage in the process may have been the disclosure of the idea of the

highest good in the second *Critique*. In combination, all these pieces of information work to diminish the strength of any reasons for claiming that the origin of reflecting judgment was the third *Critique*. At the least, it certainly justifies an entitlement to entertain the idea that it was not and consider what consequences and conditions might follow or be required.

With this necessary connection proven in experience, where all discursive intellects can agree upon it, Kant can claim that pure reason, in the idea of freedom, can be actively causal even were there no subjective end in the highest good. On his own terms he can claim that positive freedom is real, that there is an intellectual causality originating in the 'one who observes'. The moral law, as a law that describes this causality as it determines our maxims, is real. In relation once again to the idea of the world-whole: Kant claims that if we can connect the practical metaphysical system (the idea of freedom), to the speculative metaphysical system (the idea of the world-whole), then the objective reality of the speculative system will give 'true reality' to morality (G, 4:439). If, however, the idea of freedom has here been granted a necessary connection to a mere mental phantasm in the speculative system, then we have proven nothing but that we can connect two illusions. The 'reality' he can claim for freedom and morality is only as genuine as the reality he can prove for the idea of the world-whole.

The claim of reality for the idea of the world-whole has been explicated briefly in this thesis, but certainly not to the extent that it has been proven. This was not possible within the bounds of this piece yet would be essential if Kant's system itself is to be proven correct. As with any finite empirical system, this idea of Kant's project I have

constructed, in accordance with the end he claimed, is not quite freestanding. The success of his proof of the certainty of the idea of freedom is relative to a great many questions regarding the success or otherwise of various parts of his system, including the claimed reality of the idea of the whole of nature. Yet now that this idea, to the extent possible in this thesis, is formed, we may have the basis from which to better identify those further conditions to which its success is relative. From there, it may be possible to ferret out and polish away any rough spots, as Kant himself bade us do.

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