

**FREEDOM IN KANT'S CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY:  
THE KEYSTONE OF PURE REASON**

A Thesis

by

TIMOTHY JAMES AYLSWORTH

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2010

Major Subject: Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

Freedom in Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Keystone of Pure Reason. (May 2010)

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The objective of my thesis was to examine Kant's concept of freedom and the role that it plays in his Critical philosophy. Each section deals with an interpretive or theoretical problem concerning freedom in the context of one of Kant's *Critiques*. In Section 2, I focus the *Critique of Practical Reason* and I argue that transcendental freedom is a crucial premise in Kant's deduction of the moral law. In Section 3, I turn to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant claims that transcendental idealism is the theoretical apparatus that allows us to understand the compatibility of freedom and determinism. Because the first *Critique* lays the foundation for the rest of the Critical project, I try to develop a reading of this text that can sustain the viability of Kant's concept of freedom. In Section 4, I look to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, which Kant wrote in order to bridge the gap between nature, as it was described in the first *Critique* and freedom, as it was developed in the second *Critique*. Kant's teleological account of nature, which subordinates nature to the moral use of freedom, bridges the gap between nature and freedom by providing an account of how nature can realize the objective end of practical reason, viz., the highest good.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: FREEDOM AS THE KEYSTONE OF PURE REASON

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant says that “the concept of freedom, insofar as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, constitutes the *keystone* of the whole structure of a system of pure reason, even of speculative reason” (5:3-4).<sup>1</sup> The objective of my thesis is to examine Kant’s concept of freedom and the role that it plays in each of his *Critiques*. Although freedom is treated differently in each *Critique*, I argue that this concept, nevertheless, acts as a connecting thread throughout his critical philosophy.

Kant’s most detailed analysis of freedom is given in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. There, he argues that our knowledge of the moral law entails that we must be free (from the standpoint of practical reason). The first *Critique*, which describes the laws of nature and the transcendental conditions of experience, is meant to serve as a propaedeutic for this claim. In order to maintain his argument about the reality of freedom from the standpoint of practical reason, Kant must show that freedom is not impossible from the standpoint of speculative reason. The first *Critique* plays a vital role for Kant’s moral philosophy by employing transcendental idealism to demonstrate the possible compatibility of transcendental freedom with natural, empirical causation.

The first and second *Critiques* create a gap between nature, as it was described in the first *Critique*, and freedom, as it is worked out in the second. Thus, in

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This thesis follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

<sup>1</sup>All translations of the *Critique of Practical Reason* are taken from Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 133-271. For references to Kant’s work (except for the *Critique of Pure Reason*) I cite the volume and page numbers from the German Academy Edition of *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, 29 Vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter [and predecessors], 1902-). For references to the first *Critique*, I adopt the convention of citing the first and second edition page numbers by means of the A/B notation.

the third *Critique* Kant endeavors to bridge this gap, claiming that our faculty of reflective judgment makes us aware of the unity of the laws of nature and freedom. In the third *Critique*, Kant concludes that nature is teleologically subordinated to the moral use of freedom. In each section, I address a particular interpretative or theoretical problem in order to better understand how the concept of freedom fits in as the keystone of Kant's architectonic.

In Section 2, I focus on the *Critique of Practical Reason*. I argue that Kant mitigates a substantial obstacle to his practical philosophy by including transcendental freedom as a premise of the second *Critique*. Henry Allison claims that this premise provides an answer to criticisms raised by Bruce Aune and other commentators who have argued that Kant's move in the *Groundwork* from the "practical law" to the "moral law" (i.e., the move from mere conformity with universal law to the categorical imperative) requires further argumentation, which Kant fails to supply.<sup>2</sup> I assent to Allison's claim that transcendental freedom bridges the gap between the practical and moral law and that this is crucial if we are to understand the role of transcendental freedom in the second *Critique*. I argue, however, that Allison's argument requires further analysis of Kant's form and matter distinction and its role in connecting a maxim's legislative form with its compliance with the categorical imperative.

Because Kant attributes such importance to transcendental freedom in his practical philosophy, this concept requires adequate support from his speculative philosophy. Hence, in Section 3, I turn to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which provides

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<sup>2</sup>See Bruce Aune, *Kant's Theory of Morals* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 28-34. See also Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 210-213. Allen Wood presents another version of this objection and attributes it to Hegel. See Allen W. Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 161-164. Thomas Hill also mentions this objection. See Thomas Hill, "Kant's Argument for the Rationality of Moral Conduct," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 66 (1985), 19.

the essential argumentation needed to make transcendental freedom a theoretically tenable position. In the third antinomy, Kant claims that the distinction between things in themselves (noumena) and appearances (phenomena) shows how transcendental freedom can be made compatible with empirical causality. Thus, in order to understand his resolution of the antinomy, we must develop an interpretation of transcendental idealism that can sustain his view of freedom.

I argue that the two-world thesis, which understands the distinction between noumena and phenomena to be an ontological one, makes it impossible to render a coherent picture of transcendental freedom. If we acknowledge Kant's claim that the intelligible self is atemporal, then it becomes impossible to connect a timeless act of the intelligible self with a temporal act of the empirical self. Instead, I argue that the two-aspect view, which takes the division between noumena and phenomena to be an epistemological distinction, allows us to understand how we can simultaneously connect an atemporal, intelligible cause to a temporal, empirical cause. This becomes possible because the simultaneity, which Kant demands, is not a temporal convergence of two series; rather, explanations of certain events require a simultaneous conjunction of (A) the demand for the unconditioned as a transcendental condition of experience and (B) the empirical phenomenon. I argue that the two-aspect view is more conducive to this interpretation of simultaneity than the two-world position.

In Section 4, I focus on the the third *Critique*, and I am particularly concerned with Part II, which deals with teleological judgment. In this text, Kant sets out to demonstrate the unity of the laws of nature and freedom. It is not, however, a recapitulation of the compatibility of freedom and empirical causality, which was presented in the third antinomy of the first *Critique*. Instead, Kant's project in the third *Critique* is to show how the laws of nature, given in the first *Critique*, and the laws of freedom, given in the second *Critique*, can be understood, not as two discrete



systems, but as a coherent unity.

Even though it is freedom's apparent conflict with nature that creates the dilemma, Kant relies on freedom, once again, to bridge the gap between the two. He argues that our judgment of the purposiveness of nature as a systematic whole leads us to conclude that the final end of nature is human freedom. Echoing the conclusions of the second *Critique*, Kant states in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that the ultimate end that freedom gives itself is the highest good. Nature is teleologically structured such that it can realize the ends of freedom, namely the highest good. Kant's guiding question for the third *Critique* asks, "What may I hope?" His answer is that we can hope that nature sustains the possibility of the highest good in the world.

## 2. FREEDOM IN THE CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON: THE DEDUCTION OF THE MORAL LAW

The *Critique of Practical Reason* is the focal point of Kant's treatment of freedom. It is in the second *Critique* that Kant develops the inextricable connection between freedom and the moral law. He says that the first question concerning the determining ground of the will is whether or not the causality of freedom "does in fact belong to the human will" (5:15). Only on this condition is it possible for reason to be the determining ground of the will such that it is not the heteronomous product of empirical causality.

Furthermore, the concept of freedom in the second *Critique* supplements the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* by providing an argument that is absent in the *Groundwork*. In particular, Bruce Aune argues that the *Groundwork* fails to justify the move from the practical law, which is defined as "conformity of actions as such with universal law" to the moral law, which in its first, negative formulation states, "*I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law*" (4:402).<sup>3</sup> The two concepts cannot be equivalent, since, as Henry Allison notes, "the latter provides a decision procedure for the choice of maxims whereas the former does not."<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Kant assumes that the categorical imperative is either equivalent to or entailed by mere conformity of actions with a universal law (4:402). Aune argues that this move requires further argumentation that cannot be found in the *Groundwork*.<sup>5</sup>

Commentators have noted that this gap between the practical law and the moral

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<sup>3</sup>Aune, *Kant's Theory of Morals*, 28-34. All translations of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* are taken from Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, 41-108.

<sup>4</sup>Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 210.

<sup>5</sup>Aune, *Kant's Theory of Morals*, 28-34.

law is no trivial matter.<sup>6</sup> The problem is that someone could affirm the former while rejecting the latter. As Allison points out, mere adherence to the practical law would not proscribe all of the maxims that would be forbidden by the moral law. Allison claims that the requirement of the practical law, which demands that one's actions conform to universal law, is not enough to rule out the possibility of rational egoism.<sup>7</sup> The rational egoist could consistently maintain that acting in accordance with one's own self interest is a universal law insofar as she holds "that it would be reasonable for every other agent in relevantly similar circumstances to adopt the same principles or even that such agents ought to adopt them."<sup>8</sup> The moral law, however, goes beyond this requirement and demands that the agent act in such a way that she could *will* that her maxim become a universal law. The rational egoist fails to comply with the moral law even though she passes the test of the practical law.<sup>9</sup>

Allison argues that the second *Critique* completes the enthymematic argument of the *Groundwork*.<sup>10</sup> Allison claims that the inclusion of transcendental freedom as an explicit premise in the deduction of the second *Critique* is the move that mitigates the force of Aune's objection. He says that "transcendental freedom is precisely the missing ingredient, which bridges the gap between the idea of conformity to practical law as such... and the moral law as Kant defines it."<sup>11</sup> Allison points to Kant's remarks in §5, where Kant argues that the "mere lawgiving form of maxims is

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<sup>6</sup>Aune gives this problem a significant amount of attention and claims that the project of providing an argument from the practical law to the moral law is ultimately a failure. *Ibid.* Allison acknowledges that Aune's objection points to a real difficulty, but he argues that it can, nevertheless, be resolved. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 210-213. As noted in Section I, Allen Wood and Thomas Hill also address this objection. See Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, 161-164. See also Hill, "Kant's Argument for the Rationality of Moral Conduct," 19.

<sup>7</sup>Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 211.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>10</sup>Allison gives this argument in *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 210-213 and he presents the same argument again in *Idealism and Freedom*. See Henry Allison, *Idealism and Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 143-154.

<sup>11</sup>Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 213.

the only sufficient determining ground of a will” (5:28), in order to show how freedom connects the practical law to the moral law.<sup>12</sup>

If the lawgiving form of a maxim, (i.e., its formal suitability as a universal law) is the determining ground of the will, then the agent’s will must be determined without being subject to any empirical conditions and is therefore transcendently free. Allison argues that the practical law inevitably leads to the legislative form of maxims, which require transcendental freedom if they are to serve as the determining ground of the will. Because Kant equates the “legislative form of maxims” with the requirement of universalizability given in the first formulation of the categorical imperative, Allison argues that this deduction, which relies on transcendental freedom, succeeds in connecting the practical law to the moral law.<sup>13</sup>

I believe that Allison is right to claim that transcendental freedom is a necessary step in the connection between the practical and moral law. Nevertheless, Allison’s argument is in need of further development before it can achieve its purported aim. Specifically, I argue that the concept of a maxim must be considered in terms of its formal and material components in order to understand why Kant can legitimately equate the “legislative form of maxims” with their suitability as universal laws.

The form is nothing other than the universality of the imperative, and the matter is the end or object that is to be effected. Because material objects are always empirically conditioned, Kant claims that the form alone must be the determining ground of the transcendently free will. Hence, the legislative form of a maxim can be nothing other than its universality.

Thus, in this section, I argue that transcendental freedom plays an important role in Kant’s practical philosophy. Freedom is not *merely* required for moral responsi-

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

bility, as the “ought implies can” dictum indicates; rather, Kant uses the concept of transcendental freedom as a crucial premise in his deduction of the moral law.

## 2.1 Aune’s Objection: Kant’s Move from Practical Law to Moral Law

In the *Groundwork*, Kant argues that the will of a rational being must be moved to act merely out of conformity with universal law and that no empirical end, like happiness, can serve as the determining ground of the will. It is after reaching this conclusion that Kant moves from conformity with universal law to the idea of the moral law. He writes:

Since I have deprived the will of every impulse that could arise for it from obeying some law, nothing is left but the conformity of actions as such with universal law, which alone is to serve the will as its principle, that is, *I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law.* (4:402)

It is here, Aune argues, that Kant moves uncritically from the practical law to the moral law. Aune defines these concepts in the following way:<sup>14</sup>

Practical Law (PL): Conform your actions to universal law.

Moral Law (ML): Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become [or be] a universal law.

Allison gives a succinct reformulation of Aune’s objection:

Aune allows that Kant establishes the former [the PL] by showing that it is a requirement of rational willing; but he contends that Kant either mistakenly treats the latter [ML] as equivalent to it or assumes, without argument, that it is readily derivable from it.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Although the definitions come from Aune, the labels “practical law” and “moral law” are the ones that Allison uses in his discussion of Aune’s objection. See Aune, *Kant’s Theory of Morals*, 29. See also Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*, 210.

<sup>15</sup>Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*, 210.

It is not likely that Kant took the PL and ML to be equivalent. As both Aune and Allison point out, there are important practical differences between them.<sup>16</sup> Aune argues that the PL “is a higher-order principle telling us to conform to certain lower-order laws” but that it does not help us determine what these lower-order laws are.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the PL does not turn out to be a very useful principle.

Allison argues that the problem might be more serious than Aune realizes. He claims that even a rational egoist, who believes that an action is rational only insofar as it promotes her self-interest, could adopt the PL. For example, if a rational egoist is faced with a decision between accepting or rejecting a bribe, the PL does nothing to forbid her from making the wrong moral decision. She is consistent with the PL as long as she believes that it would be reasonable for others in similar situations to act in the same way, according to the universal law of self-interest. This, however, is vastly different than *willing* that everyone else act in the same way. Thus, Allison concludes that “there is a gap that needs to be filled, indeed, if it leaves room for rational egoism, perhaps even a more serious gap than Aune and other friendly critics realize.”<sup>18</sup>

Aune argues that the connection between the PL and ML could be established by the premise that “we conform to universal law when and only when we act on maxims that we can will to be universal laws.”<sup>19</sup> Aune claims that this premise would indeed demonstrate that the ML follows from the PL, but he argues that it is not as obvious as Kant seems to assume. Thus, he tries to give an argument that can justify this additional premise.

Aune’s argument turns on the logical form of maxims. Because every action is

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* See also Aune, *Kant’s Theory of Morals*, 30.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*, 211.

<sup>19</sup> Aune, *Kant’s Theory of Morals*, 32.

based on some maxim, Aune revises the PL and ML in order to include maxims. He claims that an action conforms to the PL only if that action is based on a maxim that conforms to universal law.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, he says that an agent's maxim,  $m$ , conforms to the moral law only if she "can will that  $m$  or its generalization  $G(m)$ , should be a universal law."<sup>21</sup> Aune deliberately moves from talking about maxims to their generalizations. He does so because he believes that "a maxim lacks the logical form of a proper law; what one can will to be a practical law is, at best, the *generalization* of a maxim."<sup>22</sup> Aune believes that maxims have the following logical form: "For any action  $A$ , if  $A$  satisfies the condition  $C$ , I will do  $A$ ."<sup>23</sup> Laws, on the other hand, have a different form: "All  $A$ 's are necessarily  $B$ ."<sup>24</sup>

Aune's claim that maxims must be generalized (in order to have the same logical form as laws) does have some textual support. He points to a passage in the *Critique of Practical Reason* where Kant moves from a maxim to its generalization in order to test its conformity with the PL.<sup>25</sup> In this remark on §4, Kant considers whether or not a maxim that states "I will increase my wealth by every safe means" would conform to universal law (5:27). In order to test this maxim, he evaluates an action that falls under it, namely, he asks whether or not he should deny a deposit, the owner of which has died without making any record of it (5:27). Both the description of the action and the maxim on which it is based are initially indexed to a specific agent. When he subjects this maxim to the test of the PL, however, he generalizes it by saying, "everyone may deny a deposit which no one can prove has been made" (5:27). As Aune points out, "though the maxim he is testing is expressed in the first-person

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

singular, the law he describes is fully general.”<sup>26</sup>

After giving this analysis of the nature of maxims and their generalizations, Aune claims that the PL should say: “ $m$  (or an action on  $m$ ) is consistent with universal law just when  $G(m)$  is consistent with universal law.”<sup>27</sup> This, however, is by no means a logical truth.<sup>28</sup> Aune claims that it is entirely conceivable that some maxim (or some action based on that maxim) might conform to universal law even though its generalization is incompatible with it.<sup>29</sup> For instance, if the universal law is rational egoism, then Kant’s denying the dead man’s deposit would conform to the law, but the generalization of this action does not fare quite so well. As Kant rightly notes, once this maxim is generalized, it would annihilate itself because there would no longer be deposits at all (5:27). Since Aune argues that “the shift from talk about maxims *simpliciter* to talk about generalized maxims”<sup>30</sup> compels Kant to show that a maxim conforms with universal law only if its generalization does, he concludes that the project of connecting the PL to the ML is ultimately a failure.<sup>31</sup>

## 2.2 Allison’s Reply to Aune: The Importance of Transcendental Freedom

Allison agrees with Aune’s claim that there is a gap between the PL and ML. He also concurs that the *Groundwork* fails to provide any argument connecting them. Furthermore, as it was noted earlier, Allison believes that this problem, insofar as the PL permits maxims and actions that the ML is meant to forbid, might be more serious than Aune realizes.<sup>32</sup> He also points out that, at least as far as the *Groundwork* is concerned, Kant’s argument moves in the problematic way that Aune describes.

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<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>28</sup>Of course, the converse, which states that if  $G(m)$  is consistent with universal law, then  $m$  is consistent, would certainly be a logical truth. *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>30</sup>Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*, 211.

<sup>31</sup>Aune, *Kant’s Theory of Morals*, 89.

<sup>32</sup>Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*, 211.



Allison does, however, argue that the *Critique of Practical Reason* succeeds in bridging the gap.<sup>33</sup> The important difference is that the second *Critique* uses transcendental freedom to connect the PL to the ML. He writes:

Fortunately, however, the situation is not as hopeless as it has so far appeared. What has been neglected is that the argument of the second *Critique* does not move straightforwardly from the concept of a practical law to the categorical imperative as the only conceivable candidate for such a law, but rather from this concept *together with* the assumption of transcendental freedom.<sup>34</sup>

Allison claims that the inclusion of transcendental freedom in the deduction of the moral law forges a bridge between the PL and the ML. In order to evaluate Allison's claim that transcendental freedom bridges the gap, we must first examine how he defines this concept.

In his explication of transcendental freedom, Allison naturally begins with Kant's description of it in the second *Critique*, where he writes that transcendental freedom "must be thought as independence from everything empirical and so from nature generally" (5:97). Allison argues that this independence from nature is a necessary condition of transcendental freedom, but he does not believe that it is a sufficient condition.<sup>35</sup> For example, an agent's freedom might be limited to her capacity to freely choose the means through which she effects ends that are empirically determined by nature. In this case, "such an agent would be free, yet ineluctably heteronomous."<sup>36</sup>

Hence, Allison argues that transcendental freedom requires a specifically Kantian conception of autonomy according to which an agent has the capacity to set her own ends without any empirical conditioning.<sup>37</sup> As Kant puts it, "Autonomy of the will is

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<sup>33</sup>Allison presents this argument in *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 210-213 and again in *Idealism and Freedom*, 150-154.

<sup>34</sup>Allison, *Idealism and Freedom*, 151.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

the property of the will by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition)” (4:440).<sup>38</sup> Thus, for an agent to be transcendently free, she must be able to act and set ends for herself without any causal necessitation from nature.

After providing this explication of freedom and autonomy, Allison proceeds to his argument connecting the practical law to the moral law. First, Allison discusses Kant’s requirement that a maxim be rationally justified. In order for a maxim to be rationally justified, it “must not merely conform to an unconditional practical law, it must be adopted *because* it conforms.”<sup>39</sup> Allison highlights the fact that this is only possible if the agent is transcendently free.

Furthermore, in order for a maxim to be adopted on the grounds that it conforms to universal law, the maxim “must be able to include itself as a ‘principle establishing universal law,’ which is just to say that the maxim must have what Kant terms ‘legislative form.’”<sup>40</sup> The legislative form of a maxim is nothing other than the maxim’s capacity to be generalized and established as a universal law. This, Allison argues, is the crucial move that is needed to establish a connection between the practical law and the moral law.

Essentially, Allison’s argument sets up a string of conditional statements. First, if pure reason is practical, then it must be able to create maxims without being empirically conditioned (i.e., the agent must be transcendently free). Second, if the adoption of a maxim is not empirically conditioned, then the grounds for adopting this maxim must be its conformity with universal law. Third, if a maxim is adopted on the grounds that it conforms to universal law, then this must in virtue of its

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<sup>38</sup>This conception of autonomy squares nicely with the word’s etymology. It’s a compound of the ancient Greek words *auto* (self) and *nomos* (law). Kant’s conception of autonomy requires that the agent’s will be governed by law and that this law be given by the agent herself.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 153.

legislative form. Finally, a maxim can have legislative form only if the agent can *will* that the maxim become a universal law. Allison writes:

By this line of reasoning, then, which turns crucially on the assumption of transcendental freedom, the apparently empty requirement to conform to universal law . . . which presumably even the rational egoist could accept, becomes the non-trivial requirement to select only those maxims which you can also regard as suitable to be universal laws.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, Allison concludes that the second *Critique* succeeds where the *Groundwork* fell short because of the inclusion of transcendental freedom as an explicit premise.

### 2.3 Kant's Form and Matter Distinction

I believe that Allison is right to emphasize the importance of transcendental freedom in Kant's deduction of the moral law. Nevertheless, I argue that his argument connecting the PL to the ML is not complete unless it closely attends to the distinction between a maxim's form and matter. According to the third step in Allison's argument, conformity to universal law can serve as the ground for adopting a maxim only if the maxim has the proper legislative form. Allison neglects to demonstrate why this conditional holds. In short, a maxim can be adopted on the grounds that it conforms to universal law only after the maxim has been abstracted from all material components (i.e., ends which are to be effected) such that nothing remains but the form.

Every maxim can be broken down to its form and matter. The matter is the "object whose reality of desired" (5:21). Such objects, however, are necessarily empirical and thus cannot serve as the determining ground of a rational will. Kant writes:

If a rational being is to think of his maxims as practical universal laws, he can think of them only as principles that contain the determining ground of the will *not by matter but only by their form.* (5:27)

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<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 153-154.

Because desirable ends like happiness are empirically conditioned and are not equally valid for all rational beings, it is impossible to make such ends the a priori principle of universal law (5:21-22). Hence, in order to establish a universally valid practical principle, the rational agent must evaluate maxims without any consideration of desired ends.

Kant claims that we must either abandon the project of seeking a higher moral principle or acknowledge the following principle:

*Pure reason* must be practical of itself and alone, that is, it must be able to determine the will by the mere form of a practical rule without presupposing any feeling and hence without any representation of the agreeable or disagreeable as the matter of the faculty of desire. (5:24)

Given that desired material objects will inevitably vary from subject to subject, it would be impossible to establish any universal law with such objects as the determining ground of the will.

The capacity establish a strictly formal principle as the determining ground of the will is precisely the role of transcendental freedom in Kant's deduction. Without transcendental freedom, the objects of human desire (which are driven by natural inclinations) would be the sole principle of human action. No agent could ever act purely out of respect for the formal universality of her maxim. Her will would necessarily be heteronomous.

The form of a maxim, which is to serve as the determining ground of the will, is nothing other than its suitability to serve as a principle of universal law. This is precisely what Kant is referring to in his discussion of the legislative form. Thus, in order to successfully establish the connection between the PL and ML, Allison needs to underscore the importance of the form/matter distinction and highlight the necessity to consider a maxim in complete abstraction from material considerations.

## 2.4 Concluding Remarks

Aune, Allison, and Wood are right to be concerned about Kant's move from the practical law to the moral law. If Kant wishes to maintain that acting in accordance with the moral law is the only way to conform one's actions to universal law, then this claim requires an argument establishing this connection. In the *Groundwork*, Kant certainly moves from one to the other without providing such an argument.

Allison finds this argument in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and he claims that it is crucially dependent on the assumption of transcendental freedom. While I believe that Allison is quite right in making this claim, he neglects an important facet of transcendental freedom, viz., that it is what enables an agent to act strictly out of respect for a maxim's universalizability rather than out of desire for some material object. Once Allison's argument has been supplemented in this way, I believe that it can stand as an adequate response to the criticism leveled by Aune and Wood.

### 3. FREEDOM IN THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON: AN OBJECTION TO THE TWO-WORLD VIEW

Kant is unequivocal about the importance of freedom for his practical philosophy (5:96-98). Furthermore, he argues that this integral concept of his moral philosophy ultimately rests upon the transcendental idea of freedom from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (5:94-106). Thus, if his moral philosophy is to be placed on a firm foundation, the transcendental idea of freedom must be theoretically tenable.

Given that transcendental idealism is the doctrine that grounds the transcendental ideas, any defense of Kant's view of freedom requires a suitable interpretation of this position. In this section, I focus on two interpretive approaches to transcendental idealism and I evaluate their respective strengths and weaknesses in helping us understand Kant's take on freedom in the context of the third antinomy, where Kant argues for the compatibility of antithetical positions concerning freedom and determinism.

In Section 1, after giving a brief exposition of the third antinomy, its solution, and the relevant considerations that give rise to the dilemma, I look to the "two-world" view, which takes the distinction between things in themselves (noumena) and appearances (phenomena) to be a metaphysical one. In particular, I examine Allen Wood's exposition of this view.<sup>42</sup> I argue that the two-world view makes it impossible to connect a timeless, intelligible act of choice with a temporal, empirical event that it conditions. Because Kant asserts that we *simultaneously* discover an event's intelligible and sensible causes, Hud Hudson claims that Wood's two-world understanding of this simultaneity amounts to the convergence of an atemporal, intelligible series with a temporal, sensible series, which "is simply an outright contradiction."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>See Allen Wood, "Kant's Compatibilism," in Allen W. Wood, *Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), 73.

<sup>43</sup>See Hud Hudson, *Kant's Compatibilism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 26.

In Section 2, I argue that the contradiction that results from the two-world view can be averted by adopting the alternative position known as the “one-world” or “two-aspect” view, which understands the distinction between noumena and phenomena to be an epistemological one that does not entail a metaphysical separation. More specifically, I focus on Henry Allison’s formulation and defense of this view.<sup>44</sup> I suggest that the simultaneity, which Kant demands, is not a temporal convergence of two series; rather, explanations of certain events require a simultaneous conjunction of (A) the demand for an unconditioned cause as a transcendental condition of experience and (B) the empirical, phenomenal, cause. I argue that Allison’s two-aspect view is more conducive to this interpretation of simultaneity than Wood’s two-world position. For Allison, (A) and (B) are merely different epistemological perspectives, which must be simultaneously posited in order to understand how certain events are made possible for experience. I argue that the contradiction, which arises out of the two-world view, is resolved by understanding the simultaneous conjunction of atemporal causation with temporal causation as epistemological rather than ontological. Because the epistemological perspective avoids Hudson’s contradiction, I argue that

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<sup>44</sup>See Henry E. Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 3. Although I focus on Wood and Allison, there are, of course, many other scholars who argue for these views. Lewis White Beck, Graham Bird, Ralf Meerbote, Arthur Melnick, Robert Pippin, and Gerold Prauss all argue for some version of the two-aspect view. I have chosen Allison because of his thorough treatment of Kant’s view of freedom and his robust defense of the two-aspect theory’s importance in this respect. See Allison *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*. Similarly, Wood is by no means the only or even the most vehement proponent of the two-world view. On the contrary, the two-world view has, until recently, been a standard, textbook reading of Kant. I have selected Wood because he succinctly states what he believes to be the important facets of Kant’s compatibilism, and these criteria are the ones criticized by Hudson. Although I focus on Wood, P.F. Strawson is sometimes seen Allison’s counterpart, who strongly advocates the two-world view. See P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Methuen, 1966). There are other notable proponents of the two-world view, including Karl Ameriks, Moltke Gram, T.E. Wilkerson, and Richard Aquila. Many of these scholars, however, already believe that Kant’s commitments to the two-world view, necessary as they might be, commit him to various contradictions. It is for this reason, among others, that I have singled out Wood’s account. For a detailed discussion of these two positions and their supporters, see Karl Ameriks’ “Recent Work on Kant’s Theoretical Philosophy” in *Interpreting Kant’s Critiques*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003), 67-97.

the two-aspect interpretation of transcendental idealism yields a more tenable view of freedom than the two-world view.

In Section 3, I consider Eric Watkins' objections to the two-aspect view of freedom and offer some replies. Watkins claims that the "crucial move" made by the two-aspect solution is the assertion that we cannot simultaneously view an event or action from two standpoints, which prevents the possibility of coherently stating the contradiction.<sup>45</sup> I argue that this move, which he finds objectionable, is in no way crucial to the two-aspect view of freedom. I claim that epistemological simultaneity of the two standpoints is precisely what is required for a textually faithful and philosophically defensible position. I deny Watkins' assertion that one standpoint must be true, while the other is illusory; rather, I argue that both standpoints make equally true claims. In my defense of this position, I evaluate and reject Dana Nelkin's objection that the idea of a standpoint is not intelligible and thus cannot serve as the interpretive apparatus for Kant's view of freedom.<sup>46</sup> I conclude that in the context of Kant's view of freedom, the two-world view faces more formidable objections and that the two-aspect view is preferable in this respect.

### 3.1 The Two-World View

The antinomies are central to Kant's project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR). Allison writes, "It is virtually impossible to overestimate the importance of the Antinomy to Kant's critical project."<sup>47</sup> Kant acknowledges this importance in a famous letter to Christian Garve written in 1798, in which Kant writes that it was the antinomies that "first aroused me from my dogmatic slumber and drove

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<sup>45</sup>Eric Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 321.

<sup>46</sup>Dana K. Nelkin, "Two Standpoints and the Belief in Freedom," *The Journal of Philosophy* 97 (2000), 569.

<sup>47</sup>Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 357.



me to the critique of reason itself in order to resolve the ostensible contradiction of reason with itself” (Br 12: 258).<sup>48</sup> In the CPR, Kant intends to resolve these contradictions, which stem from reason’s demand that we hold certain mutually inconsistent positions.

Reason insists that “**If the conditioned is given, then the whole sum of conditions, and hence the absolutely unconditioned, is also given**, through which alone the conditioned was possible” (A409/ B436).<sup>49</sup> In his explication of this demand, Kant tells us to evaluate a series m, n, o, where n is the condition of o and is conditioned by m. In order to understand n as the condition of o, we must presume a series of preceding conditions (l, k, j, etc.) if we are to regard n as given (A410/ B437). Kant is unwilling to concede an infinite regress of conditions, because he claims that reason cannot be satisfied with an incomplete series. Thus, he argues that reason is *compelled* to posit an unconditioned totality as a transcendental condition of any conditioned series.

Given this demand for the unconditioned, in the thesis of the third antinomy, Kant argues that the causality of the laws of nature cannot be the only one and that we must assume freedom, as an absolutely unconditioned cause, in order to explain certain appearances. In the antithesis, he claims that there is no freedom and that natural causation is entirely sufficient, when an event is considered strictly as an empirical phenomenon. These antithetical positions present us with an undesirable contradiction, but reason is, nevertheless, able to resolve the conflict. Kant writes:

The antinomy of pure reason in its cosmological ideas is removed by showing that it is merely dialectical and a conflict due to an illusion arising from the fact that one has applied the idea of absolute totality,

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<sup>48</sup>Kant to Garve, 21 September 1798, in Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, ed. and trans. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 552.

<sup>49</sup>All translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are taken from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

which is valid only as a condition of things in themselves, to appearances that exist only in representation, and that, if they constitute a series, exist in the successive regress but otherwise do not exist at all. (A506/B534)

The resolution of the antinomy relies on transcendental idealism, which distinguishes between appearances (phenomena), which we know through experience, and things in themselves (noumena), which are never given through experience. I am free *qua* noumenal self, but I am determined *qua* phenomenal self. The contradiction only arises when the subjectively necessary totality, which is merely a condition of the noumena, is mistaken for an objective property of phenomena (A297/B353). In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant insists that the reader recall this particular insight of the first *Critique*:

[T]he natural necessity which cannot coexist with the freedom of the subject attaches merely to the determinations of a thing which stands under conditions of time and so only to the determinations of the acting subject as appearance. . . . But the very same subject, being on the other side conscious of himself as a thing in itself, also views his existence *insofar as it does not stand under conditions of time* and himself as determinable only through laws that he gives himself by reason. (5:97)

The self, when it is considered empirically, is in time and causally necessitated. The self, insofar as it is considered in the intelligible sense, is neither in time nor subject to causal necessity.

In order to maintain Kant's view of freedom, we must develop an interpretation of transcendental idealism that can sustain this resolution of the third antinomy. This task is complicated by Kant's remarks that the atemporal, intelligible cause and the temporal, empirical cause are to be discovered simultaneously in an action. Kant writes:

Thus freedom and nature, each in its full significance would *both be found in the same actions, simultaneously* and without any contradiction, ac-

ording to whether one compares them with their intelligible or their sensible cause. (A541/B569; emphasis added)

Interestingly, neither cause is found in a mitigated, incomplete sense; rather, each cause is present in its “full significance.” This dispels any talk about the existence of a real or illusory cause. Kant does not want to give the impression that freedom is the real cause, that the natural, empirical cause is illusory, or vice versa. Furthermore, the two seemingly incompatible causes are *simultaneously* found in an action. This simultaneity requirement complicates the exegetical and philosophical task. With these constraints in the background, we may turn to the interpretive debate between the two-world view and the two-aspect view to evaluate their compliance with these restrictions.

Wood argues that we can conceive of ourselves as simultaneously free and determined only if we understand that there are two ontologically distinct selves. The noumenal self is free, but the empirical self is causally determined by the laws of nature. Wood writes:

Kant’s compatibilism, however, is based on the *aggressively metaphysical distinction between phenomena and noumena*; far from unifying our view of ourselves, it says that freedom and determinism are compatible only because the self as free moral agent belongs to a *different world* from that of the self as natural object.<sup>50</sup>

In a certain sense, the two-world view is helpful in alleviating the contradiction between the thesis and antithesis. If Kant does not have a unified view of the self, then he is free to say that there is no contradiction, since freedom and determinism are predicated of ontologically discrete entities. Wood also argues that Kant is committed to the claim that humans have timeless agency. The self of the intelligible world and its agency are not subject to time.<sup>51</sup> Wood says:

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<sup>50</sup>Wood, “Kant’s Compatibilism,” 75. (Emphasis Added)

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 90.

Time, however, is for Kant only a form of sensibility; only as phenomena or appearances are we necessarily in time. As noumena or things in themselves we are subject neither to time nor to the law of causality which goes along with it.<sup>52</sup>

The difficulty lies in showing how these two conceptions of the self are compatible. Particularly, in what sense does a timeless act of the intelligible self relate to the temporal, empirical event?

Hudson argues that this question presents an insurmountable obstacle for Wood's account. Hudson claims that Wood's two-world reading of Kant's solution to the third antinomy rests on three, inconsistent theses.<sup>53</sup> He reconstructs Wood's view in the following way:

(i) Kant's distinction between things in themselves and appearances is an ontological, two-worlds one; (ii) the intelligible cause is the source of causal efficacy, and the empirical cause, which is the effect of the intelligible cause, is not sufficient for its effect in the world of appearance; and (iii) human beings participate in timeless agency.<sup>54</sup>

As we have seen, Kant certainly endorses timeless agency, as the intelligible self is not subject to time, yet it has the power to spontaneously effect a series of appearances (A446/ B474). Hudson argues that this kind of timeless agency is incompatible with Wood's two-world position, when it is evaluated with respect to the requirement of simultaneity. Hudson frames his objection as follows:

Suppose that some activity x is timeless. Then there is no time at which x occurs. But if x is simultaneous with something y, x and y occur at the same time. Thus there is no y such that x and y are simultaneous. In short, to purchase compatibilism at the price of ignoring the incoherence of timeless choices that are also simultaneous with empirical events seems an awfully high price to pay.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Hudson, *Kant's Compatibilism*, 26.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Wood holds that there is a simultaneous convergence of an atemporal, intelligible cause and a temporal event. Indeed, this seems to be “an outright contradiction.” If there are two ontologically distinct selves *simultaneously* causing some action, then we are faced with the impossible task of temporally uniting a timeless choice with an empirical event in time.

I believe that Wood faces an undesirable decision. He can either affirm Hudson’s formulation of simultaneity, which would commit him to the resulting contradiction, or he can deny this formulation and claim that the simultaneity must refer to a subjective simultaneity rather than an objective one. If he chooses the latter, then this would essentially amount to an ad hoc acceptance of the two-aspect view in order to avoid the two-world contradiction. The claim of the two-aspect view is that the simultaneity is not between two ontologically discrete objects; rather the simultaneous conjunction is of two epistemological perspectives within the subject.

I argue that we can make simultaneity and timeless agency compatible only if we understand this simultaneity as epistemological rather than ontological. Wood’s two-world position, however, excludes the possibility of this alternative conception of simultaneity. If he is committed to the claim that the intelligible self and empirical self are metaphysically distinct, then he is left with the unwelcome consequence that simultaneity must refer to the temporal conjunction of two ontologically discrete entities, one of which is in time, while the other is not. Although Wood rightly retains the requirements of atemporality and simultaneity, we have to jettison the two-world thesis if we wish to understand the compatibility of these demands.

### 3.2 The Two-Aspect View

Allison categorically rejects the two-world position.<sup>56</sup> He believes that the two-

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<sup>56</sup>Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 3.

aspect interpretation is pivotal for a proper understanding of transcendental idealism.

He writes:

[T]he distinction between the empirical and transcendental object, like that between things as they appear and as they are in themselves, is not between two ontologically distinct entities but between two perspectives from which ordinary empirical objects may be considered.<sup>57</sup>

He says that that transcendental idealism “is more properly seen as epistemological or perhaps ‘metaepistemological’ than metaphysical in nature, since it is grounded in an analysis of the discursive nature of human cognition.”<sup>58</sup> The term “metaepistemological” seems appropriate here, considering that the transcendental distinction is not simply something we know; rather, it provides meta-rules (transcendental conditions), which make knowledge possible. Furthermore, it should be noted that we can only view *empirical* objects from two perspectives. One perspective is the phenomenal, which we experience through intuition. The other is the transcendental perspective, which identifies the conditions that make experience possible.

Allison argues that these are merely two epistemological perspectives through which empirical objects are cognized. I argue that if there are not two ontologically distinct selves, then the problem of simultaneity is mitigated. The contradiction in Wood’s account stems from the incompatibility of the two-world thesis with the simultaneity requirement. Allison’s one-world view does not take simultaneity to be a convergence of ontologically distinct causes; rather, he argues that a complete explanation of certain phenomena requires that we presuppose transcendental freedom at the same time that we intuit the empirical phenomenon. The simultaneity is epistemological rather than ontological. The intelligible cause is still not subject to time, but this no longer presents an insurmountable obstacle to simultaneity. We

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

merely presuppose an unconditioned, atemporal cause in order to understand how the phenomenon was made possible for experience.<sup>59</sup> We make this presupposition in simultaneous conjunction with the acknowledgment of the empirical cause. It is important to bear in mind that this is precisely what Kant says about simultaneity. He does not claim that freedom and nature simultaneously *cause* some event; rather, freedom and nature are simultaneously *found* in an event (A541/B569). Because it has the resources to avert Hudson's alleged contradiction, Allison's two-aspect theory has an important advantage over the two-world position.

In addition to this theoretical advantage, I also contend that the two-aspect view provides a more faithful rendering of Kant's texts. Although I agree with Watkins that Kant's treatment of the matter is too ambiguous to determine the decision by means of textual arguments alone,<sup>60</sup> it is, nevertheless, important to look at Kant's remarks on the issue, as they guide much of the theoretical debate. Since the existence of objects is determined by a category of the understanding, which applies only to phenomena, the attribution of objectivity<sup>61</sup> to the noumena would constitute a category mistake. Hence, we should heed Kant's repeated warnings that the noumenon functions negatively, as a limit concept of empirical knowledge. The thing in itself is the unintelligible remainder that results after abstracting an object from all of its empirical properties. Thus, it functions as an "object" only in a heuristic sense, rather than in the ordinary empirical sense. I believe that this approach allows for a two-aspect reading of many passages where Kant seems to be advocating the two-world view. Watkins cites Kant's *Lectures on Metaphysics* to

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<sup>59</sup>Kant's distinction between the intelligible and empirical cause of an event bears some similarity to Aristotle's formal and efficient causes. The intelligible cause is not the efficient cause of any event in the world, but it could be understood as a formal cause.

<sup>60</sup>Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality*, 318.

<sup>61</sup>I wish to use this word in the sense of *Gegenständlichkeit* (object-hood or concreteness) rather than strictly as *Objektivität* (objectivity understood as independence from subjective distortion).

bolster the two-world position:<sup>62</sup>

And thus the antinomy that there is freedom and necessity in the world is removed because it is shown that they are not actual opposites <opposita>, *because they apply to different objects*, namely the first to the noumenal world <mundus noumenon> and the other to the phenomenal world <mundus phaenomenon>. (29:924-925; emphasis added)<sup>63</sup>

Here, Kant seems to claim that the resolution to the third antinomy indeed rests on an ontological distinction between noumena and phenomena. I believe, however, that this interpretation is misleading. Properly understood, an “object” of the noumenon is not really an object in any ordinary sense of the word. Kant writes:

The division of objects into phaenomena and noumena, and of the world into a world of sense and a world of understanding, can therefore not be permitted at all, although concepts certainly permit of division into sensible and intellectual ones; *for one cannot determine any object for the latter*, and therefore also cannot pass them off as objectively valid. (A255/B311; emphasis added)

Because there are no objects given for the world of understanding (i.e., no thing in itself can serve as object), we are compelled to adopt the conception of the noumena, as an essential heuristic, which facilitates the two-aspect reading of the texts where Kant employs what appears to be two-world language. For example, the following passage from the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* is often cited as textual support for the two-world view:

This must yield a distinction, although a crude one, between a **world of sense** [*Sinnenwelt*] and the **world of understanding** [*Verstandeswelt*], the first of which can be very different according to the difference of sensibility in various observers of the world, while the second, which is its basis, always remains the same. (4:451)

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<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, trans. Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 223-224.



If we consider the world of understanding as a heuristic limit concept, rather than a distinct ontological realm, then this passage does not actually support the two-world view. It is worth noting Kant's qualification that this is a crude distinction [*rohe Unterscheidung*], suggesting that he might be using the two-world language heuristically. Arguably, Kant uses the two-world language to help the reader understand how to conceive of existence from two radically different perspectives. Indeed, the concept of world [*Welt*] often serves this function in Kant's philosophy.<sup>64</sup>

Later in the *Groundwork*, Kant argues that the world of understanding [*Verstandeswelt*] indeed functions heuristically and that it is "only a *standpoint* [*Standpunkt*], that reason sees itself constrained to take outside appearances *in order to think of itself as practical*" (4:458). Because an individual cannot conceive of freedom from an empirical standpoint, the world of understanding offers a conceptual apparatus that helps the reader overcome this difficulty. At times, Kant seems to explicitly support this two-aspect reading of the two-world language:

A rational being must regard himself as intelligence (hence not from the side of his lower powers) as belonging not to the world of sense but to the world of understanding; hence he has *two standpoints from which he can regard himself*. (4:452; emphasis added).

Here, Kant says that our membership in these distinct worlds is relevant insofar as it allows us to regard ourselves from different standpoints. Although my interpretation of these texts lends itself to the two-aspect view, proponents of the two-world view make similar moves in defense of their position, and it is therefore necessary to rely on theoretical arguments. These texts, however, play an important role in helping us navigate the philosophical arguments produced in the interest of making Kant's view theoretically tenable.

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<sup>64</sup>See Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 227-228.

### 3.3 Objections to the Two-Aspect View

If Hudson is right that Wood's two-world view makes it impossible to endorse timeless agency and simultaneity, then given Kant's commitment to the latter positions, it is necessary to abandon the two-world position in favor of the two-aspect view. Although proponents of the two-world view sometimes acknowledge the legitimacy of this objection, they often reply that the two-aspect view faces even more formidable objections, thus placing the argumentative burden back on the two-aspect proponents.

Watkins raises just such an objection. The objections that he gives, however, are leveled against a version of the two-aspect solution that is diametrically opposed to my own. He believes that the advantage of the two-aspect solution is that the contradiction between freedom and determinism can never be formulated because it is impossible to view an action from these differing standpoints at the same time.<sup>65</sup> Watkins objects that there is no clear reason why the two standpoints are incommensurable and that it is entirely possible to hold them at the same time. I would readily concede this objection, as it essentially bolsters my position. However, if we are in agreement that the agent can hold these standpoints simultaneously, then why does Watkins think that the two-aspect view is committed to the claim that we cannot hold the two standpoints at the same time?

He argues that if there is only one reality, then there would be no way of avoiding the contradiction that results from predicating freedom and determinism of one and the same entity.<sup>66</sup> Again, I would argue that this is not the understanding of the two-world solution that I am advocating. I would assent to the claim that there is only one reality—the empirical world. This does not mean, however, that we must ascribe

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<sup>65</sup>Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality*, 320.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 322-323.

freedom and determinism to the empirical self. Rather, there are two standpoints from which we can evaluate the one reality. First, it can be considered *qua* empirical reality, and the self is causally determined when seen from this perspective. Second, there are the transcendental conditions which make the empirical phenomenon possible. The noumenal self, which is independent of time and causality, is just such a condition. Thus, there is still no contradiction. It is not as if one and the same self is free and determined in the same respect at the same time. The two-aspect view allows us to understand the different respects in which the self is free and determined.

Watkins also objects that the two-aspect view gives rise to questions about whether both standpoints can be true at the same time or if one of them must be illusory.<sup>67</sup> Earlier, for textual reasons, I rejected the possibility that one cause is real, while the other is illusory. Thus, I would extend this reply to this objection. I see no reason why it should be impossible for both standpoints to be true. Although I believe that we can legitimately ascribe existence only to the empirical self, we can still make truthful claims about the noumenal self, as long as these claims are understood as transcendental conditions of the empirical. This way, the noumenon can continue to serve as a legitimate referent, even though it is not one that obtains as an object in the empirical world. If the empirical self is temporal and the noumenal self, which is a condition of its possibility, is atemporal, then the self (understood empirically) is causally necessitated, while the noumenal self, as a transcendental condition of the empirical, is not. Thus, we cannot legitimately ask whether or not an agent is *really* free, unless it is clear which perspective of the self is being considered.

This is also the objection that Watkins raises in response to Hudson. Watkins argues that Hudson does not adequately explain the relationship between free action

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

descriptions and natural event descriptions.<sup>68</sup> Watkins says that if the descriptions are truly incompatible, then it becomes difficult to explain “how Hudson can maintain his version of the double-aspect interpretation of transcendental idealism (according to which both free action and natural event descriptions are true).”<sup>69</sup> This objection is essentially a reformulation of the objection given earlier. How can the incompatible positions of the two standpoints both be true? I believe that the objection is predicated on a faulty premise. Watkins argues that if these two incompatible assertions are attributed to a single ontological entity, then a contradiction is unavoidable. This overlooks the important move made by the two-aspect theory, which attributes freedom and necessity to *two different aspects* of one reality.

It seems that much of the difficulty stems from what it is meant by “standpoint.” Watkins cites an article from Dana Nelkin in which she argues that although such discussion seems coherent, the idea of a standpoint is ultimately unintelligible.<sup>70</sup> Nelkin acknowledges that in ordinary discourse, we talk about standpoints all the time. As an example, she talks about an instance in which someone believes  $p$  from her point of view as an American citizen, but she believes *not-p* from the point of view of a religious person.<sup>71</sup> Nelkin argues that this talk can and should be reformulated in such a way that we no longer need to mention standpoints. Nelkin offers three ways of eliminating the idea of standpoints in the context of her example. First, “when she limits her considerations to those concerning the principles of the

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<sup>68</sup>Eric Watkins, review of *Kant's Compatibilism*, by Hud Hudson, *International Studies in Philosophy* 31 (1999), 148.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.* Admittedly, Watkins is not merely objecting to Hudson's two-aspect compatibilism; rather, he is specifically responding to Hudson's extension of Donald Davidson's token-token identity to Kant's compatibilism — a position that Hudson builds from his expansion of Ralf Meerbote's work. While I find Hudson's move interesting, insofar as it employs a modern form of compatibilism to help us understand the two-aspect view of freedom, my position in this paper is not connected with this claim.

<sup>70</sup>Nelkin, “Two Standpoints,” 569.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

United States Constitution, she concludes  $p$ , and when she limits her considerations to those concerning the tenets of her religion, she concludes *not-p*.<sup>72</sup> Nelkin objects that this is not helpful since it does not allow us to infer what decision will be made. Second, “she might be undecided about which set of considerations takes precedence, and so is uncertain about which conclusion to draw.”<sup>73</sup> Again, the same problem of underdetermination would apply. Third, she might hold contradictory beliefs, and Nelkin argues that this can be explained without recourse to discussion of standpoints. Strangely, Nelkin admits that the last alternative is plausible only if another explanation can be found, yet she offers no such explanation.

I believe that this project of reducing talk about standpoints to other terms is neither desirable nor successful. I do not think that Nelkin’s first two alternatives give us any reason to dismiss the idea of standpoints, as long as we are comfortable with the idea that no decision can be inferred regarding which one is the *real* standpoint. This is not a problem for Kant’s view of freedom, since both descriptions must be true. Furthermore, I see no simple way of removing standpoints from the third alternative. If someone is committed to two contradictory beliefs, then this is best explained by the qualification that the beliefs are held from different standpoints.

Perhaps the issue can be better understood by looking at a simpler example of differing standpoints. An object like a spoon is seen as concave from one standpoint, and it is convex from another. If we were to look at the profile of the spoon, we could see that it is both concave and convex, depending on which standpoint the observer adopts. Transcendental idealism provides the resources that allow us to see just such a profile of the self. The self is seen as free from one standpoint, while it is seen as determined from the other. In this example, there is no simple way of

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

reducing the relevance of the observer's standpoint. Thus, there is a clear answer to Watkins' question as to how both standpoints can have true beliefs at the same time. Transcendental idealism compels us to accept the veracity of both claims.

Nevertheless, Nelkin argues that the idea of standpoints faces theoretical challenges even if it is true that we hold beliefs from certain standpoints.<sup>74</sup> She raises two main objections. First, she argues that there are no clear criteria that allow us to sort various beliefs according to the standpoint from which they are believed. Second, she claims that if such criteria were found, this would not ultimately resolve the irrationality involved in believing two contradictory propositions. Nelkin's objections, however, are predicated on a different interpretation of what kind of standpoints are at stake. Nelkin grounds her analysis of standpoints on Christine Korsgaard's distinction between the deliberative standpoint, which we adopt when making practical decisions, and the metaphysical standpoint, which we use when scientifically examining empirical events.<sup>75</sup> I argue that Nelkin's objections can be answered if the issue is shifted from these standpoints to the two epistemological standpoints that I have discussed.

Korsgaard argues that we must consider ourselves as free when we are engaged in practical deliberation of moral issues, while we see that we are determined when we consider ourselves from a metaphysical perspective.<sup>76</sup> Because practical considerations are often intertwined with empirical ones, Nelkin argues that in many instances, we are unable to distinguish between the two.<sup>77</sup> She then argues that even if the distinction could be clearly articulated, that it would still be irrational to believe

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<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 570.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 567-568.

<sup>76</sup>Christine Korsgaard, "Morality as Freedom" in Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Kant's Practical Philosophy Reconsidered: Papers Presented at the Seventh Jerusalem Philosophical Encounter* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1986), 37-38.

<sup>77</sup>Nelkin, "Two Standpoints," 570.

that we are free when making practical deliberations, while denying this freedom when undertaking a metaphysical inquiry.<sup>78</sup> While Korsgaard is by no means wrong to underscore Kant's claim that we must assume that we are free when we make moral decisions, the importance of the noumenal standpoint should not be restricted to his practical philosophy. The third antinomy examines the issue merely in its theoretical, metaphysical context. Thus, Nelkin's focus is overly restrictive. In the third antinomy, Kant is not arguing that we should assume that we are free for moral reasons, while rejecting freedom metaphysically. On the contrary, he is showing that freedom is theoretically compatible with determinism because he believes that freedom can serve as a practical postulate only after this possibility has been shown in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Nelkin is right that it would be irrational to assume that we are free *only* in the context of moral deliberation. Kant would be making a thoroughly dubious move if he argued that we should falsely assume that we are free when evaluating practical concerns, while simultaneously rejecting this freedom for metaphysical reasons. The deliberative standpoint, however, is not the only standpoint from which we must view ourselves as transcendently free. Kant argues that transcendental freedom must be a *metaphysically* tenable position. When undergoing practical deliberation, we can legitimately assume that we are free only because this freedom can be made consistent with the natural, causal necessity that accompanies empirical observation. This mitigates the irrationality that Nelkin ascribes to the two-standpoint view.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

Given the vast importance of transcendental freedom in Kant's philosophy, the reader is compelled to find an interpretative approach that can support this view.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

As Hudson argues, the two-world view makes it impossible to understand how we can simultaneously understand an action as both free and determined. Thus, the two-aspect view has an important theoretical advantage over the two-world view. Watkins' objections against the two-aspect view attack what I believe to be a weaker, textually unfaithful version of the two-aspect theory. Additionally, in contrast to Nelkin, I argue that the idea of a standpoint is not reducible and that without it we cannot understand how it is possible to hold two true beliefs that would otherwise be contradictory. Because the objections to the two-world view are more formidable than the objections to the two-aspect view, we have good reason to reject the two-world view in favor of the two-aspect view. If we endorse the two-world view, which stands on a shaky theoretical foundation, then Kant's practical philosophy, insofar as it requires transcendental freedom, would be doomed to failure.



#### 4. FREEDOM IN THE CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT: BRIDGING THE GAP FROM NATURE TO FREEDOM

In the Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant articulates the need to bridge the “incalculable gulf fixed between the domain of the concept of nature, as the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, as the supersensible” (5:175-176).<sup>79</sup> Nature grounds theoretical cognition, which is legislated by the faculty of the understanding, and freedom grounds practical concepts, which are governed by reason (5:176). Kant claims that even though freedom and nature are governed by different laws, there must be some unity between them so that freedom can realize its ends in the sensible realm of nature. Kant says that one aim of the third *Critique* is to demonstrate how the faculty of judgment can serve as the intermediary between these two concepts. In the service of this aim, he argues that the purposiveness of nature, which emerges as a crucial part of the connection between nature and freedom, has its origin in the reflecting power of judgment (5:181).

This purposiveness allows for the possibility of a harmony between natural laws and the ends given to nature by freedom. This harmony, however, is not equivalent to the compatibility of freedom and causal necessity, which was already worked out in the third antimony of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Rather than describing the different perspectives from which we can view ourselves as free and determined, the third *Critique* describes how freedom and nature are unified into a systematic whole. This unification is made possible by teleological judgments of nature, which allow us to conceive of it as purposive. The highest good, which yields a direct proportioning of virtue and happiness, is an end that is set by freedom, but it cannot be realized in the sensible world unless nature is purposive in such a way that this unity is possible.

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<sup>79</sup>All translations of the *Critique of Judgment* are taken from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. by Paul Guyer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Accordingly, the purposiveness of nature is conducive for producing a rational hope for the highest good. Kant asserts this connection in his argument for the final end of nature.

In Part Two of the *Critique of Judgment*, where Kant discusses teleological judgment, he begins by examining the purposiveness that we perceive in individual objects in nature (e.g., birds, rivers, and trees). In the appendix to the teleology section, Kant says that these considerations, when extended to the whole of nature, give rise to the concept of the ultimate and final ends of nature.<sup>80</sup> Not only are individual objects seen as purposive, but nature as a whole must also have an end. Because every sensible object of nature is conditioned, the final end, which must be unconditioned, necessarily lies outside of the system of nature (5:435).

Kant claims that the final end has nothing other than itself as the condition of its possibility (5:434). The human being, insofar as it is considered as a thing in itself, is the only being that can determine its own unconditioned ends. Thus, Kant concludes that the human being must serve as the final end of nature. He writes:

The being of this sort is the human being, though considered as noumenon: the only natural being in which we can nevertheless cognize, on the basis of its own constitution, a supersensible faculty (freedom) and even the law of the causality together with the object that it can set for itself the highest end (the highest good in the world) ... which therefore makes him alone capable of being a final end, to which the whole of nature is teleologically subordinated. (5:435-436).

The human being is given this privileged status because it is the only natural creature that has been endowed with the supersensible faculty of freedom. It is interesting to note that freedom, whose ostensible conflict with nature is the impetus behind the third *Critique*, is also the culmination of the teleological structure of nature.

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<sup>80</sup>Kant makes a distinction between the **ultimate** end (*letzter Zweck*) of nature, which is human happiness and culture, and the **final** end (*Endzweck*), which is the realization of the highest good in the world, as an end that human freedom sets for itself (5:426-436).

In this section, I argue that the main aim of the third *Critique* is to provide an account of judgment that grounds the teleological structure of nature such that it is receptive to the ends of freedom. Furthermore, I claim that freedom plays two important functions in this text. First, because its ends must be realized in nature, freedom is a large part of the motivation behind Kant's teleological account of nature. Second, freedom is the reason that the human being is given the privileged status as the final end of nature. The highest good, which Kant explicates in the second *Critique*, is the highest end that freedom can set for itself, and nature must be structured in such a way that it can permit the actualization of this end. I argue that Kant's practical philosophy is the driving force behind the *Critique of Judgment* and that the concept of freedom should be seen as the keystone of the entire text.

#### 4.1 The Incalculable Gulf between Nature and Freedom

In the introductions to both the first and second edition of the third *Critique* Kant discusses the gap that exists between nature and freedom (5:175-6 and 20:202). The *Critique of Pure Reason* describes the concept of nature, which grounds all theoretical cognition according to the faculty of the understanding. Insofar as an object is considered empirically, it is subject to the categories of the understanding, which attribute causal necessity to all phenomena. The *Critique of Practical Reason* treats the issue of freedom, which grounds all practical considerations in the faculty of reason. Because practical precepts are determined by supersensible freedom, they are not subject to the causal necessity of nature. Nevertheless, if freedom is to be given any objective efficacy in the sensible world, then the ends that it determines (through the moral law) must be realizable in nature. The *Critique of Judgment* is meant to demonstrate how the faculty of judgment can bridge this gap that is created by the first two *Critiques*.

Near the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant famously posed the three questions that exhaust the interests of reason. He asked, “1. What can I know? 2. What should I do? 3. What may I hope?” (A805/B833). The first question is answered in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and the second is answered the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The connection of the third question to the *Critique of Judgment*, however, is somewhat more ambiguous. The connection between them ultimately lies in Kant’s conception of the highest good. Kant says that the highest good results in a direct proportioning of happiness and virtue and thus reformulates the third question to say, “If I do what I should, what may I then hope?” (A805/B833). Although virtuous action makes one worthy of happiness, there is no guarantee that it will yield actual happiness. Kant believes that “happiness must be conceived of as realizable in nature, thus as requiring a unity of the systems of nature and freedom.”<sup>81</sup> It is the practical philosophy, particularly the highest good, which motivates the need to bridge the gap between nature and freedom. When Kant first raises the issue of the “incalculable gap,” he notes that it cannot be bridged by theoretical reason; rather, as Paul Guyer puts it, the gap “can and must be bridged by the practical use of freedom.”<sup>82</sup>

If a practical consideration (viz., freedom) closes the gap, then why must the *Critique of Judgment* take up the task of uniting freedom and nature? Kant writes:

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. (5:196)

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<sup>81</sup>Paul Guyer, *Kant’s System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 282.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 294.

The gap between nature and freedom can only be bridged through the purposiveness of nature. If the laws of nature are the causes of our inclinations, pleasure, and pain, then there is no assurance that these mechanistic laws have any connection with the laws of freedom (i.e., the moral law). This means that without a connection between nature and freedom, the virtuous have no reason to hope for happiness in the sensible realm of nature.

There is an additional interest in establishing the unity of nature and freedom. Without this unity, certain claims of the moral philosophy would no longer be tenable. For example, in the second *Critique*, Kant discusses the feeling of pleasure that comes from overpowering one's inclinations in conformity with the moral law, which must be the product of both nature and freedom (5:161). Pleasure is typically nothing more than a natural phenomenon, but if pleasure can be caused by the moral exercise of freedom, then there must be an intersection between nature and freedom. Kant seeks to establish the purposiveness of nature, which will ultimately connect nature and freedom by means of its final end.

The deduction of this purposiveness, however, lies outside the scope of both practical and theoretical reason. Theoretical reason is restricted to an account of nature within the limits of the understanding, which merely describes the conditions that give rise to our experience of nature. Because theoretical reason remains agnostic about the existence of God and the reality of freedom, the possibility of the highest good is grounded only by the presuppositions espoused by practical reason. Thus, Kant postulates God's existence and the immortality of the soul in the second *Critique*. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the highest good can only be achieved by means of these postulates. The purposiveness of nature, which also sustains the possibility of the highest good in the world, goes beyond the claims of practical and theoretical reason; it must find its a priori principle in another faculty. Hence it

is the power of judgment that serves as the ground for an a priori concept of the purposiveness of nature—a concept that lies outside the scope of both theoretical and practical reason.

This means, however, that the gap between nature and freedom, which is to be bridged by the purposive account of nature, must be importantly distinct from the related issues in the first two *Critiques*. Kant already demonstrated the possible compatibility of freedom and nature in the third antinomy of the first *Critique*, and he showed the objective reality of freedom from the practical point of view in the second *Critique*. What gap remains, then, between freedom and nature? Paul Guyer and Michael Rohlf argue that the gap must be between our natural inclination to pursue happiness and our moral sensibilities, which often compel us to act against the interests of such inclinations.<sup>83</sup> According to Guyer and Rohlf, the aim of the *Critique of Judgment* is to give an account of nature that will foster the moral disposition of human beings, who are subject to the laws of both nature and freedom.

Because we are torn between our natural inclinations and our obligations to the moral law, Rohlf argues that Kant is trying to find an a priori principle of judgment that connects happiness to moral dispositions. Rohlf writes:

Kant needed to write a third *Critique* because he realized that he needs an a priori – that is to say, a universal and necessary – principle for the human capacity to feel pleasure and displeasure in order to explain how it is possible for each of us to develop a moral disposition.<sup>84</sup>

Rohlf argues that an immoral agent has no reason to develop a moral disposition unless she has cause to believe that her virtue will be rewarded with happiness, as the highest good seems to promise. Although Rohlf's account offers a viable theory

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<sup>83</sup>See Michael Rohlf. "The Transition from Nature to Freedom in Kant's Third Critique," *Kant-Studien* 99 (2008), 344. See also Paul Guyer. *Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 27-33.

<sup>84</sup>Rohlf, "Nature to Freedom," 359.

that connects the third *Critique* to Kant's moral philosophy, there are alternative possibilities which, unlike Rohlf's do not risk slipping into moral theory that requires contingent assumptions about psychology.

For instance, Kant might wish to show the possibility of the highest good simply so that it is rational to hope for it. If nature was incapable of effecting the highest good, then we would have no reason to hope for its realization, but this does not entail that we should develop a moral disposition because we hope that happiness will reward our virtue. On the contrary, Kant goes to great lengths to offer a moral theory that relies in no way upon such empirical, contingent claims about psychology.

The question may arise, however, as to whether or not the possibility of the highest good is in need of further support, since it was already posited in the second *Critique*. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant says that "the highest good in the world is possible only insofar as a supreme cause of nature having a causality in keeping with the moral disposition is assumed" (5:125). This is why Kant claims that God is a necessary postulate that is required for the possibility of the highest good. However, in his general remark on the postulates of practical reason, Kant qualifies the scope of the postulates. Freedom, the immortality of the soul, and God's existence are only objectively valid with respect to *practical considerations* (5:133). Arguably, the third *Critique* is an attempt to demonstrate the possibility of the highest good without reference to postulates which are only justified within the confines of practical reason.

The *Critique of Judgment* seeks to extend the claims of practical reason into a new domain. While Kant does not wish to argue that the postulates of practical reason should be granted objective validity by theoretical reason, he does want to give an account of nature that solidifies the claims he makes about our prospects for hope. Kant discusses the inculcation of moral values in society. He looks at

moral education of children as a salient example. While the first task is showing the child what it means to have an action conform to the moral law, the second task is demonstrating the importance of performing the action “for the sake of the moral law” (5:159). It is here, at the close of the second *Critique* that Kant begins sketch the need for the third *Critique*. He claims that the pupil can achieve this second goal only when his “attention is fixed on the consciousness of his freedom” (5:160). This is crucial for moral development, because the worthiness of happiness that is achieved through virtue, intersects with actual happiness, when “the duty of the law, through the positive worth that observance of it lets us feel, finds easier access through the respect for ourselves in the consciousness of our own freedom” (5:161). The dignity and respect that we garner for ourselves is achieved through the moral exercise of our freedom. Nevertheless, this exercise of reason is limited to the practical domain. Thus, the incalculable gap between freedom and nature remains. Nature must be structured such that the moral employment of freedom and the development of virtue yield actual happiness in the sensible world. This, as was noted earlier, requires a purposive account of nature.<sup>85</sup>

## 4.2 The Teleological Concept of Nature

Kant claims that judgment is divided into two distinct powers, both of which are bound up with the idea of purposiveness. The aesthetic power of judgment is exercised in the domain of the formal, subjective purposiveness, which gives rise to our feelings of pleasure and displeasure. The teleological power of reflective judgment is the faculty that judges the real, objective purposiveness of nature (5:193). It is

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<sup>85</sup>In the Doctrine of Method in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant acknowledges the role of judgment in this process. It was not until the time of the publication of the second *Critique*, however, that Kant discovered the a priori principle that drove him to write the third *Critique*, which he had originally titled the “Critique of Taste.” See John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 2-8.



on the basis of this distinction that Kant divides the third *Critique* into its two parts. Part One, which is restricted to the aesthetic power of judgment, deals with our experience of the beautiful and the sublime. Part Two, which focuses on the teleological power of judgment, turns our attention to the objective purposiveness of nature. It is primarily in Part Two that Kant shows how this objective purposiveness of nature establishes the connection between nature and freedom via the highest good.<sup>86</sup>

Kant begins Part Two by introducing a distinction between relative and internal purposiveness (5:366). Nature exhibits relative purposiveness when it produces something that is useful for human beings or advantageous for other creatures (5:367). More importantly, however, an organism demonstrates internal purposiveness, as a natural end, on the condition that it is “the cause and effect of itself” (5:371). Kant takes the example of a tree, which meets three important conditions that demonstrate its existence as a natural end. First, a tree is structured in such a way that it generates other trees, propagating its own species. Thus, its reproductive function is self-generating insofar as it preserves its kind. Second, the tree contains the seeds of its own growth. All of its nutritional, photosynthetic mechanisms are internal to its structure and have nothing other than the tree itself as its own end in this regard. Third, the parts of the tree are reciprocally dependent on each other. The connec-

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<sup>86</sup>Although it lies outside the scope of this paper, there is an interesting relationship between his moral philosophy and Part One of the Third *Critique*. In particular, Kant discusses the connection between the sublime and our moral sensibilities (5:268-269). For an excellent discussion of this connection, see Robert R. Clewis, *The Kantian Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 126-146. Though I will not make the argument here, I would contend that the real importance of the beautiful and the sublime is found in their capacity to awaken in us a certain moral sensibility. Kant seems to explicitly affirm this contention. At the end of Part One, Kant says that “taste is at bottom a faculty for the judging of the sensible rendering of moral ideas” (5:356). Additionally, Kant’s *Analytic of the Beautiful* provides an interesting account of the harmony between the freedom of the imagination and the lawfulness of the understanding. Although this seems less relevant for the claims concerning the highest good, it is yet another way in which freedom and lawfulness can be unified.

tion between the roots and leaves, for example, demonstrates its constitution as an organism (i.e., the parts are dependent on the whole and vice versa). The tree is its own cause and effect. The causal mechanisms that produce the leaves are internal to the organism, but the *telos* of the leaves is the sustenance of the tree. The leaves depend on the tree for their existence, but the tree must in turn depend on the leaves for its existence. Kant concludes that these observations, although they deal with natural phenomena, are strictly within the domain of the faculty of judgment. He writes:

The concept of a thing as in itself a natural end is therefore not a constitutive concept of the understanding or of reason, but it can still be a regulative concept for the reflecting power of judgment, for guiding research in accordance with a remote analogy with our own causality in accordance with ends. (5:375)

The judgment of organisms as natural ends is an integral part of the connection between freedom and nature. In Section III, I discuss how this kind of judgment is writ large onto the whole of nature, which gives rise to the concept of the final end of nature.

The teleological structure of organisms leads Kant to the conception of an intelligent author of nature. He writes:

We cannot form any concept at all of the possibility of such a world except by conceiving of such an intentionally acting supreme cause. Objectively, therefore, we cannot establish the proposition that there is an intelligent original being; we can establish it only subjectively for the use of our power of judgment in its reflection upon the ends in nature, which cannot be conceived in accordance with any other principle than that of an intentional causality of a highest cause. (5:399)

Although our faculty of judgment yields a purposive conception of nature, this does not prove the objective reality of God. Rather, the supposition of God's existence is

a subjectively necessary condition of the purposiveness of nature. As Guyer puts it, “we see that the peculiar complexity of individual organisms makes it necessary for us to conceive of them as if they were products of intelligent design.”<sup>87</sup> This conception of an intelligent author of organisms is later extended to the whole of nature — a crucial move that promotes nature’s receptivity to the highest good. Guyer writes:

The attempt to comprehend individual organisms in nature also makes it natural for us to conceive of nature as a whole as a system that is designed by an intelligent author, and must therefore have or be compatible with a final end.<sup>88</sup>

Since the first *Critique* demonstrated the possibility of freedom and God’s existence and the second *Critique* proved their objective validity from the perspective of practical reason, it is left to the third *Critique* to show how these ideas can be unified in nature’s purposiveness, which ultimately leads to the final end of nature.

### 4.3 The Final End of Nature

In the “Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment,” Kant argues for the existence of the final end of nature. He says that the claim of natural ends, which was demonstrated in his explanation of natural organisms, rests upon the possibility of a “final end (scopus) of nature, which requires the relation of nature to something supersensible, which far exceeds all of our teleological cognition of nature; for the end of the existence of nature itself must be sought beyond nature” (5:378). The teleological power of judgment is restricted to the domain of nature, which cannot contain anything supersensible. This provides the grounds for a possible intersection between the sensible and the supersensible. Nature, which is sensible, must find its final end outside of nature, in the supersensible. Freedom is, of course, the only

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<sup>87</sup>Guyer, *Nature and Freedom*, 294.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 297.

supersensible faculty given to any natural creature, which can act as the bridge between the sensible and supersensible.

Before demonstrating the existence of a final end (*Endzweck*), Kant first argues that the human being is also the ultimate end (*letzter Zweck*) of nature. The ultimate ends of nature are human happiness and culture (5:429). Kant acknowledges that the human being, as a natural creature, is by no means favored by nature. The destructive natural forces of hunger, floods, cold, attacks by animals, and disease are more than enough to demonstrate this fact. Thus, the sense in which man's happiness is the ultimate end of nature must be distinguished from this natural idea of happiness. Kant writes:

As the sole being on earth who has reason, and thus a capacity to set voluntary ends for himself, he [the human being] is certainly the titular lord of nature, and, if nature is regarded as a teleological system, then it is his vocation to be the ultimate end of nature; but always conditionally, that is, subject to the condition that he has the understanding and the will to give to nature and to himself a relation to an end that can be sufficient for itself independently of nature, which can thus be a final end, which, however, must not be sought in nature at all. (5:431)

Although man is given no natural privileges compared to other animals, his privilege is the possession of freedom, which allows him to appropriate nature for his own ends. In particular, the human being is able to produce its own unconditioned ends, completely independent from the laws of nature, and actualize these ends in nature. It is here that the supersensible freedom and sensible nature intersect. The human being is sensible insofar as she is an empirical object of nature, but she is supersensible insofar as she is transcendently free.

Kant says that “a **final end** is that end which needs no other as the condition of its possibility” (5:434). There is, of course, no natural end, which does not in turn depend on something else in nature as the condition of its possibility. Therefore,

Kant argues that the final end must lie outside of nature. The mere existence of natural ends, which was demonstrated in Kant's account of organisms, is not sufficient for a determination of a final end of nature. This idea of natural ends was supplemented by the concept of an intelligent author, who guides the whole of nature as an intentionally acting cause, which compels us to continue our teleological questioning until the final end is discovered (5:434). Kant writes:

Now if the things in the world, as dependent beings as far as their existence is concerned, need a supreme cause acting in accordance with ends, then the human being is the final end of creation; for without him the chain of ends subordinated to one another would not be completely grounded; and only in the human being, although in him only as a subject of morality, is unconditional legislation with regards to ends to be found. (5:435-436)

The whole of nature, must find the condition of its possibility in a supreme cause that acts in accordance with ends. The human being sets ends for itself by means of maxims, the determination of which is not dependent on any empirical condition. This unconditioned, transcendental freedom, is the only reason that the human being can be simultaneously both sensible and supersensible. It is interesting to note Kant's claim that the human being can serve as the final end of nature only in his capacity as a moral subject. As an object of the sensible world, the human being is not unlike other animals, but the possession of reason (and thus freedom) elevate mankind above the natural world.

This final end of nature, to which the whole of nature is subordinated, is the motivation behind Kant's teleology. Guyer writes, "morality requires us to take a view of nature as well as reason as purposive, so the possibilities of the scientific view of nature and the necessities of the moral view of nature ultimately coincide."<sup>89</sup> Morality, in its exercise of freedom, forges the bridge between the two contrasting

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<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 298-299.

views of nature. Kant argues that a world that has no rational beings would be a world without value (4:449). Nature only has value insofar as its ultimate purpose is to provide a world in which moral agents can realize their unconditioned ends. Kant emphasizes the point again:

The moral law, as the formal rational condition on the use of our freedom, obligates us by itself alone, without depending on any sort of end as a material condition; yet it also determines for us, and indeed does so a priori, a final end, to strive after which it makes obligatory for us, and this is the highest good in the world possible through freedom. (5:450)

The heavy focus that Kant places on morality here at the end of the *Critique of Judgment* is sometimes referred to as the “Ethical Turn.”<sup>90</sup> This term, however, is dangerously misleading. While it is true that the appendix to Part Two is the most thorough exposition of this idea, these considerations were the core issue throughout the entire text. The moral relevance of his teleology is by no means “tacked on” to the end of the account; rather, man’s purpose in nature “had been at stake all along in the Third *Critique*.”<sup>91</sup> Zammito is exactly right in saying that “the Third *Critique* finds its decisive concerns neither in questions of beauty nor in questions of empirical biology but rather in the ultimate questions of the place of man in the order of the world—his freedom and his destiny.”<sup>92</sup>

Morality and freedom caused the problems that created the need for the third *Critique*, but at the same time, they are a crucial part of the solution. The gap could only be bridged by a purposive account of nature so that highest good would be seen as a rational aspiration. In the second *Critique* the highest good requires the practical postulates that Kant gives in the Dialectic, but the legitimacy of these postulates is, of course, restricted to practical reason. Thus, it is the third *Critique*,

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<sup>90</sup>Zammito, *Genesis*, 263.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

through its purposive account of nature, that shows how it is rational to hope for the equal proportioning of virtue and happiness even outside the confines of practical reason.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

The gulf between nature and freedom, which motivates the third *Critique*, must be seen as a question that remained unanswered by the first two *Critiques*. The first *Critique* is always agnostic about freedom, as the third antinomy merely makes room for the possibility of freedom. In the second *Critique*, Kant proves the objective reality of freedom only insofar as it was necessitated by practical reason. But the highest good, because it was only possible through various postulates, is still severed from the sensible world. Thus, nature and freedom must be united in order to realize the ends of the highest good. Without this unity, there would be no reason to think that nature will ever place virtue and happiness in equal proportion.

This unity can only be achieved through a teleological account of nature that provides a privileged position to human beings because of their faculty of freedom. It is this supersensible power that makes the human being eligible for its status as the final end of nature. Thus, freedom both creates and bridges the gap that the third *Critique* sought to address.

Without freedom, nature would be nothing more than a collection of empirically conditioned ends, blindly following the laws that causally necessitate their existence. The faculty of reflective judgment gives rise to a different story — one in which nature appears as the product of an intelligent author, who has structured it in such a way that the moral ends of freedom can be realized in the sensible world. Here lies the answer to Kant's third question. We may hope that the unity of nature and freedom will be receptive to the realization of the highest aim of human existence,

namely, the highest good in the world.



## 5. CONCLUSION

I believe that it would be impossible to overstate the importance of the concept of freedom in Kant's philosophy. Unsurprisingly, commentators have not failed to take notice of the significance of this concept. Allison writes, "There can be little doubt regarding the centrality of the concept of freedom in Kant's 'critical' philosophy... it is no exaggeration to claim that, at bottom, Kant's critical philosophy is a philosophy of freedom."<sup>93</sup> I have tried to highlight some of the important roles that freedom plays in Kant's three *Critiques*.

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant repeatedly emphasizes the importance of freedom for his moral philosophy. I concur with Allison that freedom is a crucial premise in the connection between the practical law and the moral law. As Aune points out, this connection was not sufficiently established in the *Groundwork*. Without transcendental freedom, it would be impossible to act on a maxim purely because of its conformity with universal law.

The third antinomy of the *Critique of Pure Reason* laid the essential foundation for the claims of the moral philosophy. Although Kant insists that speculative reason (unlike practical reason) must remain agnostic about freedom, he nevertheless uses the third antinomy to show that freedom is not impossible. On the contrary, he argues that transcendental idealism makes it possible for freedom to be compatible with causal necessity. I have argued that we must understand the division between noumena and phenomena to be an epistemological one if the claims of the third antinomy are to be viable at all.

The third *Critique* bridges the gap between the first two *Critiques*. Through his teleological account of nature, Kant shows how reflective judgment gives rise to an understanding of the world such that is not indifferent to the ends of freedom.

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<sup>93</sup>Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 1.

Rather, nature is teleologically subordinated to the moral use of human freedom. Thus, Kant concludes that nature creates the possibility for the realization of the highest good in the world.

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