

THE RELATIONSHIP OF KANT'S
METAPHYSICAL AND MORAL GOD

THE RELATIONSHIP
OF THE IDEA OF GOD
AND THE POSTULATE OF GOD
IN KANT

By

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PREFACE

This thesis is the product of a year's research at the Friedrich Alexander Universität Erlangen - Nürnberg, made possible by an exchange scholarship granted by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, to whom I am most grateful. Somehow, contact with German thinking at a German university creates the right atmosphere for the study of one of Germany's greatest philosophers.

I wish to express my thanks to my thesis supervisor at McMaster University, Miss M. Hahn, who first led me to consider a treatment of Kant for my thesis in view of my interest in the Philosophy of Religion. The suggestion at first scared me, but in carrying it out, I found it very challenging and satisfying. I wish to thank Miss Hahn for her help, guidance and useful criticism during the writing of my thesis .

I want to thank Herrn Prof. Dr. H. Zeltner of the Department of Philosophy of the University at Erlangen for the help given during discussions with him and in his lectures on Kant.

I also wish to express my thanks to my wife for her constant encouragement and also for her help in typing the manuscripts.

In order to facilitate the reading of the thesis, reference to direct quotes from Kant's writings will be given immediately after the quote.

In referring to the Critique of Pure Reason I am following the traditional method, the first edition being referred to as "A", and the second as "B". I will quote from N.K. Smith's translation. A quote from Kant's Critique of Practical Reason will be indicated by the abbreviation "Pr.R." referring to the translation by L.W. Beck. "M.F." is the abbreviation I will use to refer to Kant's Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics translated by T.K. Abbott. "C.J." will refer to Kant's Critique of Judgement translated by J.H. Bernard. "R" is the abbreviation for Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone translated by T.M. Greene and H.H. Hudson.

Erlangen,
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E.J.T.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to analyse the theoretical Idea of God as described in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and the practical Postulate of God as given in Kant's Critique of Practical Reason, proving that for Kant, these two concepts of God were in essence, identical.

Lest this be just another thesis where an apparent problem is created, and then easily solved, it might be well to very briefly outline this problem.

For Kant,¹ Ideas have a threefold meaning. First of all, the theory of Ideas forms the basis of the old transcendental metaphysics, which Kant destroys in the "Dialectic" of the Critique of Pure Reason. We shall not be concerning ourselves with this meaning because for Kant, this kind of theoretical objective meaning of Ideas is nonexistent and the result of an illusion.

Secondly, Ideas have meaning as regulative principles of theoretical reason. They are a kind of hypothesis assumed in the interest of extending our scientific knowledge, and giving to this knowledge a systematic unity essential to reason. This proper

1 Adickes, Kant und die Als-Ob Philosophie 77

theoretical use of Ideas is considered in the "Dialectic" of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

Thirdly, these Ideas acquire meaning as Postulates of practical reason. Here they are postulated as conditions of the fulfillment of the highest good, the attainment of which is commanded by the moral law. This practical use of the Ideas is discussed in the "Dialectic" of Kant's Critique of Practical Reason.

We shall be concerned with the last two meanings ascribed to the Idea. The problem is already seen in the fact that the Ideas are called by a new name in their practical use. The Ideas are used very differently in each case. Their nature is very different. Their status differs. In fact, the differences are so numerous, that the most obvious conclusion one comes to is that Kant is speaking of two entirely different concepts. This thesis will disprove the latter conclusion. In analysing these two concepts of God, I wish to prove that in spite of their differences, which will also be elaborated on in my argument, there is an underlying unity.

In the course of my argument, a number of side issues will be clarified at the same time. These are, as it were, the by products of my thesis.

We will come to see Kant's own theory of the nature and use of the concept of God.

We will also defend Kant's genius by showing that

he stays true to his epistemology and does not contradict himself by first proving that God can't be an object of knowledge, and then later reinstating him as knowable.

This is a very common criticism and is beautifully illustrated by the German writer, Heinrich Heine in an essay describing the history of religion and philosophy in Germany.²

After the tragedy [of disproving God] comes the farce. Immanuel Kant, till now, has played the part of an unyielding philosopher; . . . the ruler of the world swims senseless in his blood; there is now no more all-encompassing mercy, no fatherly kindness, no future reward for present privations; the immortality of the soul lies in its last agonies - death rattles and groans - and old Lampe [Kant's servant] stands by with his umbrella under his arm, as a sorrowing spectator, the sweat of anguish and tears running down his face. Then Immanuel Kant takes pity and shows that he is not only a great philosopher but also a good man. He reconsiders and half good-naturedly and half-ironically he says, 'Old Lampe must have a God, since otherwise that poor man cannot be happy - but people ought to be happy on earth - that is claimed by practical reason - Well, for all I care, let practical reason guarantee the existence of God.' In the course of this argument Kant distinguishes between theoretical and practical reason, and with the latter, as with a magic wand, he resurrects the dead body of deism which theoretical reason had killed.

Heine claims that the above may explain Kant's change. Possibly the change only is a result of fear of censorship from Frederick William II, the religiously orthodox ruler of that time. Possibly this was an ex-

2 Heine, Werke, VII, 308 f (my translation)

pression of genuine belief. Possibly he had disproved God theoretically only to show how necessary a belief in God is. Heine writes:³

He may have behaved just as wisely as my friend from Westfallen, who, after he had broken all the lanterns on Grohnderstraße in Göttingen, then gave to us, who were standing there in the dark, a long speech about the practical necessity of lanterns, which he had broken theoretically only to show us that we cannot see without them.

Another illustration of this same interpretation of Kant is a paper where the author makes the absurd comparison of Kant with Luther, claiming that Kant could be considered the philosopher of Protestantism. "Kant, indeed put God out of the front door of pure reason and then let him in the back door of the practical reason."⁴

My thesis will destroy the basic assumption of these illustrations, namely that Kant resurrected a God, the knowledge of whom he has before denied. My thesis will prove that Kant maintained his "agnostic position" in both of his Critiques.

I hope to correct the above misconceptions and misinterpretations of Kant, but these issues will not be considered directly but will be conclusions one could draw from the context of my argument.

³ Heine, Werke, VII 309 (my translation)

⁴ Richards, "Kantian Philosophy and Christian Theology" 355.

I wish to draw attention to a few restrictions of my argument. The main argument is restricted to a consideration of the Critique of Pure Reason and the Critique of Practical Reason. References to Kant's other writings will be made but only for the purpose of clarifying his position in the first two Critiques.

I will not consider Kant's epistemology which is very important for my thesis. For a thesis of this size, a brief summary of this background would be all that would be possible, and since this would be next to useless, I will leave it out entirely. Knowledge of Kant's epistemology is simply assumed.

Although the concept of God is only one of three Ideas, I will restrict myself to this concept only, except for a brief background to Kant's doctrine of Ideas, where all the Ideas will be considered. The Idea of freedom will also be touched on in so far as it is the basis for the Idea of God.

I will not deal with Kant's treatment of the classical arguments for the existence of God as given in the "Dialectic" of the Critique of Pure Reason. I wish rather, to concentrate on Kant's positive doctrine of the concept of God.

Although a brief outline of the moral argument will have to be given, I will not give a detailed analysis

of it nor evaluate it, as this would be a thesis all in itself. Instead, I wish to concentrate on the positive doctrine of the Postulate of God, which is the conclusion of the argument.

From time to time, I will draw attention to topics which are important but not crucial for my thesis, and which will have to be dropped in order to cut down on the length of the thesis.

The question before us throughout this thesis will be; "Does the Idea of God in Kant's first Critique refer to the same concept as the Postulate of God in the second Critique?" In order to argue for the basic identity of these two concepts of God, I will in Chapter II consider how the concept of God arises in both of the Critiques. In outlining the radically different approaches to the concept of God, we will have discovered the problem with which this thesis is concerned. Doesn't the fact that Kant comes up with a concept of God in such a different context in each Critique already prove that Kant had two distinct concepts of God? My thesis aims to prove the contrary.

In Chapter III I will make a detailed comparison and analysis of the use and nature of the Idea and the Postulate of God, arguing that beneath the differences there is an underlying unity.

Chapter IV will give the basic arguments in support of my thesis. I will also answer objections to my thesis and then draw my final conclusions.

II HOW DOES THE CONCEPT OF GOD ARISE?

A The Idea of God

1. What is Reason?

Kant distinguishes between three higher faculties of knowledge. "These are: understanding, judgement, and reason." (B 169) The developement of this distinction is not at all clearly given by Kant. Kant does not hold strictly to this division of the mind into faculties, a claim which I will not prove in this thesis.

I believe there has been much unjust criticism of Kant's doctrine of the faculties of the mind, enhanced by a poor translation of the German text. "Erkenntnisvermögen" and "Erkenntniskräfte" are both usually translated as "faculties of knowledge". These words really mean, "cognitive powers or abilities". The mind performs different functions which Kant isolated in order to give a systematic treatment of knowledge. Without further defending Kant's distinction, I wish to consider the cognitive power of reason.

Reason, like the understanding, "can be employed in a merely formal, that is, logical manner," as well as in a transcendental manner, where it is in "itself

the source of certain concepts and principles". (B 355)
 The logical employment of reason consists of inference.
 "Reason, considered as the faculty of a certain logical
 form of knowledge, is the faculty of inferring i.e.
 judging mediately." (B 386)

This is not immediate inference which Kant assigns
 to the understanding. In an immediate inference the
 conclusion follows directly from one premiss as, e.g.
 'Some men are mortal' follows directly from, 'All men
 are mortal'. (B 360)

In a mediate inference there is a major premiss,
 e.g. 'All men are mortal', as well as a minor premiss,
 e.g. 'All learned beings are men', from which the con-
 clusion follows, e.g. 'All learned beings are mortal'.
 (B360) Kant distinguishes between three kinds of mediate
 inferences; namely, one in which the major premiss is
 hypothetical and one in which the major premiss is dis-
 junctive, and one in which the major premiss is categor-
 ical.

Kant claims that generally, a judgement given to
 us as a conclusion "is set as a problem". (B 361) That
 is, if a judgement is given, we look for two other pre-
 misses from which it would follow as a conclusion. As
 an example, let us look for the two premisses from which
 our former major premiss, 'All men are mortal' would

follow as conclusion. The more general major premiss would now be, 'All animals are mortal'. Then, if we add the minor premiss, 'All men are animals', our conclusion follows.¹ Now we could again set up our 'problem' and look for further premisses from which this new conclusion would follow, - and so on. "If the conditioned is given, a regress in the series of all its conditions is set us as a task." (B 526) In doing this, one can see that we are striving for a certain ultimate premiss from which all else follows. Thus we bring unity to our manifold judgements. "From this we see that in inference, reason endeavors to reduce the varied and manifold knowledge obtained through the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions) and thereby to achieve in it the highest possible unity." (B 361)

"Understanding may be regarded as a faculty which secures the unity of appearances by means of rules, and reason as being the faculty which secures the unity of the rules of understanding under principles." (B 359)²

We have discussed the logical employment of reason where it seeks "to find for the conditioned knowledge, obtained through the understanding, the unconditioned

1 Körner, Kant 108

2 cf. B 362-5, B 672

whereby its unity is brought to completion". (B 364)
 Reason also has a transcendental employment where it itself is the source of concepts and principles. These principles are really based on reason's logical employment. The above logical maxim was merely a piece of logical advice telling us what to do if we want to give systematic unity to our judgements. It tells us that to accomplish this end, we must for every condition, look for a further condition, continuing this procedure in search for an ultimate condition which is the unconditioned. "It is important to note that this useful maxim does not imply that there is any ultimate, unconditioned condition."³

However, the supreme transcendental principle claims that there is an unconditioned. It claims there is a last member in the series of premisses. "But this logical maxim can only become a principle of pure reason through our assuming that if the conditioned is given, the whole series of conditions, subordinated to one another - a series which is therefore itself unconditioned - is likewise given, that is, is contained in the object and its connection." (B 364) Thus for each kind of

sylogistic inference we will reach an unconditioned.

With each unconditioned, Kant identifies one transcendental Idea.

It can be shown how reason simply by the synthetic employment of that very function of which it makes use in categorical syllogisms is necessarily brought to the concept of the absolute unity of the thinking subject, how the logical procedure used in hypothetical syllogisms leads to the Idea of the completely unconditioned in a series of given conditions, and finally how the mere form of the disjunctive syllogism must necessarily involve the highest concept of reason, that of a being of all beings. (B 392f)⁴

Pure reason thus furnishes the Idea for a transcendental doctrine of the soul, for a transcendental science of the world and finally for a transcendental knowledge of God. (B 391f)

We will concern ourselves with the last of these Ideas.

It should be pointed out that these Ideas are really formed from the categories. Kant has proved that the basic concepts for thinking are the categories and these must be used whether or not they apply to experience.

We must recognize that pure and transcendental concepts can issue only from the understanding. Reason does not generate any concept. The most it can do is to free a concept of understanding from the unavoidable limitations of possible experience and so to endeavor to extend it beyond the limits of the empirical. (B 435)

The transcendental Ideas are thus . . . simply categories extended to the unconditioned. (B 436)

For a given conditioned, reason demands on the side of the conditions . . . absolute totality, and in so doing converts the category into a transcendental Idea. (B 436)⁵

4 cf. B 379

5 cf. B 379, B 377

Here it might be well to briefly ask why reason comes with these Ideas. Why does it proceed to the unconditioned? Kant very simply and clearly states that this is simply a natural drive of reason. "Transcendental Ideas are just as natural to it [reason] as the categories are to understanding." (B 670) Reason begins with necessary principles and conditions of experience, namely the categories. "Rising with their aid (since it is determined to this by its own nature) to ever higher, ever more remote conditions, it soon becomes aware that in this way . . . its work must always remain incomplete; and it therefore finds itself compelled to resort to principles which overstep all possible empirical employment." (A, viif) Thus Kant gives a very subjective explanation for the "why" of this drive to the unconditioned. What this entails, in terms of the necessity of the Idea of God, we shall consider later.

2. The Illusion of Ideas

What is an Idea? Kant gives us a concise definition of such a transcendental concept of reason. It is "the concept of the totality of the conditions for any given conditioned". (B 379) This totality of conditions is only made possible by the unconditioned. This totality is always itself unconditioned. Thus, "a pure concept of reason . . . is the concept of the unconditioned

conceived as containing a ground of the synthesis of the conditioned". (B 379) "They are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding." (B 384)

In another passage where Kant also seems to be giving a definition of an Idea, he says something radically different. "I understand by Idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense experience." (B 383) Ideas are not derived from experience, as the *aposteriori* concepts are. They are not even applicable to experience in terms of being conditions of experience as the categories are. "But Ideas are even further removed from objective reality than are categories, for no appearance can be found in which they can be represented in concreto." (B 595) Ideas are neither applicable to nor abstracted from experience. Therefore, they have no objective reality.

The whole purpose of the "Dialectic" is to show that these Ideas cannot be objects of knowledge. "Knowledge involves two factors; first, the concept, through which an object in general is thought (the category) and secondly, the intuition, through which it is given." (B 146) We can think a concept without an intuition,

but we can have no knowledge of it. "The only intuition possible to us is sensible." (B 146) Thus, knowledge can only be had of objects of sense experience. Therefore, we cannot have knowledge of Ideas which transcend experience. One of the main conclusions of the "Analytic" is to show that knowledge is limited to what is given in experience. Kant also proves that synthetic apriori knowledge of the categories is possible because they express "the formal conditions of a possible experience". (B 666) The "deduction" or justification of this as knowledge, entails proving that the categories relate to experience by giving us conditions of experience. Ideas, however, cannot give rise to knowledge because they are neither given to us in experience, nor do they state conditions of experience. "No objective deduction such as we have been able to give of the categories is strictly speaking, possible in the case of these transcendental Ideas." (B 393)⁶ Our inclination to think that we do have knowledge of Ideas, is what Kant calls, "transcendental illusion". (B 349)

The illusion occurs exactly in our inevitably changing the logical maxim of reason into a transcendental principle of reason.⁷ There is nothing wrong in

6 cf. B 691 f, B 697 f

7 cf. B 364

reason's search for an unconditioned. In fact, this is necessary for our understanding of the world. Where we err, is when we say there really is an unconditioned. This is an illusion because we are here asserting the existence of something of which we can have no experience because it is transcendent. In the "Dialectic" Kant is concerned with destroying any claims to a knowledge of such Ideas which was traditionally considered to be possible.

However, Kant doesn't only destroy claims to transcendent knowledge. If reason naturally comes up with these Ideas, they must serve some useful purpose.⁸ Some sort of a "deduction of them must be possible, however greatly (as we admit) it may differ from that which we have been able to give of the categories." (B697 f) This deduction consists of showing how these Ideas can be used as regulative principles promoting the systematic unity of knowledge, so necessary to reason. It is this positive doctrine that we will primarily concern ourselves with. How is the Idea of God useful? What is its nature and status? How does it compare with the Postulate of God?

3 The Idea of God

On the basis of the criteria of knowledge, Kant rejects the traditional arguments for the existence of

⁸ cf. B 670 f.

God. "All attempts to employ reason in theology in any merely speculative manner are altogether fruitless and by their very nature null and void." (B 664)

Kant goes on to say that we also cannot disprove God's existence, for the very same reasons that we cannot prove it. "The same grounds which have enabled us to demonstrate the inability of human reason to maintain the existence of such a being, must suffice to prove the invalidity of all counter assertions." (B 669)

We simply cannot have knowledge of God because such a concept transcends experience.

But, man does in fact have a concept of a supreme being. This fact must be accounted for. Where does man get this Idea of God? There are three sources which exactly coincide with the traditional proofs for the existence of God. All three sources have their basis in reason's drive to unify experience. Reason follows a natural course of developement, getting this Idea first from physico-theological considerations, then from cosmological and lastly from ontological considerations.⁹

However, it is the ontological considerations, or "the transcendental concept which in all such endeavors marks out the goal that reason has set itself to attain". (B 619)

9 cf. B 618 f, B 657

Reason expresses its true function in following the logical principle of determination, this activity being based on the disjunctive syllogism.¹⁰ Reason inevitably changes this into a transcendental principle of complete determination where we "represent everything as deriving its own possibility from the share which it possesses in this sum of all possibilities". (B 600) This is thought to be the unconditioned condition of all particular predicates. This "ens realissimum" is "therefore a transcendental Ideal which serves as basis for the complete determination that necessarily belongs to all that exists. This Ideal is the supreme and complete material condition of the possibility of all that exists." (B 604) Kant indicates the uniqueness of the Idea of God by also calling it an "Ideal".

This in itself wouldn't be sufficient to make reason think this Ideal were real. However, reason "is impelled from another direction to seek a resting place in the regress from the conditioned which is given, to the unconditioned". (B 612) Reason, "by its very nature" is driven, upon seeing contingent existence, to assume the existence of something which is uncon-

10 B 599, B 604

ditionally necessary.¹¹ Reason is then naturally driven to unite this concept with that of an "ens realissimum" and thus arrives at a concept of a supreme being which must exist by absolute necessity.¹²

Reason also, in its attempt to give causal explanations of nature, proceeds to an ultimate causality. "This supreme cause we then proceed to regard as absolutely necessary." (B 618) In so doing, we also think it to be the most real being. Thus reason gets this concept of God by starting with experience, but this is completed only when ontological considerations are included.

If reason's natural inclination is taken as proving the existence of God, we are suffering from an illusion. Reason's error consists of moving from its logical employment to a transcendental employment. Kant rejects the latter as illusory. However, he wishes to show how this Idea of God can serve a useful function. Kant simply assumes that if something is natural to reason, it must have a proper use.¹³

This Idea of God arises again in a different context, which is very closely related to the above

11 B 612

12 B 614 f.

13 B 670 f.

considerations. The Idea of God is seen as the ground of the Idea of systematic unity, so essential to reason.

Reason is naturally driven to seek "the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion". (B 364) "From this we see that in inference reason endeavors to reduce the varied and manifold knowledge obtained through the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions) and thereby to achieve in it the highest possible unity." (B 361) Reason secures the unity of rules of understanding, just as understanding secures the unity of appearances by means of rules.¹⁴ The relation of reason's principles of systematic unity with the transcendental unity of apperception would be an interesting and fruitful study, but one which cannot be covered in this thesis.

The basic logical employment of reason is this search for the unconditioned. Reason is always looking for more basic explanations of given phenomena. In doing so it systematizes our knowledge of the world. "If we consider in its whole range the knowledge obtained for us by the understanding, we find that what is peculiarly distinctive of reason in its attitude to

¹⁴ B 359, B 672, B 692.

this body of knowledge, is that it prescribes and seeks to achieve its systematisation, that is, to exhibit the connection of its parts in conformity with a single principle." (B 673) For Kant this activity is the essence of what it means to be rational. "The law of reason which requires us to seek for this unity, is a necessary law, since without it we should have no reason at all, and without reason no coherent employment of the understanding, and in the absence of this no sufficient criterion of empirical truth." (B 679)

Bound up with this logical principle of systematic unity are three other principles. They are the principles of homogeneity, specification and continuity of forms.¹⁵ They are merely expressions of the principle of systematic unity so I will deal only with the latter.

The logical principle however, is based on a transcendental principle. Here we see the move already described in connection with reason's drive to the unconditioned.¹⁶ If reason works towards unity, it can only do this successfully if there actually is unity in nature. "It is indeed difficult to understand how there can be a logical principle by which reason prescribes the unity of rules unless we also presuppose a

¹⁵ B 682 ff.

¹⁶ p. 10 f.

transcendental principle whereby such a systematic unity is apriori assumed to be necessarily inherent in the objects." (B 678)¹⁷ In order to ensure the rationality of reason's activity "we have no option save to presuppose the systematic unity of nature as objectively valid and necessary". (B 679)

This activity of reason presupposes an Idea of a whole unified system of knowledge based on a system of nature, "a whole which is prior to the determinate knowledge of the parts and which contains the conditions that determine apriori for every part its position and relation to the other parts". (B 673) Nature is thus assumed not to be a mere aggregate, a summation of parts, but a whole where the nature of the parts and their relation to each other are predetermined by the whole. This system is the ideal of rationality, an ideal presupposed as real by virtue of the fact that reason works towards unity.¹⁸

This logical principle becomes transcendental in another way. The systematic unity inherent in nature presupposes a ground of this unity, namely, God. "If in connection with a transcendental theology, we ^{ask} first, whether there is anything distinct from the world,

17 cf. B 679, B 680, B 689

18 Cassirer, Kant's First Critique 338 ff.

which contains the ground of the order of the world and of its connection in accordance with universal laws, the answer is that there undoubtedly is." (B 723 f)¹⁹ This is a "transcendental assumption" we make in order to give a "substratum of the greatest possible unity of experience". (B 706)

Kant feels the only explanation of such a unified whole is that some intelligence or other has entertained the Idea of the whole and caused all the parts to be related to this whole. Systematic arrangement must be arrangement by design. Systematisation is a rational process. The notion of an integrated system is the ideal of rationality. The implication of reason considering nature as reducible to a system, is that nature "is being treated as if it came under the jurisdiction of an intelligence causing it to behave in a reasonable manner".²⁰

This principle of systematic unity really is the teleological principle which Kant goes on to describe in his Critique of Judgement. This claim I won't go on to defend now.²¹

Reason's move from a logical to a transcendental

19 cf. B 703, B 705, B 707, B 709

20 Cassirer, Kant's First Critique, 344

21 cf. B 714, B 719, B 720, B 722

principle of systematic unity is unjustified. Reason is here going beyond the sensible world and thus cannot have knowledge of such a principle. Reason is here suffering from an inevitable illusion.

That this is so is verified when reason fails to find the unity in the world it has assumed to be there. Kant frequently admits that reason can fail in its attempt to find unity.²²

Also, we cannot tell whether this unity is merely a subjective need of reason or whether it really is to be found in nature. It must be a matter of indifference to us whether we say nature actually is a system or whether reason merely must assume systematic unity for the sake of scientific knowledge.²³

Therefore, this systematic unity is a mere Idea.²⁴ In fact, for Kant it is the prime Idea, the others being merely grounds of the Idea. The other speculative Ideas seek "only to formulate the command of reason" to view all connection in the world, "in accordance with the principle of a systematic unity". (B 714)

Because we cannot tell if this Idea of systematic unity is subjective only, or whether it is objectively

22 B 716, B 722, B 728

23 B 727

24 B 673, B 675, B 689, B 690, B 691, B 709, B 720, B 723

grounded in nature, it, with the help of the other Ideas, is merely set as a goal, as an endless problem which we try to reach.²⁵ The Idea is a "scientific concept of reason "which contains the end and the form of a whole system, but which is set as a problem for reason."²⁶ It is an Idea "which nowhere exists in concreto, but to which, by many different paths, we endeavor to approximate". (B 866) It represents the "logical perfection of knowledge", the rational ideal. Reason must pursue its logical activity, with this goal before it, a goal which is a mere Idea and must never be allowed to change into a transcendental assertion. The nature and use of these Ideas, we wish to study further.

B. The Postulate of God

1. What is Practical Reason?

At times it may sound as if Kant considers practical reason to be distinct from theoretical reason, but I don't think this is his position. Practical reason is simply reason working with moral problems. Kant feels it is possible to show the identity of practical reason "with the speculative reason in a common principle, for it can ultimately be only one and the same reason

25 Zilian Die Ideen in Kant 34

26 B 860

which has to be distinguished merely in its application". (M.E. 8) "Now practical reason has the same cognitive faculty for its foundation as the speculative, so far as they are both pure reason." (Pr.R. 92) Here we are merely considering one and the same reason being used for different purposes.²⁷ Pure reason has both a speculative employment as well as a practical employment.²⁸

Reason can be related to its objects in two ways, "either as merely determining it and its concept (which must be supplied from elsewhere) or as also making it actual. The former is theoretical, the latter is practical knowledge of reason". (B ix f) Objects of experience are to theoretical reason what objects of practical reason are to practical reason. In the theoretical function of reason, objects had to be given to the understanding by intuition, whereas practical reason itself produces objects, namely moral choices in accordance with the moral law.²⁹ In the practical use of reason, "reason deals with grounds determining the will, which is a faculty either of bringing forth objects corresponding to conceptions or of determining itself". (Pr.R. 15) Practical reason is the will.³⁰ "The will

27 Pr.R. 125

28 B 835

29 cf. Pr.R. 47 f., 68

30 Pr.R. 57

is a faculty which can make an object real." (Pr.R. 62)
 "The will is conceived as the faculty of determining one-
 self to action in accordance with the conception of
 certain laws." (M.E. 54)³¹

Practical reason or the will is directed towards
 choice in accordance with the moral law. Kant proves
 that reason is actually practical by proving that it
 need not be determined by desires. "This Analytic proves
 that pure reason can be practical, i.e. that of itself
 and independently of everything empirical it can deter-
 mine the will." (Pr.R. 43) That reason is practical,
 is proved by the consciousness of the moral law within
 us.³² Reason here, as in its theoretical function looks
 for an unconditioned.³³ Practical reason produces the
 unconditioned categorical imperative.³⁴ "As pure prac-
 tical reason it likewise seeks the unconditioned for
 the practically conditioned (which rests on inclinations
 and natural need) and this unconditioned is . . . sought
 as the determining ground of the will." (Pr.R. 112)
 Because we are influenced, though not determined by
 desires, this imperative comes to us in the form of an

31 cf. M.E. 35

32 Pr.R. 125

33 Pr.R. 111 , M.E. 101

34 Pr.R. 30

obligation.³⁵ A perfect will wouldn't experience obligation. For us as finite rational beings, such holiness of will remains a practical ideal, a goal towards which we strive.³⁶

Because the Postulates are based on the moral law, it might be well to consider the necessity of the moral law. Is the moral law hypothetical for Kant? I think not. The moral law is a fact. "The consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason." (Pr.R. 31) The moral law is absolutely necessary.³⁷

Kant considers the objection one might make by introducing "a man who is completely indifferent with regard to moral laws". (B 857) Kant answers by claiming that such an example cannot be produced. "Even the most consummate villain, has a sense of right and wrong." (M.E. 89) It seems to me that Kant makes the presence of this moral law the very definition of rationality. "The human mind (as, I likewise believe, must necessarily be the case with every rational being) takes a natural interest in morality." (B 857n) "Here we have to do, however, with a need of reason arising from an objective determining ground of the will, i.e. the moral law, which

35 Pr.R. 32 f.

36 Pr.R. 33

37 B 851, B 856, B 661, B xxv

is necessarily binding on every rational being."

(Pr.R. 149n)³⁸ The overthrowing of one's moral principles would result in one's becoming abhorrent in one's own eyes.³⁹ This is again verified when Kant gives us the second formulation of the categorical imperative: "rational nature exists as an end in itself." (M.E. 56) We may not be able to explain why or how the moral law is binding on rational beings, but that it is, remains an undisputed fact.⁴⁰

A moral principle has a formal element as well as a material element.⁴¹ The formal element, which we have discussed above, is the determining ground of the moral principle. The material element must never be made the determining ground of the moral law as this would make it a heteronomous principle.⁴² "The material of a practical principle is the object of the will." (Pr.R. 26) Kant claims every volition must have an object.⁴³ "By a concept of an object of practical reason, I understand the Idea of an object as an effect

38 cf. M.E. 51

39 B 856 This reminds us of a very similar passage, B 679, where systematic unity becomes the definition of rationality.

40 M.E. 98

41 Pr.R. 26

42 Pr.R. 26, 34, 35, 66

43 Pr.R. 34

possible through freedom." (Pr.R. 59) "The sole objects of a practical reason are thus those of good and evil." (Pr.R. 60) However, there are many good things and so there can be many objects of practical reason.

The primary object of the will is the highest good. "Consequently, though the highest good may be the entire object of a pure practical reason, i.e. of a pure will, it is still not to be taken as the determining ground of the pure will; the moral law alone must be seen as the ground for making the highest good and its realization or promotion the object of the pure will." (Pr.R. 113) This is another element of practical reason's search for the unconditioned. Practical reason not only seeks the unconditioned determining ground of the will but this unconditioned "is also sought as the unconditioned totality of the object of the pure practical reason under the name of the highest good." (Pr.R. 112) Kant calls this an "Idea".⁴⁴

What the Idea of systematic unity is to theoretical reason, the Idea of the highest good is to practical reason. Both are unrealizable ideals for the finite rational being. Both are necessary objects of reason. Both are ideals set to us as unending tasks.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Pr.R. 112.

⁴⁵ Zilian, Die Ideen in Kant, 48 f.
cf. B 526, Pr.R. 148, 129

Both are concepts of a "whole".⁴⁶

Because the Postulate of God is based on this Idea of the highest good, we must further investigate its connection with the moral law. For Kant, these were simply two sides of one coin. There is no conditional relation between the two. Each implies and is implied by the other. "Since, now, the furthering of the highest good . . . is an apriori necessary object of our will and is inseparably related to the moral law, the impossibility of the highest good must prove the falsity of the moral law." (Pr.R. 118) The law requires the highest good as its object.⁴⁷ The interest of reason in its "practical employment lies in the determination of the will with respect to the final and perfect end," namely the highest good. (Pr.R. 124) The promotion of the highest good is merely seen as the subjective effect of the moral law.⁴⁸

The promotion of the highest good is considered a duty just as it is our duty to obey the moral law.⁴⁹

The moral law was seen as absolutely necessary.⁵⁰ The promotion of the highest good is based on this same apriori necessity.⁵¹

46 B 673, Pr.R. 114

47 Pr.R. 140, 5

48 Pr.R. 148, cf. Pr.R. 126

49 Pr.R. 129, 148, 149n, 130, 134

50 B 851, B 856, B 661, B xxv

51 Pr.R. 117, 139, 151

Kant is always careful to point out that the determining ground of the will is the moral law alone.⁵² However, because the highest good is inseparably connected to the moral law, one could just as well say that the highest good too is the determining ground of the pure will. Kant does this at one point.⁵³

I think it is wrong to criticize Kant for introducing a hedonistic element into his ethics. At least this is not his intention.⁵⁴ Kant criticizes the hedonists for first looking for an object of the will, and then making this into the determining ground of the will.⁵⁵ Kant avoids this error because he first makes the form of the law the determining ground of the will, and then adds the highest good as a necessary object of the law.⁵⁶

The highest good consists of two elements; virtue or the worthiness to be happy, and happiness.⁵⁷ This is the necessary object of the will, a goal, an ideal towards which we strive, but which actually can never be realized by us in this world. The connection

52 Pr.R. 113

53 Pr.R. 114

54 Schrader, Kant's Presumed Repudiation 234

55 Pr.R. 66

56 Pr.R. 66, 113

57 Pr.R. 114, B 842

between these two elements isn't analytic.⁵⁸ If the connection is synthetic an antinomy results. Either the desire for happiness must be the motive of morality or virtue must be the efficient cause of happiness. The first alternative is ruled out because happiness cannot be the determining ground of the will. The second is impossible because the world of nature is independent of man's will.⁵⁹ There is injustice in the world. The good man isn't always the happy man.

The solution to the antinomy involves a correction of the second alternative. The second part is "false only if I assume existence in this world to be the only mode of existence of a rational being". (Pr.R. 119) The fulfillment of the highest good is thus put beyond this world. It is an Idea whose completion occurs in another world.

Is it necessary that this highest good be realized? Obligation to promote the highest good, for Kant, entails possibility of fulfillment. "Nevertheless, in the practical task of pure reason, i.e. in the necessary endeavor after the highest good, such a connection is postulated as necessary: we should seek to further the highest good (which therefore must be at least

58 Pr.R. 117

59 Pr.R. 117 f., 129, B 838

possible)". (Pr.R. 129) "Now it was our duty to promote the highest good, and it is not merely our privilege but necessity connected with duty as a requisite to presuppose the possibility of this highest good." (Pr.R. 130) If the promotion of the highest good is one's duty, one must then "presuppose" its possibility.⁶⁰

But, how is this possible? It isn't possible from a theoretical point of view. Its possibility will require the presuppositions of the conditions of its fulfillment. But the fulfillment of the highest good is itself a presupposition.⁶¹ We must assume its possibility.⁶² The possibility of the highest good is a "thing of faith", something which we must promote in conformity to duty but which is transcendent theoretically and must therefore be assumed.⁶³

"Faith . . . is the moral attitude of reason as to belief in that which is unattainable by theoretical cognition. It is therefore the permanent principle of the mind to assume as true on account of the obligation in reference to it, that which is necessary to presuppose as condition of the highest moral final purpose, although its possibility or impossibility be alike impossible for us to see into." (C.J. 324)

"But such a system of self rewarding morality is only an Idea." (B 838)

60 Pr.R. 148, cf. Pr.R. 149n, 150

61 Pr.R. 148

62 Pr.R. 149n

63 C.J. 321

The completion of this highest good isn't objectively real from a theoretical point of view. Here it remains problematical. However, from a practical point of view we must assume it as real or else the whole moral law collapses. "The impossibility of the highest good must prove the falsity of the moral law also." (Pr.R. 118) Here we have a subjective need of reason to assume as given, the fulfillment of a necessary object of the moral law.⁶⁴

I believe it is at this point that a hypothetical element enters into Kant's treatment. Neither the categorical imperative nor its necessary object are hypothetical, but what is hypothetical, is the completion of the highest good. If the highest good is to be fulfilled, then I must assume its possibility and the conditions for its completion. These conditions we must now consider.

2. The Postulates as Conditions of the Highest Good

Kant gives us a concise definition of a Postulate. "By a Postulate of pure practical reason, I understand a theoretical proposition which is not as such demonstrable, but which is an inseparable corollary of an

⁶⁴ Pr.R. 149n

apriori unconditionally valid practical law." (Pr.R. 127)

A Postulate is an "inseparable corollary" of the moral law because it is the condition of the realization of the object of the moral law. "A need of pure reason in its speculative use leads only to hypothesis; that of pure practical reason, to postulates." (Pr.R. 147) We have already seen how reason in its theoretical use strives for the unconditioned but, because this is transcendent, this unconditioned must be properly seen as a kind of hypothesis, an ideal which we strive to realize but which is in actuality unrealizable. Reason naturally must assume this ideal as complete and grounded in God. This Idea of God is merely assumed as a condition of the realization of the systematic unity of nature which reason also must assume and towards which reason is striving.

We have a very similar situation in the practical use of reason. Here reason strives to fulfill the unconditioned highest good. "A need of pure practical reason, on the other hand, is based on a duty to make something, (the highest good) the object of my will so as to promote it with all my strength. In doing so, I must presuppose its possibility and also its conditions which are God, freedom and immortality." (Pr.R. 148)

The first Postulate, is that of freedom. "For

speculative reason, the concept of freedom was problematic but not impossible." (Pr.R. 3) "But though I cannot know, I can yet think freedom." (B xxviii) This Idea of freedom is now given objective practical reality.⁶⁵ This connection of the Postulate of freedom with the Idea of freedom I will consider further in the last chapter.

The fact that reason is practical and gives rise to an unconditional law, proves that we aren't determined by the world of sense, which implies that we are free.⁶⁶ The principle of morality is independent from all material of the law, i.e. from all desires. This is freedom in the negative sense. The principle of morality determines choice by the mere form of a given universal law. This is freedom in the positive sense.⁶⁷ "Thus freedom and unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other." (Pr.R. 29)

We know we are free on the basis of our moral experience.⁶⁸ Thus Kant goes on to say that this freedom is a fact, just as consciousness of the moral law is a fact.⁶⁹ But it still isn't a theoretical fact. It is a moral fact, whose nature and reality will be

65 Pr.R. 139, cf. Pr.R. 100, B xxvii n

66 Pr.R. 29, 137

67 Pr.R. 33, cf. Pr.R. 4n

68 B 830

69 C.J. 321, Pr.R. 31

elaborated on later. This moral fact is a Postulate. Thus I feel Beck is wrong in distinguishing between freedom as a condition of the moral law which is a fact, and freedom as a Postulate.⁷⁰ Beck failed to see that "facticity" here is of a very different sort, than the facts of real objective theoretical experience. That this interpretation of Kant is the correct one is verified by the fact that Kant still calls freedom an Idea,⁷¹ whose objective reality cannot be known.⁷²

Now I say every being that cannot act except under the Idea of freedom is just for that reason in a practical point of view really free, that is to say, all laws which are inseparably connected with freedom have the same force for him as if his will had been shown to be free in itself by a proof theoretically conclusive . . . I adopt this method of assuming freedom merely as an Idea which rational beings suppose in their actions, in order to avoid the necessity of proving it in its theoretical aspect also. The former is sufficient for my purpose. (M.E. 80)

The latter would be impossible!

Kant seems to attach more importance to the Postulate of freedom than to the other Postulates.

The concept of freedom, in so far as its reality is proved by an apodeictic law of practical reason, is the keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason. All other concepts (those of God and immortality) . . . now attach themselves to the concept of freedom and gain, with it and through it, stability and objective reality. (Pr.R. 3)

⁷⁰ Beck, A Commentary, 207 f.

⁷¹ M.E. 91, 95, 98

⁷² B xxix

Freedom seems to be more basic, only however, if we consider the form of the moral law. If we consider the material of the moral law, which is inseparably related to the form, than all three Postulates have equal importance as conditions of the fulfillment of the highest good. Also, if freedom and the unconditional practical law "reciprocally imply each other," the other Postulates can be seen as based on the moral law just as freedom itself is a condition of the moral law.

The second Postulate is that of immortality.⁷³ One element of the Ideal of the highest good is virtue or worthiness to be happy. Complete virtue is never attained by finite man. It remains an ideal towards which we strive, but whose possibility we must assume. Therefore, we must assume the condition of such a realization, which is immortality of the soul.

The third Postulate concerns the existence of God. We have already considered the necessity of assuming the possibility of the realization of the Idea of the highest good. However, it isn't realizable in actuality because nature is independent of man's will and doesn't distribute happiness in accordance with virtue.⁷⁴

⁷³ Pr.R. 126 ff.

⁷⁴ Pr.R. 118, 129

For it to be realized, all men would have to be perfect so that no injustice would occur, but this is obviously not the case.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, in the practical task of pure reason, i.e. in the necessary endeavor after the highest good, such a connection is postulated as necessary: we should seek to further the highest good (which therefore must be at least possible). Therefore also the existence is postulated of a cause of the whole of nature, itself distinct from nature, which contains the ground of the exact coincidence of happiness with morality. (Pr.R. 129)⁷⁶

Is a deduction of this Postulate of God possible? Obviously not! From a theoretical point of view this Postulate is transcendent and therefore illusory. Kant doesn't see this as a theoretical proof of God's existence. "This moral argument does not supply any objectively valid proof of the Being of God." (C.J. 301n) The highest good is a mere Idea, the ground of which we postulate in order to give this Idea its proper effect on morality. The Idea with its condition are assumed in order to give "effect and confirmation to the practical laws". (B 617) Proving the usefulness of the Postulate of God is a kind of deduction, but one, very different from the deduction of the categories.

⁷⁵ B 838

⁷⁶ cf. B 839, C.J. 301 f., Pr.R. 137 f.

C. The Underlying Similarities

In showing the very different ways in which these two concepts of God arise, it may seem that my thesis is already disproven. However, amid the differences, there are underlying similarities.

Both concepts of God arise from reason's search for the unconditioned. This unconditioned is called a "systematic unity" in both cases.⁷⁷ Both concepts of the unconditioned cannot be realized in experience. Thus, both become an ideal, the striving towards which, is given to us as a job.⁷⁸

Both concepts of God are seen as the ground of this unconditioned. They are assumed because reason must complete this ideal, but we must never forget that this completed unconditioned is merely an Idea.

Both concepts of God are called assumptions, presuppositions and Ideas.

Thus we see that there are many similarities. The differences are only apparent. Later we shall look further into this underlying unity in order to prove our thesis.

77 B 835

78 Zilian, Ideen in Kant 48

III A COMPARISON OF THE TWO CONCEPTS OF GOD

A. The Proper Use of these Two Concepts of God

My aim in this chapter is clearly given in a quote from Kant's second Critique: "These concepts of reason are now seen in transition to an altogether different use from that made of them in the first Critique. Such a transition makes necessary a comparison of their old and new employment, in order to distinguish clearly the new path from the previous one and at the same time to call attention to the connection between them." (Pr.R. 7)

The concepts Kant is here referring to are the Ideas of God, freedom, and immortality. From the above quote, we can already see that there is a connection between the Idea of God and the Postulate of God. In our comparison, we want to investigate further the connection between these two concepts of God and hope to prove that they are in essence identical, even though they appear to be different.

1. Regulative vs. Constitutive

a) The Idea of God We have already seen what these Ideas are to be used for. Reason strives for unity. "Reason unifies the manifold of concepts by means of

Ideas, positing a certain collective unity as the goal of the activities of the understanding." (B 672)

In connection with the furthering of this aim, Kant mentions a supplementary aim very closely connected to that of unity, namely the extension of empirical or scientific knowledge.¹ We wish now to consider how these Ideas are used to promote this aim. This is best done by a consideration of the regulative use of Ideas.

First we must clear up a confusion which results from Kant's ambiguous use of the terms "regulative" and "constitutive".² Kant distinguishes between the constitutive, mathematical principles, and the regulative, dynamical principles of the understanding.³ I will not consider in what way the dynamical principles are regulative.

What I wish to point out is that they are not regulative in the same way as Ideas are regulative. When comparing Ideas to these dynamical principles he says the latter are constitutive in respect of experience while the former are not.⁴ The dynamical principles are principles of the possibility of experience while at B 537, Kant specifically states that a dialectical principle is not a principle of the possibility of

1 B 709, B 672, B 699

2 Bird, Kant's Theory of Knowledge 70 f.

3 B 220 ff., B 296, B 692

4 B 692

experience. Therefore, I conclude that the dynamical principles are regulative in a different way from the Ideas. Thus we must restrict ourselves to the regulative use of the Ideas only.

What is the regulative principle? We have already considered reason's natural logical activity in its search for the unconditioned which inevitably leads to the assertion of a transcendental principle. A regulative principle is really a slightly transformed transcendental principle. It is a transcendental principle without its transcendental claims. Instead of claiming that the unconditioned is real and given, the regulative principle says it is a mere Idea which we try and realize. One could also say that a regulative principle is merely the logical maxim of reason with the addition of a goal formulated as an Idea, but not as a given object.

Thus it is a principle of reason which serves as a rule, postulating what we ought to do in the regress, but not anticipating what is present in the object as it is in itself, prior to all regress. Accordingly, I entitle it a regulative principle of reason, to distinguish it from the principle of the absolute totality of the series of conditions, viewed as actually present in the object (that is in the appearances). (B 537)

A regulative principle of reason simply tells reason to strive for the unity which it must assume as an Idea. The principle is "a problem for the understanding, and therefore for the subject, leading it to undertake

and to carry on, in accordance with the completeness prescribed by the Idea, the regress in the series of conditions of any given conditioned". (B 536) The Idea of unity is "set as a task". (B 536)

A regulative principle always assumes an Idea, the supreme Idea of systematic unity. Thus Kant usually calls them, "regulative principles of systematic unity".⁵ The aim of the regulative principle is to promote this systematic unity of which it has an Idea.⁶ The regulative employment of reason has this systematic unity as a goal, a "focus imaginarius".⁷

Kant considers an analogy. Pure earth, pure water and pure air aren't found anywhere in nature. Yet we require these pure concepts, supplied by reason to determine the share each of these have in producing appearances. The Idea of unity is a similar pure concept. "These concepts of nature are not derived from nature; on the contrary, we interrogate nature in accordance with these Ideas, and consider our knowledge as defective so long as it is not adequate to them." (B 673 f.)

But, this Idea of systematic unity presupposes another Idea, the Idea of God as ground of this unity.⁸

5 B 699, B 702

6 B 644, B 708, B 709

7 B 672

8 see p.20 ff.

The Idea of God as ground of this unity is inseparably bound up with the Idea of systematic unity, which entails, that a regulative principle of systematic unity, is at the same time a regulative principle of the Idea of God.

Kant expresses this relation of the Idea of God to the principle of systematic unity by calling the Idea of God the "schema" of the regulative principle. "This transcendental thing is only the schema of the regulative principle by which reason, so far as lies in its power, extends a systematic unity over the whole field of experience." (B 710)⁹

Kant compares this to the schemata of understanding:

But the acts of the understanding are without the schemata of sensibility undetermined; just as the unity of reason is in itself undetermined, as regards the conditions under which, and the extent to which, the understanding ought to combine its concepts in systematic fashion. But although we are unable to find in intuition a schema for the complete systematic unity of all concepts of the understanding, an analogon of such a schema must necessarily allow of being given . . . Thus the Idea of reason is an analogon of a schema of sensibility. (B 692 f.)

The schema of understanding is the mediator between the categories and appearances.¹⁰ The schema is the referential rule, making possible the application of the category to appearances.¹¹

9 cf. B 693, B 698, B 702, B 707, B 725, B 861 f.

10 B 177

11 B 178

Similarly, the Idea is to be a kind of schema. It is the referential rule of the regulative principle of unity. Without the Idea of God we couldn't apply the principle of systematic unity to experience. Reason needs a concrete concept of a ground of systematic unity in order to make this principle operative in experience. The Idea of God is the mediator between the regulative principle of unity and its empirical employment. Just as the schema of a category could be said to have one foot in understanding and one foot in sensibility, so the schema of the regulative principle of unity can be said to have one foot in reason and one foot in empirical employment.

There is one basic difference between the two kinds of schema. "The application of the concepts of the understanding to the schema of reason does not yield knowledge of the object itself (as is the case in the application of categories to the sensible schemata), but only a rule or principle for the systematic unity of all employment of the understanding." (B 693) The Idea of God as a schema doesn't give us knowledge of God as an object. It is an Idea only, an Idea which as a schema makes possible the practical application of the Idea of systematic unity.

Why does the Idea of systematic unity need to be

schematized? The Idea of systematic unity cannot operate self-sufficiently, when reason attempts to make practical use of it. We have already discussed the move from a logical maxim to a transcendental principle, in which reason assumes unity to be inherent in nature. Kant feels this move entails a further assumption that there is a ground of this unity in nature, and thus arises the Idea of God. The important thing to notice here, is that the Idea of God arises when the Idea of systematic unity is applied to nature.

The Idea of systematic unity must be schematized in order to become practically useful in the empirical employment of reason. "If the greatest possible empirical employment of my reason rests upon an Idea (that of systematically complete unity) . . . I shall not only be entitled, but shall also be constrained to realize this Idea that is, to posit for it a real object." (B 705) Why? This, "enables us to represent to ourselves other objects in an indirect manner, namely in their systematic unity, by means of their relation to this Idea". (B 698) It is in this way that the schema "extends systematic unity over the whole field of experience". (B 710)¹²

In order to become empirically useful, the Idea

12 cf. B 699, B 701 f., B 704, B 709, B 727 f.

of systematic unity needs objectification in a creator figure. "The unity of reason is in itself undetermined." (B 693) Kant goes on to say that we cannot determine it *a posteriori* in nature, and therefore reason supplies its own schema in the Idea of God. "Reason cannot think this systematic unity otherwise than by giving to the Idea of this unity an object." (B 709)¹³

We will later see that this stress on the practical need for introducing the schema of the Idea of God is comparable to the practical need in morality for a Postulate of God.

Thus, the Idea of God, in its regulative use consists of guiding reason, furthering its empirical employment, telling it to look upon the world as if it were a systematic whole created by divine intelligence.¹⁴ The Idea of God, "seeks only to formulate the command of reason, that all connection in the world be viewed in accordance with the principle of systematic unity -- as if all such connection had its source in one single all-sufficient cause. It is thus evident that reason has here no other purpose than to prescribe its own formal rule for the extension of its empirical employment." (B 714)

¹³ cf. B 647

¹⁴ B 700 f., B 713 ff.

There seems to be a circle involved here. Reason, by its very nature postulates an Idea of God as the ground of the systematic unity of nature. This is to guide us in finding systematic unity in nature. With this assumption as basis, we go on to try to prove the existence of an intelligent Cause which before we assumed, as a mere Idea.¹⁵ But in doing this, the Idea is performing its true regulative function in helping us extend our knowledge of nature. Thus, in a sense it is true that we are assuming the very thing we are trying to prove. However, we can't accuse Kant of a circular argument because the thing we are assuming is a mere Idea, and the thing we are trying to prove, will in fact never be proven. It is our mere trying to prove the Idea, that already accomplishes that which we wished to achieve by assuming it.

Kant warns us not to change this regulative principle into a constitutive principle. "I accordingly maintain that transcendental Ideas never allow of any constitutive employment." (B 672)¹⁶ A constitutive principle determines an object. If the Idea of God is taken constitutively, it would be taken as something

¹⁵ B 721

¹⁶ cf. B 708, B 537

objectively real. We cannot do this because the concept of God is transcendent. It is this kind of metaphysics that Kant is so bent on destroying.

Kant considers two errors resulting from taking the Idea of God constitutively.¹⁷ The first result is that reason is left without any useful function. If we actually assert that God in his unsearchable wisdom created the world, we would think that reason's search for explanations was completed and therefore cease looking for further connections in nature. Instead, we should merely assume the ground of systematic unity in the Idea of God, and then try to search for proof of this Idea in nature. This is the true regulative function of the Idea of God.

The second error resulting from the Idea of God being used constitutively is that we thus "impose ends upon nature, forcibly and dictatorially instead of pursuing the more reasonable course of searching for them by the path of physical investigation". (B 720) If we begin with the assertion of a "supreme purposive being as the ground of all things, the unity of nature is really surrendered as being quite foreign and accidental

¹⁷ B 717 ff.

to the nature of things and as not capable of being known from its own universal laws. There then arises a vicious circle; we are assuming just that very point which is mainly in dispute". (B 721) Instead, we must investigate nature looking for causal connections, thereby trying to prove an Author of this purposiveness we find. "Whether this latter enterprise succeed or not, the Idea remains always true in itself and justified in its use, provided it be restricted to the conditions of a merely regulative principle." (B 722)

b) The Postulate of God There are two kinds of Ideas in Kant's second Critique, both of which are constitutive from the perspective of a practical use. First of all there are the practical Ideas which are unending but in principle, realizable tasks set us by morality. The prime example of a practical Idea is the concept of the highest good.

The use of practical reason is immanent.¹⁸

Herein lies the major difference between theoretical reason and practical reason. Theoretical reason gets the form of intuition (space and time) from sensibility. Practical reason supplies its own form, namely the form

of the pure will. "The elementary practical concepts have as their foundation the form of a pure will given in reason." (Pr.R. 68) Therefore, "the practical concepts apriori in relation to the supreme principle of freedom immediately become cognitions, not needing to wait upon intuitions in order to acquire a meaning. This occurs for the noteworthy reason that they themselves produce the reality of that to which they refer, (the intention of the will)". (Pr.R. 68)¹⁹ Practical reason "is a faculty either of bringing forth objects corresponding to conceptions or of determining itself, i.e., its causality to effect such objects, (whether the physical power is sufficient to this or not)". (Pr.R. 15) Practical reason has an Idea of the highest good, and everytime it produces a maxim or an intention of the will, it partially realizes this Idea. It is in this way that this Idea gains objective reality and it is in this way that this Idea is said to be constitutive of experience. "Thus also, the reality of the practical Ideas can be accepted as positively realizable, because they are immanently experienced and in this lies the constitutive validity of these Ideas."²⁰

The second kind of Idea in the Critique of Prac-

19 cf. Pr.R. 48, B 385

20 Zilian, Die Ideen in Kant, 48 (my translation)

tical Reason is the Postulate. These gain constitutive meaning only because they stand in a necessary relationship to the realization of morality as given in the practical Ideas. "Here they [Ideas] become immanent and constitutive since they are grounds of the possibility of realizing the necessary object of pure practical reason (the highest good)." (Pr.R. 140)

The Ideas gained constitutive meaning in the practical philosophy, either because they could be realized in the practical use of reason because this is what they were supposed to do, thus the moral practical Ideas, or because they, like some transcendental Ideas stood in a necessary relation to that realization of morality, as Postulates of practical reason. It is in this sense that Kant speaks of a practical reality of Ideas.²¹

Both of these Ideas are constitutive from within a practical point of view. However, this is only one point of view! From a theoretical point of view they may still be regulative. This, in fact was Kant's position.²² If one considers the practical Ideas from a theoretical standpoint, they aren't realizable. In a practical sense, they are partially realizable because reason creates its own objects as I have explained above. But this doesn't entail theoretical realizability. Kant specifically states that the highest good isn't realizable in the empirical world.²³ From a theoretical viewpoint

21 Zilian, Die Ideen in Kant 56 (my translation)

22 This is the thesis Zilian tries to prove

23 Pr.R. 118 f., B 838

it is an unrealizable ideal just as the Idea of systematic unity is an unrealizable ideal. The completion of this ideal is set us as a task. We act with this ideal in mind. Thus, from a theoretical viewpoint, this practical Idea, and with it, the necessary conditions of its realization, are regulative.

At times Kant does actually claim that these practical concepts and the moral law are regulative principles.

Pure reason, as a practical faculty, i.e. as the faculty of determining the free use of our causality by Ideas (pure rational concepts), not only comprises in the moral law a regulative principle of our actions, but supplies us at the same time with a subjective constitutive principle in the concept of an object which reason alone can think and which is to be actualized by our actions in the world according to the law. (C.J. 304)

The practical Idea of the highest good is only subjectively constitutive, not objectively constitutive. It is constitutive only from a practical point of view. From a theoretical point of view, it is regulative, as is the moral law. Kant goes on to say that the moral law commanding us to realize the highest good is "a regulative principle" but "at the same time constitutive, i.e. practically determinant. Nevertheless, as a principle for judging of the objective possibility of things it is in no way theoretically determinant". (C.J. 309)

The above quote clearly indicates the two points of view from which the moral law must be considered. Kant also says that because practical reason is a causality, still partially dependent on sensibility, the Idea of a pure causality in an intelligible world is for us a regulative principle which determines an object.²⁴

Thus the Postulates have this dual nature because one can look at them from two points of view. This is important for my thesis. A superficial reading of Kant brings to the fore a contrast between Ideas which are regulative and Postulates which are constitutive. Were this difference real, the proving of their essential identity would be impossible. I have tried to prove this difference as merely apparent. Thus the way is clear to later prove the identity of these two concepts.

2. As If Use

a) The Idea of God The regulative function of the Idea of God is probably best seen in Kant's "as-if" justification of this Idea.

We must view everything that can belong to the context of possible experience as if this experience formed an absolute but at the same time completely dependent and sensibly conditioned unity, and yet also at the same time as if the sum of all appearances

24 C.J. 252, cf. Pr.R. 50

(the sensible world itself) had a single highest and all-sufficient ground beyond itself, namely, a self-subsistent, original, creative reason. (B 700)²⁵

Why should we look on the world in this way?

Looking on the world in this way is justified by the fact that it leads to systematic unity and extension of the empirical employment of reason. Looking on the world in this way, stimulates scientific research into further natural causal explanations. The Idea thus acts as a heuristic concept.²⁶

By saying that we should look on the world as if it were created by God, Kant doesn't want to say that the world actually is created by God. In other words, Kant isn't offering a pragmatist theory of truth. The usefulness of the Idea doesn't prove the truth of the assertion of its reality. In fact, Kant warns us against the danger of taking a further step of asserting the actual reality of the Idea. We cannot know if God created the world. We must merely act as if he did. Whether this is a fiction or not, we shall consider later.

However, we must not fall into an opposite error in interpreting Kant. The fact that we must act as if God created the world doesn't exclude the fact that God actually did do so. The fact that reason invents

25 cf. B 699, B 701, B 706, B 714, B 716

26 B 644, B 691, B 799

this Idea shows the origin of the Idea, but it says nothing about the existence or non-existence of God. The latter problem lies outside the domain of theoretical philosophy.²⁷ We cannot know whether God really is the ground of the unity we find in nature. We must merely act as if he is.

b) The Postulate of God In view of the two points of view according to which the Postulates must be considered, we can expect the as if justification of the Postulate of God only where it is considered from a theoretical point of view. Because practical reason creates its own objects, in the sense explained above, we can say there is a God from a practical point of view. This is the constitutive use of God. Here the concept of God gains objective reality, though only from a practical point of view.²⁸ In the Critique of Practical Reason Kant stresses the Postulate of God, almost entirely from this point of view.

However, this doesn't rule out the possibility and the validity of considering the Postulate from the second point of view. To consider only the one, leads to a misinterpretation of Kant. Both Vaihinger and

27 Adickes, Kant und die Als Ob 132 f.

28 Pr.R. 137 ff., B 836

Adickes have this error in common. Vaihinger considers the Postulates only from a theoretical point of view. This forces him to see the practical point of view as a contradiction in Kant.²⁹ Adickes, restricts himself mainly to a practical consideration where the reality of God is asserted.

From a theoretical viewpoint the person who wants to act morally must act as if the highest good is realizable which is possible only if we assume a God who completes this highest good in the future life. The Postulate of God is the schema making the Idea of the highest good an operative ideal for our everyday life. A person who acts morally acts as if there is a God who will someday reward his attempt to be virtuous. Kant comes very close to saying this at one point: "Granted that the pure moral law inexorably binds every man as a command (not as a rule of prudence), the righteous man may say: I will that there be a God." (Pr.R. 148 f.) Kant often speaks of assuming God's existence for the sake of morality.³⁰

Kant becomes even more explicit in discussing freedom. Because freedom is the basis of the other

29 Vaihinger, The As-If 47, 153

30 Pr.R. 59, 130, 149n, C.J. 322, B xxx

Postulates, and because it itself is a Postulate, we can say that what holds of it, must hold of the Postulate of God. "Now I say every being that cannot act except under the Idea of freedom, is just for that reason in a practical point of view really free, that is to say, all laws which are inseparably connected with freedom have the same force for him as if his will had been shown to be free in itself by a proof theoretically conclusive." (M.E. 80) Here is a clear statement of the two points of view.³¹ Theoretically, the moral agent must act as if he were free. From a practical point of view he sees himself as actually free. Here it is a fact.

Why should the moral agent act as if there were a God? This enables him to see the realization of the highest good which it is his duty to promote. Thus, this assumption helps "to give effect and confirmation to the practical laws". (B 617) It does this because it proves (from a practical viewpoint) that the moral law isn't "fantastic, directed to empty imaginary ends". (Pr.R. 118)

3. Hypothetical vs. Apodeictic Use

a) The Idea of God In the hypothetical employment of

31 cf. M.E. 84, 85, 86, Pr.R. 57

reason, the particular instances are given, which are then scrutinized, in view of a problematic universal, to see if they follow from it. If they do, we argue to universality and from this again to the particular instances. This is the opposite procedure of the apodeictic use of reason where the universal is certain and the particular is deduced from it.³² This corresponds to the distinction between a reflective and a determinant judgement.³³

Ideas can be used hypothetically but Kant immediately qualifies this by saying we don't have a usual hypothesis here, where the universal can be verified. The hypothetical employment of reason is not constitutive. "The hypothetical employment of reason is regulative only; its sole aim is, so far as may be possible, to bring unity into the body of our detailed knowledge, and thereby to approximate the rule to universality." (B 675) Reason sets up a kind of hypothesis of systematic unity, and in trying to verify this "hypothesis", reason unifies its knowledge. This "hypothesis" can never be verified. "The systematic unity (as a mere Idea) is, however, only a projected unity, to be regarded not as given in itself, but as a problem only." (B 675)

³² B 674 f.

³³ C.J. 15 f,

It is not a real hypothesis because it isn't verifiable. Thus Kant repeatedly refuses to apply the expression "hypothesis" to Ideas.³⁴ They do not satisfy the requirements of an hypothesis.³⁵ This refusal to allow a hypothetic use of Ideas doesn't contradict Kant's previous assertion because Kant never admitted that an Idea was a real hypothesis.

The false dialectic move of reason is to move from a hypothetical use of reason to an apodeictic use.³⁶ Here the systematic unity is asserted as objectively real. Here it would be considered a real hypothesis which was verified. This move is invalid, leading to antinomies and contradictions, which always occur when reason goes beyond its limits.

b) The Postulate of God In view of our previous considerations we would expect that from a practical point of view, the Postulate of God would be used apodeictically. The moral law is an apodeictic law.³⁷ The conditions of the possibility of the highest good are just as necessary as the moral law itself.³⁸ Therefore, the Postulate of God is apodeictic as well. "Apodeictic" means uncon-

34 B 698, B 799, B 855

35 B 797 ff.

36 B 678

37 Pr.R. 12n, 148

38 Pr.R. 149n

ditionally necessary.³⁹ The Postulate of God is absolutely necessary,⁴⁰ and therefore it has apodeictic certainty, but only from a practical point of view.

From a theoretical point of view however, this Postulate isn't apodeictic, but again appears in the form of a hypothesis. The certainty of the Postulate of God "is not in the least theoretical and consequently also not apodeictic, i.e. not a necessity known by reference to an object; it is a necessary assumption rather, with reference to the subject as conforming to the objective practical laws of reason. Thus it is merely a necessary hypothesis. I could not discover for this subjective yet true and absolute rational necessity a better term than 'Postulate' ". (Pr.R. 12n) Here we have a definition of a Postulate which combines both points of view. It is necessary from a practical point of view. However, it is still an "hypothesis", considered theoretically, though again a very different kind of hypothesis which cannot be verified. Thus when Kant says; "A need of pure reason in its speculative use leads only to hypotheses, that of pure practical reason to Postulates", (Pr.R. 147) we must keep in mind that a

39 B 199, cf. A xv

40 B 662, B 846

Postulate is merely a necessary "hypothesis". This helps to give us a clearer picture of the relation between the Idea and the Postulate of God.⁴¹

We see these two points of view compared in another passage.

To assume its [God's] existence is thus connected with the consciousness of our duty, though this assumption itself belongs to the realm of theoretical reason. Considered only in reference to the latter, it is a hypothesis, i.e. a ground of explanation. But in reference to the comprehensibility of an object (the highest good) placed before us by the moral law, and thus as a practical need, it can be called faith. (Pr.R. 130)⁴²

Faith believes in God with apodeictic certainty, though only from a practical point of view.

4. Transcendent vs. Immanent Use

a) The Idea of God "We shall entitle the principles whose application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience immanent; and those on the other hand, which profess to pass beyond these limits, transcendent." (B 352)

If we have made the move from logical principles to a transcendental principle, then the principle is transcendent, "i.e. there can never be any adequate empirical employment of the principle. It will therefore

41 cf. B 661 f., Pr.R. 148

42 cf. also R.142n

be entirely different from all principles of understanding, the employment of which is wholly immanent, inasmuch as they have as their theme only the possibility of experience". (B 365)⁴³ It is the purpose of the transcendental dialectic to expose the illusion of such transcendental judgements.⁴⁴ If the Idea of God is taken as objectively real, it is transcendent and it becomes entirely useless for us.⁴⁵

However, if we restrict ourselves to the logical maxim and use the Idea of God only regulatively, then it can be used immanently. "We are entitled to suppose that transcendent Ideas have their own good, proper and therefore immanent use, although, when their meaning is misunderstood, and they are taken for concepts of real things, they become transcendent in their application and for that very reason can be delusive." (B 671)⁴⁶ This proper use of the Idea of God refers to its regulative empirical employment where it does lead to unity. Here, however, the Idea of God is merely an assumed problematic concept. It is not a transcendent concept because the objective reality of the Idea has not been asserted.

43 cf. B 352 f., B 383, B 593

44 B 354

45 B 827

46 cf. C.J. 244, 251, B 847

b) The Postulate of God In the practical use of reason, we again witness a transformation. What before was transcendent now becomes immanent.⁴⁷ "The use of pure [practical] reason, if it is shown that there is such a reason, is alone immanent." (Pr.R. 16)

How can the Postulate of God be immanent? "Here they [i.e. Ideas] become immanent and constitutive, since they are the grounds of the possibility of realizing the necessary object of pure practical reason (the highest good)." (Pr.R. 140) Practical reason is immanent in its use because it is the cause of intentions. "Its [i.e. reason's] transcendent use is changed into an immanent use, whereby reason becomes in the field of experience, an efficient cause through Ideas." (Pr.R. 49) Practical reason is immanent because the practical concepts used in determining the will, "themselves produce the reality of that to which they refer (the intention of the will)". (Pr.R. 68)

The practical use of reason is immanent but this is only one side of the coin. "Is our knowledge really widened in such a way by pure practical reason, and is that which was transcendent for speculative reason immanent in practical reason? Certainly, but only

47 Pr.R. 49, 109, 138, 140

from a practical point of view." (Pr.R. 138) From a theoretical point of view the Postulate of God is transcendent just as the Idea of God was.

B. The Nature of the Two Concepts of God

1. Reality

a) The Idea of God What does Kant mean by objective reality? "If knowledge is to have objective reality, that is, to relate to an object, and is to acquire meaning and significance in respect to it, the object must be capable of being in some manner given." (B 194)

"Appearances are the sole objects which can be given to us immediately, and that in them which relates immediately to the object is called intuition." (A 109)

Appearance alone doesn't have objective reality. Only in its relation to a consciousness does it acquire objective reality.⁴⁸ To be objectively real requires the connection of the object with some actual perception.⁴⁹

Empirical concepts are objectively real because they are derived from actual experience.

Kant also ascribes objective reality to apriori concepts because, although they aren't derived from experience, yet they are applicable to experience.

48 A 120

49 B 272

"The possibility of experience is, then what gives objective reality to all our apriori modes of knowledge."

(B 195) Space and time have objective validity because of their necessary application to objects of experience.⁵⁰ In order to demonstrate the objective reality of categories we need intuitions.⁵¹

Ideas do not have objective reality because they are neither applicable to nor abstracted from perception. "But Ideas are even further removed from objective reality than are categories, for no appearance can be found in which they can be represented in concreto."

(B 595) They are nothing because they are empty concepts without objects, (ens rationis).⁵²

The concept of God as an Ideal has the least objective reality. "But what I entitle the Ideal seems to be further removed from objective reality than the Idea." (B 596) The Ideal is determined by the Idea alone.

Are Ideas objectively real? At times Kant definitely refuses to ascribe objective reality to them. "We cannot concede to these ideals objective reality (existence)." (B 597) It is only because of an inevitable illusion that we ascribe objective reality to

50 B 195

51 B 288, B 291

52 B 348

them.⁵³ They have the illusory appearance of possessing objective validity and thus Kant calls them "conceptus ratiocinantes" (pseudo-rational concepts),⁵⁴ The objective reality of the Idea of God cannot be proved or disproved.⁵⁵

At times, however, Kant claims that they do have some sort of objective reality. Kant has gradings of objective reality and, although Ideas have very little, they do have some.⁵⁶ The objective reality of the Idea of God consists of its indirect relation to objects of experience in bringing about systematic unity.⁵⁷ The Idea of God does have a useful application to objects of experience and in this way it does satisfy the criterion of objective reality to some degree.

We have seen that for Kant, the Idea of God does not have objective reality in the sense that tables and chairs do. Does this mean that the Idea of God is a fiction? To give Kant's answer to this question, it is essential to consider it from two points of view. This is where both Adickes and Vaihinger fail.⁵⁸

53 B 397, cf. B 537, B 672 f.

54 B 368, B 397, C.J. 243

55 B 669, B 698, B 701

56 B 595, cf. B 697 f.

57 B 693, B 698

58 Adickes, Als Ob Philosophie

Vaihinger, The As-If Philosophy

Vaihinger considers only the fictional character of the Ideas. Adickes considers only the non-fictional character of the Ideas. We wish to consider both.

The Idea of God is a fiction in the sense that it is a creation of reason. Kant calls it a "heuristic fiction".⁵⁹ Ideas are thought-entities.⁶⁰ However, they differ from the usual fiction, e.g. a golden mountain, in that they aren't self-contradictory and they aren't just fancies. They perform a very useful function. This is the way we must interpret Kant when he seems to deny their fictional nature. "They are not fictitious and have not arisen fortuitously, but have sprung from the very nature of reason." (B 397) Kant here merely points out that they are not like what we commonly call fictions. The same applies to the following quote: "But if they are to have the least objective validity, no matter how indeterminate that validity may be, and are not to be mere empty thought-entities . . . a deduction of them must be possible." (B 697)⁶¹ The emphasis here is on "empty". They are still thought-entities but they aren't useless or arbitrarily invented.⁶²

59 B 799, cf. B 573, B 608

60 B 497, B 517, B 594, B 799

61 cf. B 597

62 Vaihinger, The As If Philosophy 278

The Idea of God is a necessary fiction of reason. We don't assume the being of God as existing in itself. We assume the Idea of God as the object of a mere Idea.⁶³ The Idea of God is like the fictional mirror image.⁶⁴ The Ideas are like concepts of pure earth, pure water, pure air which are fictions created by reason, needed "to determine the share which each of these natural causes has in producing appearances."
(B 674)

From another point of view, however, they aren't fictions. Their fictional nature is called into question whenever Kant calls them problematic concepts, the reality of which we cannot assert or deny. The Idea of God might just be real, and if it is, it is no longer fiction. Is there a transcendental basis to the unity of nature? For Kant, there is, the only problem being that we can't have knowledge of it.

Repeatedly Kant asserts that the logical maxim, expressing reason's drive to the unconditioned, does actually presuppose a transcendental principle.⁶⁵ Nature does actually correspond to the Idea of systematic unity. The Ideas do have a transcendental reality.⁶⁶ Kant

63 B 698, B 705

64 B 672 f.

65 B 678 f., B 682, B 684, B 688 f.

66 B 397, B 593

does give the design argument some validity.⁶⁷ "If, in connection with a transcendental theology, we ask first, whether there is anything distinct from the world, which contains the ground of the order of the world, and of its connection in accordance with universal laws, the answer is that there undoubtedly is." (B 723 f.) This passage clearly indicates that Kant really believed in the reality of God. I agree with Adickes that basically Kant never doubted the reality of God's existence.⁶⁸ However, his epistemology didn't allow him to claim theoretical knowledge of God and so Kant simply says we cannot have knowledge of God's existence.

Because we cannot know of God's existence Kant simply forgets about this question and talks only of the usefulness of the Idea of God.⁶⁹ To say that the Idea of God is useful as a schema of the regulative principle of unity is not to say that God doesn't exist. Both of the statements, "God exists", and, "The Idea of God is useful", may be true at the same time. However, theoretical reason can only know about the truth of the latter.

If we restrict ourselves to the point of view

67 B 655

68 Adickes, Als Ob Philosophie 97, cf. 80

69 Adickes, Als Ob Philosophie 116 f.

in which the Idea of God is used as the schema of the regulative principle of unity, then the Idea of God is merely a heuristic fiction. Asserting the objective reality of the Idea involves an illusion which Kant repeatedly warns us against.⁷⁰ It is this point of view which represents the main positive doctrine of the "Dialectic" of the first Critique.

Kant tries to combine these two points of view in his consideration of the Idea of God as a problematic concept.⁷¹ The concept of noumenon also is problematic for Kant. The relation of the Ideas to Kant's noumena would be an interesting and fruitful study but one which we must avoid.

Kant gives us a definition of a problematic concept. "If the objective reality of a concept cannot be in any way known, while yet the concept contains no contradiction and also at the same time is connected with other modes of knowledge that involve given concepts which it serves to limit, I entitle that concept problematic." (B 310) The Idea of God isn't self-contradictory.⁷² It is thinkable. The concept of God as an unconditioned is necessary to prevent the logical maxim

70 B 354, B 397, B 672 f., B 697, A 397, Pr.R. 111

71 B 397, B 445n, B 709, B 799, C.J. 250

72 Pr.R. 139, B xxix, Cf. Pr.R. 3

of reason from becoming a transcendental principle. Thus it limits the objective validity of the logical maxim, restricting the Idea of God to its regulative use. We cannot determine the objective reality of the Idea of God because ours is only a sensible intuition. This doesn't exclude another kind of intuition which could verify the objective reality of God.⁷³ Thus the Idea of God satisfies the criteria of a problematic concept. We can think the Idea. We can use the Idea. But, we can never assure ourselves of its objective reality. Because the Ideas are problematic, Kant restricts himself to the positive use that can be made of them. The Idea is set as a problem towards which we strive. We seek to approximate the Idea of systematic unity whose "ground" is assumed to be in the Idea of God.

The problem of applying predicates to this problematic concept of God, though important, is one I shall avoid in order to cut down on the length of the thesis.

b) The Postulate of God Let us consider the reality of the Postulate of God, first from a practical point of view. We have already discussed this in part in the section on regulative principles.⁷⁴

⁷³ C.J. 249 ff.

⁷⁴ p. 52 ff.

The objective reality of practical reason is proved by the fact that we are determined by the moral law which implies causality through freedom.⁷⁵ "Even though I have no intuition which would determine its objective theoretical reality, it nevertheless has a real application exhibited in concreto in intentions or maxims, that is, its practical reality can be pointed out." (Pr.R. 58)

The moral law has a formal and material element. Although man is determined by the formal law, there must be an object of the moral law. The highest good is the entire object of practical reason.⁷⁶ "Reason deals with the grounds determining the will, which is a faculty either of bringing forth objects corresponding to conception or of determining itself." (Pr.R. 15) Every time reason determines itself it also brings forth an object. Practical reason differs from theoretical reason in that it creates its own objects.⁷⁷ Thus, the Idea of the highest good gains objective reality because it is partially realized when a man acts in accordance with the formal element of the moral law, the material object of which is the highest good. "The Idea of

75 Pr.R. 3, 49 f., 57

76 Pr.R. 113

77 Pr.R. 48, 62, 68, B x

practical reason can always be given actuality in concreto, although only in part." (B 385) "The highest good is the necessary highest end of a morally determined will and a true object thereof; for it is practically possible, and the maxims of this will, which refer to it by their material, have objective reality." (Pr.R. 119)

The Postulates gain objective reality in their being conditions of the complete fulfillment of the necessary object of the will, the highest good. "Now through an apodeictic practical law, they, [i.e. Postulates] as necessary conditions of the possibility of that which this law requires to be made an object, acquire objective reality." (Pr.R. 140) The Postulate of God, thus gains objective reality because of its connection with the object of practical reason, the highest good, whose objective reality is proved by its connection with an immanently experienced moral law.⁷⁸

The Postulate of God may have objective reality in another sense. The highest good is not realizable here on earth. Kant places its full realization in the future life. Thus, the highest good remains an Idea. We strive for perfection and virtue, hoping for reward in accordance with virtue. This ideal, and its conditions,

⁷⁸ Pr.R. 3 ff., 143, C.J. 326 f. (see my quotations from Zilian, p. 53 f.)

certainly have an influence on our actions here and now. The Idea of a moral world "can have, as it also ought to have, an influence upon the sensible world, to bring that world, so far as may be possible, into conformity with the Idea". (B 836) The highest good is seen as the ultimate end or goal of our acting morally. Just as the ideal of systematic unity helps reason to find unity in nature, so the ideal of the highest good helps us to act morally. Thus, the ideal is given a kind of objective practical reality in that it indirectly relates to man's intentions and actions.

Let us consider the reality of the Postulate of God from a theoretical point of view. "Three theoretical concepts are presupposed: freedom, immortality, and God. Since they are pure concepts of reason, however, no corresponding intuition can be given and consequently no objective reality for them can be found in a theoretical way." (Pr.R. 139)⁷⁹ Thus, from a theoretical point of view, the Postulate of God, like the Idea of God has no objective reality.

This is the point Kant is trying to make when he asserts the reality of the Postulate of God but qualifies it by saying it is real only from a practical point

79 cf. Pr.R. 4 f., 58, 140, C.J. 308, 321 f.

of view, or for practical use.⁸⁰ The two points of view are well illustrated in the following quote:

No assertorical knowledge is required (even of God's existence), since with our lack of insight into supersensible objects, such avowal might well be dissembled; rather is it merely a problematic assumption (hypothesis) regarding the highest cause of things that is presupposed speculatively, yet with an eye to the object towards which our morally legislative reason bids us strive - an assertorical faith, practical and therefore free, and giving promise of the realization of this its ultimate aim. This faith needs merely the Idea of God . . . it need not presume that it can certify the objective reality of this Idea through theoretical apprehension. (R. 142)

Is the Postulate of God a fiction? Yes, from a theoretical point of view! Kant still speaks of assuming or presupposing the existence of God.⁸¹ "The righteous man may say: I will that there be a God", but this doesn't prove that there really is a God. (Pr.R. 149) It is only from the practical point of view that it is seen as an assertion, but this has nothing to do with its theoretical fictional nature. Vaihinger correctly emphasizes this fictional aspect of the Postulate of God but he forgets entirely the practical point of view. Thus we see that Kant isn't contradicting his epistemology as given in the first Critique, by giving the Postulate of God practical reality. He is not letting

80 Pr.R. 45, 49, 51, 109, 110, 138, 142, B xxi, C.J. 307

81 B xxx, Pr.R. 4, 12n, 59, 130, 137, C.J. 322

God in through a back door as Heine and Richards believed.⁸²

By saying that the Postulate is a useful and necessary fiction, we must always keep in mind that this doesn't preclude the possible reality of God. I merely cannot know his reality. This restricts one to a fictional use of the Postulate of God even though he may be real. This is the point Adickes rightly emphasizes, but he fails to acknowledge the fictional nature of the Postulate of God for Kant.

The Idea of God was a problematic concept. The Postulate of God is assertorical from a practical point of view.⁸³ The Idea of God was problematical because its possibility could not be assured since ours is only a sensible intuition and therefore God cannot be given in sense experience. Morality supplies the objective reality of the Idea of God without any intuition in the sense explained above. Thus, the concept of God now is from a practical point of view, an assertion.

However, from a theoretical point of view, the Postulate of God is still problematical.⁸⁴ We still don't know the nature of God.⁸⁵ Theoretically, the

82 see Introduction

83 Pr.R. 7, 139, 140, R. 142n

84 cf. C.J. 304

85 Pr.R. 138

Postulate of God has no objective reality.

From a theoretical point of view, the highest good is an Idea never realizable on earth but an ideal towards which we constantly strive. The realization of this highest good remains problematical in another sense, in that it cannot be completed but it is seen as our duty to promote it. Here we see that the practical Idea is just like the Idea of systematic unity. Both are problems given to man to promote.⁸⁶

2. Necessity

a) The Idea of God For Kant, necessity refers primarily to the apriori necessity and strict universality of synthetic apriori principles.⁸⁷ "Any knowledge that professes to hold apriori lays claim to be regarded as absolutely necessary." (A xv) "The apriori conditions of intuition are absolutely necessary conditions of any possible experience." (B 199)

Kant admits that we have an Idea of an absolutely necessary being. However, as soon as we consider this being in itself and regard its existence, the Idea of absolute necessity disappears. Reason can annihilate the Idea without contradiction. "Absolute necessity is

⁸⁶ Zilian, Die Ideen 48 f.

⁸⁷ B 3 f., B 64, A 106, B 280

a necessity which is found in thought alone." (B 645)

"If therefore, in the field of theoretical knowledge, the absolute necessity of a thing were to be known, this could only be from apriori concepts and never by positing it as a cause relative to an existence given in experience." (B 662) The inevitable error consists of considering concepts like space, time, and God as existing in themselves and having absolute necessity. This is simply false. "The concept of necessity is only to be found in our reason, as a formal condition of thought; it does not allow of being hypostatized as a material condition of existence." (B 648)

Kant does however, introduce other notions of necessity. Why does reason strive for unity and thus assume an Idea of the unconditioned? Kant says reason must do so by its very nature.⁸⁸ They [Ideas] are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself." (B 384) "Ideas are just as natural to it as the categories are to the understanding." (B 670) Thus, Kant claims the Ideas are subjectively necessary. In a sense, the categories too are subjective, proceeding from understanding but the difference is that categories are conditions of experience while Ideas are only

88 A vii, B 380, B 502, B 612, B 614, B 618

conditions of reflection on experience. Thus the concept of cause isn't subjectively necessary.⁸⁹ An Idea is subjectively necessary because it arises only because our reason by its very nature is discursive.⁹⁰ The necessity here is based on a subjective need of reason to look for the unconditioned.⁹¹ The subjectivity is also proved by the fact that both sides of the antinomy find conditions of their necessity in the very nature of reason.⁹²

Kant also speaks of hypothetical necessity. "Once an end is accepted, the conditions of its attainment are hypothetically necessary." (B 851) Given the end, namely systematic unity, one can state the absolutely necessary conditions of the realization of this end. But, since the end itself is only subjectively necessary, the conditions likewise are really only subjectively necessary.

The inevitable move of reason consists of seeing this subjective necessity as objectively necessary. "Transcendental illusion" results when we "take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts,

89 B 168

90 C.J. 253 ff.

91 Pr.R. 147, cf. B 662

92 B 449

which is to the advantage of the understanding, for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves". (B 353)⁹³ This is the natural and unavoidable dialectic of pure reason.

b) The Postulate of God Since I have already considered the necessity involved in postulating God from a practical point of view,⁹⁴ I will deal with this very briefly.

"The assumption [i.e. of the Postulates] is as necessary as the moral law." (Pr.R. 149n) Thus both the moral law and the Postulate of God are objectively necessary from a practical point of view.⁹⁵ Kant even goes so far as to attribute absolute necessity to both in so far as the moral law is a practical synthetic a priori condition of moral experience.⁹⁶

From a theoretical point of view however, both the moral law with its object and the Postulates have mere subjective necessity like the Idea of God. The following quote illustrates the two points of view: "Here we have a ground of assent which, in comparison to the speculative reason, is only subjective, but which is just as valid objectively to a practical but equally pure reason." (Pr.R. 4) The Postulates have subjective

93 cf. B 676

94 see p. 28 ff.

95 Pr.R. 151, M.E. 37, 40, C.J. 251

96 B 662, B 851, B 856, M.E. 40, 101, Pr.R. 139, 148

necessity as a need of pure reason.⁹⁷ "My conviction is not logical but moral certainty, and since it rests on subjective grounds (of moral sentiment), I must not even say, 'It is morally certain that there is a God etc.' but, 'I am morally certain, etc.' " (B 857)

The completion of the highest good cannot occur in this world.⁹⁸ Thus, theoretically it is given us as a task, and the assumption of full completion in the future is merely subjectively necessary, due to reason's need to see that which is its duty, as complete.

3. Epistemological Status

a) The Idea of God We have already discussed Kant's refusal to allow knowledge of God.⁹⁹ We cannot know God. We merely assume or presuppose the Idea of God.¹⁰⁰ It is important to realize what we are assuming and how we assume. We are not assuming a real God but merely an object of a mere Idea. "We misapprehend the meaning of this Idea if we regard it as the assertion or even the assumption of a real thing." (B 709) "It is not assumed as something that is real absolutely and in itself." (B 709) "None the less, though I cannot assume such

97 Pr.R. 4, cf. Pr.R. 130, 147, 151,

98 Pr.R. 129, 150

99 see p. 14 f.

100 B 661 f., B 702, B 704 f., B 707, B 709, Pr.R. 147

an inconceivable being in itself, I may yet assume it as the object of a mere Idea." (B 705) This object in the Idea is "only a schema for which no object, not even a hypothetical one, is directly given." (B 698)

How do we assume it? We assume it only in a relative sense.¹⁰¹ We assume it for the purpose of furthering systematic unity and extending our knowledge of the world. We assume the Idea of God as a "schema of the regulative principle of the systematic unity of all knowledge of nature." (B 702) It is an optional or contingent presupposition, dependent on our desire to extend our knowledge of nature.¹⁰²

"Cognizable things are of three kinds: things of opinion; things of fact; and things of faith." (C.J. 319)¹⁰³ The Idea of God can be none of these because it isn't cognizable. However, Kant allows an analogon of practical belief, namely doctrinal belief.¹⁰⁴ "In such cases the expression of belief is, from the objective point of view, an expression of modesty, and yet at the same time, from the subjective point of view, an expression of the firmness of our confidence." (B 855)

101 B 704

102 B 661 f.

103 cf. B 850

104 B 853 f.

We have subjective grounds for assuming the Idea of God, i.e. its guidance in empirical employment. In this way it corresponds in some sense to the subjectively sufficient grounds of holding to a moral belief. This will become clearer when we discuss true believing.

b) The Postulate of God From a theoretical point of view, the Postulate of God is not knowledge, but merely belief, which is in part an assumption.¹⁰⁵ "I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith." (B xxx) Repeatedly Kant claims the Postulate of God is assumed or presupposed.¹⁰⁶ "Thus the cognition of the latter [i.e. Postulates] is neither knowledge nor opinion of the being and character of these conditions, regarded as theoretical, but is a mere assumption in a reference which is practical and commanded for the moral use of our reason." (C.J. 322)

From a practical point of view however, it is more than an assumption. Now it is a Postulate, Kant often contrasts postulating with assuming. "At some future time we shall show that the moral laws do not merely presuppose the existence of a supreme being, but also, as themselves in a different connection absolutely

105 B 850 f. C.J. 319 ff.

106 Pr.R. 5, 12n, 59, 130, 137, 148, 149n, 150, 151, B xxx, B 498, B 502, B 662, M.E. 80, C.J. 301, 324, R. 142n

necessary, justify us in postulating it, though, indeed, only from a practical point of view." (B 662)¹⁰⁷ This latter clause is significant. The only difference between a Postulate and an assumption is that a Postulate can also be seen from a practical point of view where it is more than an assumption. "By a Postulate of pure reason, I understand a theoretical proposition which is not as such demonstrable", but, which can also be seen from another point of view. (Pr.R. 127)¹⁰⁸ A Postulate is a hybrid between knowledge and mere assuming only if considered from two points of view. This is clearly illustrated in the following quote: "But it is only from a practical point of view that the theoretically insufficient holding of a thing to be true can be termed believing." (B 851) "If our holding of a judgement be only subjectively sufficient, [i.e. practically] and is at the same time taken as being objectively insufficient, [i.e. theoretically] we have what is termed believing." (B 850) "Faith is the moral attitude of reason as to belief in that which is unattainable by theoretical cognition." (C.J. 324)

From within a strictly practical point of view,

107 cf. B 661, Pr.R. 147 f.

108 cf. Pr.R. 137, B 846

Kant can go even further and call this knowledge. Kant asks whether our knowledge is really widened by pure practical reason. He answers; "Certainly, but only from a practical point of view". (Pr.R. 138)¹⁰⁹ He devotes two sections to a consideration of the problem of how we can have practical reason.¹¹⁰ We have already seen how practical reason creates its own objects. It is thus that "practical concepts a priori in relation to the supreme principle of freedom immediately become cognitions, not needing to wait for intuitions in order to acquire meaning". (Pr.R. 68) This is practical knowledge from a practical point of view.

This strict dichotomy which I have stressed is open to two apparent criticisms which I want to answer now. First of all, it can be pointed out that Kant does claim that theoretical knowledge is extended by this practical knowledge.

By this, then, the theoretical knowledge of pure reason does gain an accession but it consists only in this - that those concepts which for it are otherwise problematical (merely thinkable) are now described assertorically as actually having objects. . . . Theoretical reason is, therefore, justified in assuming them." (Pr.R. 139)

It was therefore no extension of knowledge of given supersensuous objects but still an extension of theoretical reason and of its knowledge with

109 cf. Pr.R. 52, 142, B xxi, B 823

110 Pr.R. 52 ff. 139 ff.

respect to the supersensuous in general, inasmuch as knowledge is compelled to concede that there are such objects without more exactly defining them, and thus without being able to extend this knowledge of objects given to it only on practical grounds and only for practical use. (Pr.R. 140)

The latter clause gives us the answer. It is only from within a strictly practical point of view that theoretical reason is seen as being supplied with practical objects. These objects aren't empirical objects, so it still isn't theoretical knowledge. "This too is not yet knowledge [i.e. theoretical] of these objects, for we can thereby neither make synthetic judgements about them nor theoretically determine their application. Consequently, we can make no theoretical rational use of them, and it is in this that all speculative knowledge of reason actually consists." (Pr.R. 140)¹¹¹ I conclude that Kant is not contradicting himself in saying that theoretical knowledge gains an accession, because it does so only from a practical point of view. Kant clearly denies a theoretical extension from a theoretical point of view.

The second objection to the assertion that practical knowledge isn't real knowledge is Kant's doctrine of the primacy of practical reason. Why did Kant have to assert such a primacy? The argument runs that he

¹¹¹ cf. Pr.R. 4, 12n, 50, 139, C.J. 311, 307

had to do so because the theoretical prohibition of knowledge of God was a threat to the practical assertion of God's existence. In other words, practical knowledge is really theoretical because Kant saw the prohibitions of theoretical knowledge as contradicting the assertions of practical knowledge.

This objection does injustice to Kant's theory. It fails to see that practical knowledge must be seen from two points of view. From a practical point of view it is different from theoretical knowledge, not contradictory to it. "It is not a question of which must yield, for one does not necessarily conflict with the other." (Pr.R. 125) The assertion of the Postulate of God by practical reason in no way contradicts theoretical reason's refusal to allow knowledge of God, because the assertion isn't a theoretical claim. Kant asserted the primacy of practical reason because practical reason added a practical point of view and because, "every interest is ultimately practical". (Pr.R. 126) Kant is merely objecting to a person accepting the theoretical criteria of knowledge and refusing to accept something different; a different point of view which in no way conflicts with his justifiably held theoretical point of view. This person must act morally, and in so doing

he must accept the other point of view. "The doctrine of primacy prevents what is a difference from becoming an incompatibility, by establishing an order of subordination instead of coordination."¹¹²

Therefore, I conclude that Kant justifiably can assert the possibility of practical knowledge of God, without contradicting his previous epistemology. We can have faith in God. We can, because this practical knowledge or faith must be seen from two points of view. It is an assertion only from a practical point of view. Theoretically it is still a mere assumption.

IV PROOF OF THE IDENTITY OF THE TWO CONCEPTS OF GOD

A. An Objection Disproven by the Comparison

In the preceeding two chapters, we have been comparing the Idea of God and the Postulate of God in Kant's first two Critiques. The results of this comparison have given an answer to the most serious objection to my thesis.

The objection runs thus: The Idea of God is totally different from the Postulate of God. The Idea is a product of theoretical reason. The Postulate arises from practical reason. The Idea is merely a schema of a regulative principle. We merely assume it in order to further the systematic unity, which is so essential, if reason's empirical employment is to be extended. The Postulate, however, is used as a constitutive principle. We assert it as objectively real, due to moral considerations. It is simply absurd to try to identify two concepts which are entirely different.

The objection is invalid, because it misinterprets Kant's Critique of Practical Reason. We have proven that the differences are merely apparent, and arise only if the Postulate of God is considered from a practical point of view alone. Beneath these apparent differences there are underlying similarities if we consider

both the Idea of God and the Postulate of God from the same theoretical point of view. We have already considered some similarities at the end of the second chapter.

Both concepts are used as regulative principles. In both cases we act as if there were a God. Both concepts are not objectively real but are merely assumed. In neither case does Kant admit a theoretical knowledge of God and thus he stays true to his theory of knowledge.

In proving the similarities of these two concepts of God, we have not only overcome the most serious objection to my thesis, but we have prepared the way for proving their essential identity. We have not as yet shown that they are in essence identical. Two concepts may have many similarities and yet be different. However, now their basic identity is at least possible. We wish to prove it to be actual.

B. The Real Purpose of the Critique of Pure Reason

1. What is Metaphysics?

The first Critique is a treatise on metaphysics. Metaphysics for Kant includes a consideration of the basic Ideas required by morality.

Metaphysics has as the proper objects ['Zwecke'] which should be translated 'aims'] of its enquiries three Ideas only: God, freedom, and immortality.
. . . Any other matters with which this science may deal serve merely as a means of arriving at these

Ideas and of establishing their reality. It does not need the Ideas for the purposes of natural science, but in order to pass beyond nature. Insight into them would render theology and morals, and through the union of these two, likewise religion, and therewith the highest ends of our existence, entirely and exclusively dependent on the faculty of speculative reason. (B 395n)

The real purpose of the Critique is the consideration of the Ideas which aren't needed for natural science but for morality. It seems to me most commentators have failed to see this as the ultimate purpose of Kant's writing. This is why the "Dialectic" is the major part (two thirds) of the book. The "other matters" Kant refers to are covered in the "Analytic". Kant goes on to say that if this first Critique could give us insight into these Ideas, then morality would need only the conclusions of speculative reason as its support. Kant has shown that the first Critique can't give us knowledge of the Ideas. Therefore their reality must be proven from other considerations. However, the purpose of the first Critique is still to tailor these Ideas for the use of the second Critique. How it does this we shall consider later.

The same emphasis is repeated by Kant in other places.

These unavoidable problems set by pure reason itself are God, freedom, and immortality. The science which, with all its preparations, is in its final intention directed solely to their solution is metaphysics. (B 7)

God, freedom, and immortality are the problems at the solution of which all the preparations of metaphysics aim, as their ultimate and unique purpose. (C.J. 325)¹

For Kant, metaphysics, or philosophy in the true sense, "is the science of the relation of all knowledge to the essential ends of human reason." (B 867)² The essential ends of reason are moral.³ Kant calls this notion of philosophy a "conceptus cosmicus". I agree wholeheartedly with H.R. Lindgren when he says, "Accordingly, we must conclude that the central intention of Kant's thought was to return philosophy to its primeval bearing, viz, the relation of all knowledge to the essential ends of human reason,"⁴

Kant claims that down through the centuries, the primary aim of philosophy was to get knowledge of God. "Accordingly, theology and morals were the two motives, or rather the two points of reference, in all those abstract enquires of reason to which men came to devote themselves." (B 881)⁵ This attempt to get knowledge was later called metaphysics. Kant goes even further and claims that reason's natural drive to the uncondi-

1 cf. B xix, B 874

2 cf. B 877 f.

3 B 846, B 868

4 J.R. Lindgren, "Conceptus Cosmicus" p. 300

5 cf. B xxxii f. B 502

tioned is motivated by the needs of morality.

Is this endeavor [of reason to find a systematic whole] the outcome merely of speculative interests of reason? Must we not rather regard it as having its source exclusively in the practical interests of reason? (B 825)

The ultimate aim to which the speculation of reason in its transcendental employment is directed concerns three objects: the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God. In respect of all three the merely speculative interest of reason is very small. (B 826)

Kant goes on to show the real moral interests of reason in these three objects and concludes by saying: "It is evident that the ultimate intention of nature in her wise provision for us has indeed, in the constitution of our reason, been directed to moral interests alone."

(B 829) The Ideas "are so many foundation stones of morals and religion". (B 499) "If there is no primordial being distinct from the world . . . moral Ideas and principles lose all validity and share in the fate of the transcendental Ideas which served as their theoretical support." (B 496)

Thus, I conclude that we are wrong in separating these two Critiques. We are wrong in separating the Ideas from the Postulates. Both are united in one master plan of Kant's. Kant himself admits that reason at first presents these two elements as "two distinct systems, but ultimately in one single philosophical system". (B 868)

In fact, the Postulates are "the sole means of reconciling the speculative with the practical interest".

(B 770) As man gains interest in morality, "we shall find reason very teachable and in itself more enlightened as regards the uniting of the speculative with the practical interest". (B 858n)

2. Kant's Method

Let us look a little more closely at Kant's method to see how these two Critiques actually do present a unity. "This attempt to alter the procedure which has hitherto prevailed in metaphysics . . . forms indeed the main purpose of this Critique of pure speculative reason." (B xxii) Kant's new procedure was his thesis that objects must conform to our knowledge rather than vice versa.⁶ This explains how apriori knowledge is possible.⁷ "We can know apriori of things only what we ourselves put into them." (B xviii) But, the important point here is the restriction of apriori knowledge to "objects" or "things". Kant's aim includes not only the sources and extent of apriori knowledge but also its limits.⁸ We cannot have apriori knowledge of transcendent objects. "For we are brought to the conclusion

6 B xvi

7 B xix, cf. B 22

8 A xii

that we can never transcend the limits of possible experience, though that is precisely what this science is concerned above all else to achieve." (B xix) This sounds detrimental to the real aim of the Critique, but it isn't.

"On a cursory view of the present work it may seem that its results are merely negative, warning us that we must never venture with speculative reason beyond the limits of experience. Such in fact is its primary use." (B xxiv) We cannot have knowledge of God. Thus Kant argues against the dogmatists, the prime example of whom is Wolff.⁹ The dogmatist asserted that it is possible to prove the existence of God. But if this is so, then it is also possible to disprove this, a possibility taken advantage of by the skeptic and by Kant. Kant destroys all the basic arguments for the existence of God. But this is detrimental to morality which needs the Postulate of God. "The dogmatism of metaphysics . . . is the source of all that unbelief, always very dogmatic, which wars against morality". (B xxx) Kant, by showing the limits of apriori knowledge has destroyed this dogmatic procedure, so harmful to morality.

Thus, Kant's Critique also acquires positive

9 B xxxvi f. B 884, cf. B 789

value.¹⁰ If we cannot have knowledge of God, we cannot disprove his existence just as we cannot prove it. Here Kant also destroys the claim of the skeptic, like Hume.¹¹

Whenever I hear that a writer of real ability has demonstrated away the freedom of the human will, the hope of a future life, and the existence of God I am eager to read the book, for I expect him by his talents to increase my insight into these matters. Already before having opened it, I am perfectly certain that he has not justified any one of his specific claims; not because I believe that I am in possession of conclusive proofs of these important propositions, but because the transcendental critique which has disclosed to me all the resources of our pure reason, has completely convinced me that, as reason is incompetent to arrive at affirmative assertions in this field, it is equally unable, indeed even less able, to establish any negative conclusion in regard to these questions. (B 781)

We can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God.¹²

Thus, Kant protects morality from the deadly blow of the skeptic.¹³ It is in this way that Kant's metaphysics is the "bulwark" of religion and morality.¹⁴

This procedure however, has another positive result, and this is really the important one for Kant. By showing that neither proofs nor disproofs of the existence of God are valid, Kant has made room for a practical faith in God.

10 B xxiv f.

11 B 788 ff., B 884, Cf. Pr.R. 52 ff.

12 B 669, B 701, B 767, f., B 770

13 B xxxi

14 B 877

I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith. (B xxx)¹⁵

So far, therefore, as our Critique limits speculative reason, it is indeed negative; but since it thereby removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason, nay threatens to destroy it, it has in reality a positive and very important use. At least this is so, immediately we are convinced that there is an absolutely necessary practical employment of pure reason - the moral - in which it inevitably goes beyond the limits of sensibility. Though [practical] reason in thus proceeding requires no assistance from speculative reason, it must yet be assured against its opposition, that reason may not be brought into conflict with itself. (B xxv)

But when all progress in the field of the supersensible has thus been denied to speculative reason, it is still open to us to enquire whether in the practical knowledge of reason, data may not be found sufficient to determine reason's transcendent concept of the unconditioned, and so to enable us, in accordance with the wish of metaphysics, and by means of knowledge that is possible apriori, though only from a practical point of view, to pass beyond the limits of all possible experience. Speculative reason has thus at least made room for such an extension; and if it must at the same time leave it empty, yet none the less we are at liberty, indeed we are summoned, to take occupation of it, if we can, by practical data of reason. (B xxi f.)

What should be especially noticed in the above quote is that practical knowledge attaches itself to the Idea of speculative reason.¹⁶ Here again we see a clear identification of the Postulate with the Idea. "Taken positively, Kant has disengaged the contradictions inevitably incurred when considered by speculative reason and in so

¹⁵ cf. B 772f., B 822

¹⁶ cf. B 669

doing has made that object available to the consideration of practical reason."¹⁷ Thus, Kant can be said to be dressing up the Ideas, so they are fit and ready to be used by practical reason. This further step, in the positive value of the first Critique we shall consider in the next section.

C. Ideas as the Basis of the Postulates

1. Freedom as an Example of this Connection

Kant shows how the Ideas provide the basis upon which the Postulates are built, using the concept of freedom as an example.¹⁸ The "Analytic" of the first Critique has proven that all speculative knowledge is limited to mere objects of experience. It also proved that behind appearance there must be something that appears, namely a thing in itself. We cannot know this thing in itself, but we must be able to think it, that is, it must not be logically self-contradictory.¹⁹ The distinction between appearance which I can know and the thing in itself which I can only think also entails a restriction of the application of the categories to appearance only, thus allowing the possibility of freedom

¹⁷ Lindgren, "Conceptus Cosmicus" p. 283

¹⁸ B xxv ff.

¹⁹ B xxvi

to apply to the thing in itself. Without the distinction one couldn't say of one and the same thing, namely a human soul, that it is free and not free at the same time.

Thus freedom can be thought. "But though I cannot know, I can yet think freedom; that is to say, the representation of it is at least not self-contradictory." (B xxviii) The first Critique provides the basis for the Postulate of freedom by proving an Idea of freedom which is not self-contradictory and which does not contradict the category of causality. "Morality does not, indeed, require that freedom should be understood, but only that it should not contradict itself, and so should at least allow of being thought." (B xxix) If speculative reason had not been able to prove the logical possibility of freedom, then morality could not have produced a Postulate of freedom.²⁰ Whether, in fact, Kant has really satisfactorily provided an Idea of freedom which is free of self-contradiction is a question I must disregard.

The first Critique proves the logical possibility of freedom. The second Critique proves the real possibility of freedom. Real possibility equals logical

20 B xxix

possibility plus a relation to some other fact whose reality is given.²¹ This reality "need not however, be sought in the theoretical sources of knowledge; it may lie in those that are practical." (B xxvi n) The first Critique could prove neither the reality nor the real possibility of freedom.²² This was provided only after practical considerations were added, but this addition could be made only after theoretical reason prepared the way by providing an Idea of reason, which practical reason could use.

Thus Kant has proved that the Postulate of freedom is based on the Idea of freedom. "It should especially be noted that the practical concept of freedom is based on this transcendental Idea." (B 561) "The denial of transcendental freedom must, therefore involve the elimination of all practical freedom." (B 562) Practical reason merely proves the objective reality of this logically possible Idea of freedom. "With the pure practical faculty of reason, the reality of transcendental freedom is also confirmed." (Pr.R. 3) Thus Kant frequently interchanges the two concepts, because for

21 Beck, A Commentary 273n, cf. B 266 ff., B 302n, Pr.R. 109, M.E. 91 f. B 282 ff.

22 B 585 f., Pr.R. 7, 49, 50, 137 f.

him, they are basically the same.²³

2. The Idea of God as the Basis of the Postulate of God

We have shown how Kant considers the Idea of freedom a basis for the Postulate of freedom. Kant considers this an example of what could be done for the other Ideas. "This discussion as to the positive advantage of critical principles of pure reason can be similarly developed in regard to the concept of God." (B xxix)

Not only has the first Critique protected the concept of God from the skeptic, but it has prepared the way for a practical knowledge of God.²⁴ Theoretical reason provides practical reason with an Idea of God which is free from contradiction. It is an "Ideal without a flaw". (B 669)²⁵ Theoretical reason has also proven that there is no contradiction between contingency of natural things and the assumption of a necessary intelligible condition of all things.²⁶ Whether or not Kant has in actual fact proved the logical possibility of the concept of God is again a question with which we will not concern ourselves.

23 Pr.R. 28, 100, B 574 f.

24 B xxx

25 Pr.R. 4, 140

26 B 590

Again it is not the purpose of theoretical reason to prove either the reality or the real possibility of the Idea of God. "In these remarks we have no intention of proving the unconditionally necessary existence of such a being, or even of establishing the possibility of a purely intelligible condition of the existence of appearances in the sensible world" (B 590)²⁷ Theoretical reason merely proves the logical possibility of the concept of God. Practical reason goes further and gives to this concept of God not only real possibility but also "objective reality".

These Postulates are not theoretical dogmas but presuppositions of necessarily practical import; thus while they do not extend speculative knowledge, they give objective reality to the Ideas of speculative reason in general (by means of their relation to the practical sphere), and they justify it in holding to concepts even the possibility of which it could not otherwise venture to affirm." (Pr.R. 137)

Reason is not hereby extended however, in its theoretical knowledge; the only thing which is different is that the possibility, which was heretofore a problem, now becomes an assertion, and the practical use of reason is thus connected with the elements of theoretical reason. (Pr.R. 4)

The "possibility" mentioned in both of the above quotes is "real possibility" which couldn't be proven by theoretical reason but which was supplied by practical data.²⁸

²⁷ cf. Pr.R. 4

²⁸ B xxvi n, cf. Pr.R. 3, 5, 7

Before the concept of God was merely thinkable; now it is described assertorically as having an object.²⁹

On the basis of the above evidence, I conclude that the Postulate of God is the Idea of God with some practical considerations added to it.

D. Additional Considerations

This section may appear to be an assortment of odds and ends but it seems impossible to avoid this because these odds and ends don't quite fit into, what I hope has been a tight argument until now. However, they do add to my total argument, so I will include them in this fashion.

Here I wish to call attention, if I may, to one thing, namely, that every step which one takes with pure reason, even in the practical field where one does not take subtle speculation into account, so neatly and naturally dovetails with all parts of the critique of theoretical reason that it is as if each step had been carefully thought out merely to establish this confirmation. This agreement was by no means sought after. It is rather (as one can convince himself if he only follows moral considerations back to their principles) a self-evident agreement between the most important propositions of practical reason with the often seemingly too subtle and unnecessary remarks of the critique of speculative reason. (Pr.R. 110)

The nature of this agreement we have already considered.

This is repeated again in the following quotes:

29 Pr.R. 138, 139

"Concepts of reason may perhaps make possible a transition from the concepts of nature to the practical concepts, and in that way may give support to the moral Ideas themselves, bringing them into connection with the speculative knowledge of reason." (B 386)

Of the second Critique, Kant says:

The concepts and principles of the pure speculative reason are now and again reexamined in this work, in spite of the fact that they have already been scrutinized in the Critique of Pure Reason . . . These concepts of reason are now seen in transition to an altogether different use from that made of them in the first Critique. Such a transition makes necessary a comparison of their old and new employment, in order to distinguish clearly the new path from the previous one and at the same time to call attention to the connection between them. (Pr.R. 7)³⁰

Kant here is clearly referring to the connection between the Postulates and the Ideas. Thus we can make another conclusion from our detailed comparison in Chapter III. The comparison really involved one common element, the concept of God, which was used differently and which was considered from a different point of view in each case. However, in each case, it was still the concept of God that was being compared. The concept of God which in the first Critique was problematic, now is real.³¹

The same concept which before was transcendent and

³⁰ cf. Pr.R. 5 f.

³¹ Pr.R. 4, 7, 139

regulative, now is immanent and constitutive.³² What before was presupposed, now is postulated.³³ Many other examples could be given which show that Kant was comparing one and the same concept by seeing it from two points of view.

Beneath the differences, there is unity. This is perhaps easier to see if we consider both concepts first from a theoretical point of view alone. I have done this in my comparison and we saw that the nature and use of the Postulate was identical with the Idea, i.e. $P_t = I$. Let us now consider the Postulate alone but from both points of view. The theoretical point of view and the practical point of view are merely two sides of one coin, i.e. $P = P_t + P_p$. Therefore, $P_t = P - P_p$. Using our symbols it is easy to see that if $P_t = I$ and $P_t = P - P_p$, then $I = P - P_p$. The Postulate is merely the Idea in disguise.

Kant speaks of the physico-theological proof, which formed part of the basis of the Idea of God, as giving additional weight to other proofs, if there were such.³⁴ He is of course alluding to the moral proof and thus we see here that the two proofs refer to the same God. Practical considerations swing "the balance

³² Pr.R. 140, cf. Pr.R. 138

³³ B 662

³⁴ B 665

so delicately preserved by the indecisiveness of speculation", in favor of the Idea of God which speculative reason couldn't prove. (B 617) God as the ground of the highest good is also the cause of nature.³⁵ Kant sees a basic unity between moral teleology and physical teleology, both pointing to the same God.³⁶ Moral theology leads to a concept of God of which speculative theology could not yield any conviction.³⁷ The decision to postulate a God on the basis of moral considerations agrees with the theoretical need of reason in assuming the Idea of God.³⁸

Kant often claims that once practical reason has shown the moral necessity of postulating the concept of God, then theoretical reason can add to this same concept of God, considerations of its own.

In this, [i.e. the moral considerations] speculative reason was only a spectator, or at best, it had the merit of embellishing a concept which did not grow on its own ground and of promoting it with a series of confirmations drawn from the observation of nature. (Pr.R. 146)

For if, in some other relation, perhaps on practical grounds, the presupposition of a supreme and all sufficient being, as highest intelligence, established its validity beyond all question, it would be of the greatest importance accurately to determine this concept on its transcendental side, as the concept of a necessary and supremely real being, [i.e.

35 Pr.R. 130, cf. R. 142n

36 B 843, C.J. 298, 307, 330, R. 5

37 B 842

38 Pr.R. 151

as the Idea of God.] (B 668) In considering the history of human thought, Kant says it was only when moral ideas came to the fore that they could correct the "crude and incoherent concepts of the Deity", provided by considerations which until then had been primarily theoretical.³⁹

We must also keep in mind that ultimately practical reason and speculative reason are one and the same reason.⁴⁰ "The practical employment of reason . . . is closely bound up with its speculative employment." (B 424) Thus, we can expect that this one reason will come up with only one concept of God which can be used in two different ways. This is already implied in our previous considerations. The concept of God "is completely satisfactory from every human point of view for both the speculative and practical use of our reason". (C.J. 248)

The above sundry considerations again reaffirm my conclusion that basically the Postulate of God and the Idea of God refer to one and the same concept.

E. The Major Objection Reconsidered

I wish to reconsider the major objection to my thesis as formulated by Schweitzer, although there are

39 B 845, cf. Pr.R. 145

40 see above p.25 f.

others who also disagree with my thesis.⁴¹ I shall deal only with Schweitzer because he best summarizes the objections which are also contained in the other writings.

Schweitzer admits that in the "Dialectic" of the first Critique Kant intended to present one philosophy of religion, with one God. "The Ideas which are realized in the practical realm are prepared for this task by the instrumentality of critical idealism."⁴² "This is to take place in this manner, so that theoretical reason may guide the transcendental Idea in question through all phases up to its limits where it is ready to transcend it (using a passport which documents its origin in the land of critical idealism) and to settle down in the realm of the practical use of pure reason."⁴³ Here Schweitzer agrees with my thesis.

However, Schweitzer argues that in the development of Kant's thought, Kant retracts this previous claim and separates entirely the moral and the metaphysical God. This process of separation begins already in

41 Schweitzer, The Essence of Faith
cf. Webb, Kant's Philosophy of Religion 172 ff.
Beck, Commentary to Kant 281 ff

42 Schweitzer, The Essence of Faith 18

43 Schweitzer, The Essence of Faith 35

the "Canon" of the first Critique, but here, "the two great trains of thought which appear later in Kant's philosophy of religion are found side by side in a somewhat confused state".⁴⁴ This separation is fully completed in the Critique of Practical Reason.

This difference in the arrangement in the sketch of a philosophy of religion [the "Canon"] and the Critique of Practical Reason lies in the fact that in the former, the realized magnitudes are not yet Ideas, and in the latter they are no longer Ideas. The escalation which drives the realized magnitudes beyond the concept of Ideas in the Critique of Practical Reason took place by a deepening of the ethical content.⁴⁵

Let us look very briefly at Schweitzer's main arguments. In the "Canon", Kant begins to bring in practical considerations and in so doing, we begin to see the separation of the two realms, especially with respect to the concept of freedom. Schweitzer bases his argument primarily on two quotes from Kant:

The question of transcendental freedom is a matter for speculative knowledge only, and when we are dealing with the practical, we can leave it aside as being an issue with which we have no concern. (B 831 f.)

I must first remark that for the present I shall employ the concept of freedom in this practical sense only, leaving aside that other transcendental meaning which cannot be empirically made use of in explanation of appearances, but is itself a problem for reason, as has been already shown. (B 829 f.)

44 Schweitzer, The Essence of Faith 33

45 Schweitzer, The Essence of Faith 73 f.

Schweitzer concludes: "But now we behold the spectacle that at the point where practical freedom steps on the scene it rejects all connection with the transcendental Idea of freedom because the latter has nothing to do with anything practical!"⁴⁶ This conclusion applies to the Idea of God as well.

In the Critique of Practical Reason, the Postulates are established without concern for the Ideas of speculative reason.⁴⁷ The Postulate of the existence of God was arrived at solely by the demands of practical reason, a fact which is emphasized by Kant's emphasis on the primacy of practical reason.

Thus we can note the curious fact that it is only on the basis of critical idealism that the Ideas of God, freedom, and immortality have been established as possible without science being able to claim otherwise in the interest of truth, but that these Ideas immediately undergo a transformation as soon as this possibility has been raised into a practically recognized reality by virtue of the experience of the moral law.⁴⁸

Schweitzer argues that Kant arbitrarily asserts the connection of the Postulates with the Ideas, in order to confirm the correctness of his procedure.⁴⁹ Schweitzer also argues that the possibility of this transformed

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| 46 | Schweitzer, <u>The Essence of Faith</u> | 36 |
| 47 | Schweitzer, <u>The Essence of Faith</u> | 68, see Pr.R. 110 |
| 48 | Schweitzer, <u>The Essence of Faith</u> | 71 |
| 49 | Schweitzer, <u>The Essence of Faith</u> | 41 |

Idea can no longer be supported with the means at the command of critical idealism.

Are Schweitzer's arguments valid? I agree with his description of Kant's thought. I agree that the Postulate of God is developed without consideration of the Idea of God. I agree that the Ideas undergo a radical transformation when they become Postulates. But I don't think this entails Schweitzer's conclusion: that for Kant they are entirely different and that one isn't the basis of the other. Schweitzer and others who agree with him, fail to see that the Postulate of God must be seen from two points of view. From a theoretical point of view, the Postulate is identical with the Idea. From a practical point of view the Postulate is developed independently from the Idea, but this doesn't preclude there being another side to this coin.

The two passages Schweitzer uses in support of his thesis (B 831 f B 829 f) don't in fact do so. The transcendental aspect of freedom can be left aside because in moral considerations we need only the practical side of the coin. This doesn't exclude the possibility that there is a theoretical side of the coin, identical with the Idea of freedom, which is the basis of practical freedom and alone makes it possible.

Kant develops the practical aspect of the Postulate of God quite independently of a consideration of its theoretical side but this in no way entails that there is no theoretical aspect to the Postulate which in fact makes possible its practical developement.

Schweitzer is also wrong in claiming that the possibility of the Postulate can no longer be supported with the means at the command of critical idealism. If critical idealism actually does support the possibility of the Idea of God (a problem which I don't consider in this thesis), then it also can support the possibility of the Postulate of God because the Postulate has a theoretical aspect which is identical with the Idea.

Schweitzer fails to do justice to the many times Kant does assert the connection, as I have shown previously in this chapter. Therefore, Schweitzer and others agreeing with him, have simply misinterpreted Kant's doctrine of the Idea and the Postulate of God. They have emphasized only the differences, failing to see the underlying similarities which I have tried to point out in Chapter III.

F. Conclusion

On the basis of the above considerations, I conclude therefore, that I have proved my thesis, namely, that, for Kant, the Postulate of God and the Idea of God

are in essence identical. The Postulate of God must be seen from a practical as well as a theoretical point of view. It is the latter which is identical with the Idea of God and provides the basis of the possibility of development in its practical aspects.

In my introduction, I pointed out a few side issues which would be clarified in the development of my thesis. In proving my thesis, I have, at the same time vindicated Kant's genius, proving that he didn't blatantly contradict himself by allowing a practical knowledge of God. Kant did not contradict his empiricism. He did not let in God "in the back door". He did not really give "Old Lampe" back his God which formerly he had taken from him. Kant rejected all the arguments for the existence of God and he maintained this position to the last. But, he wasn't an atheist. The same grounds which make it impossible to prove the existence of God make it equally impossible to disprove his existence. In other words, Kant was an agnostic.

But, it seems as if Kant couldn't quite rid himself of the notion that God really did exist. The "starry heavens above" and the "moral law within" actually required a real God. Kant wanted to know God, but his criteria for knowledge didn't allow this. So, he did

the next best thing. He proved on purely rational grounds, a Postulate of God, which was very useful; which was the ground of the moral law within; which was the designer of the starry heavens above; which in fact was very much like the Christian God; but which was still only an Idea.

Is there then no way out for Kant? Does Kant's reasonable empirical criterion of knowledge exclude the possibility of proving the existence of God? The words of the Christian message come to my mind: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands . . . we proclaim also to you."⁵⁰ "And the Word [God] became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."⁵¹ The crucial question which Kant failed to properly answer was the question Jesus asked of his disciples; "But who do you say that I am?"⁵²

50 I John 1:1-3

51 John 1:14

52 Mark 8:29

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