

Immanuel Kant's *Critiques* as Fulfillment of the Philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico*

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Abstract

It is documented that Kant stated in one of his *Lectures on Logic*, edited by G. B. Jäsche, that the field of philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico*, or according to the cosmopolitan concept, can be brought down to the four questions: 1) What can I know? 2) What ought I to do? 3) What may I hope? 4) What is man? We find the former three questions in the same order also in *Critique of Pure Reason*. Therefore it seems to us that Kant's critical philosophy, represented by his three *critiques*, is nothing other than the fulfillment of philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico*. But a rough guess is shaky and insufficient. I examine in this paper the correlation between three *critiques* plus *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and three questions in order to demonstrate that supposition on firm grounds. I emphasize the importance of the supplement to the answer to the first question in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and of the involved necessity for newly answering the third question, which is satisfied through *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

Keywords: philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico* (according to the cosmopolitan concept), *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*

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Preface

In his *Manual for Lectures on Logic*, edited by G. B. Jäsche, Kant defines his concept of philosophy. He distinguishes philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico*, or according to the cosmopolitan concept, from that *in sensu scholastico*, or according to the scholastic concept. While the latter means “the only science that has systematic connection in the most proper sense, and it gives systematic unity to all other sciences”, the former can be called “*a science of the highest maxim for the use of our reason*, insofar as we understand by a maxim the inner principle of choice among various ends.” In philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico* we relate therefore all our cognition as well as all our use of reason to the ultimate end of human reason. Its field can be brought down to the following four questions:

- 1) What can I know?
- 2) What ought I to do?
- 3) What may I hope?
- 4) What is man?

Log, AA 09: 25. 03-06.

We find the former three questions in the same order in the second section of the chapter “on the Canon of Pure Reason” i.e. the third last chapter of “*Transcendental Doctrine of Method.*” Kant states there:

All interest of my reason (the speculative as well as the practical) is united in the following three questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What should I do?
3. What may I hope?

KrV: A804-5/B832-3.

Kant explains then that he has already exhausted all possible replies to the first question which is merely

speculative, that he will next reply to the second question which is merely practical with his moral philosophy, and that he will finally, based on that, reply to the third question which is simultaneously speculative and practical. Therefore it seems to us that Kant's critical philosophy, represented by his three *critiques*, is nothing other than the fulfillment of philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico*. As it appears, he responds to the above questions one after another. However, we must be cautious not to come to a hasty conclusion. We have only to be reminded that it is doubtful whether the second and the third *critique* are assigned to the respective questions. The point of an argument can be described as follows:

1. To all appearances *Critique of Practical Reason* gives an answer not only to the second, but also to the third question, so that it seems that this is not reserved for the next work.
2. It is hard for us to explain why *Critique of the Power of Judgment* should exclusively deal with the third question which includes hope, although the judgment is normally identified with the cognition.
3. Kant had *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* published three years after the appearance of *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. It is in that work that he revealed his comprehensive view on religion. However, he had already stated elsewhere that we might be able to answer the third question only with religion. Then, was it not until the appearance of that work that he could give a complete answer to the third question?

In the following I investigate closely the relation between the three *critiques* as well as *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and the three questions. I hope that I can justify our assumption of Kant's critical philosophy as fulfillment of philosophy *in sensu cosmopolitico*.

1. Actual independence of the second question from the first

Because of Kant's ingenious description we assume very often that the three questions occur in orderly sequence and therefore the succeeding question is necessarily dependent on the preceding question. Yet, it does not take much observation for us to realize that there can be in the nature of things no actual

dependence of the second question on the first in contrast to the case with the relation between the second and the third. What one should do is what one should do; it is fixed, whether or not one has already given light to the limits of human knowledge. In order to do what one should do, one has no need to have the consciousness enlightened through transcendental philosophy. One's common moral "healthy" sense suffices for that purpose; otherwise only the transcendental philosopher would be able to justify his action. Judging from the text of the chapter "on the Canon of Pure Reason", Kant undoubtedly recognized the artificiality of the orderly succession between the two questions, when he completed the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*. He states the following:

The second question is merely practical. As such, to be sure, it can belong to pure reason, but in that case it is not transcendental, but moral, and thus it cannot be in itself a subject for our critique.

Krv: A805/B833.

In this regard, the way in which he treats the concept of freedom in the previous paragraph of that chapter is more noteworthy. Namely, explaining freedom as key to the practical field, Kant asserts as follows: We can set aside, as having been already dealt with, the transcendental signification of the concept of freedom so far as we concern ourselves with the practical things and inquire of reason the prescription for our acts. Each time we have to act, reason gives us such a prescription which can be also characterized as imperative. Thus it demonstrates practical freedom, which we recognize through experience as reason's causality in relation to the will. Whether reason is at the same time determined by another cause or not belongs to the transcendental, speculative concerns, since the transcendental signification of the concept of freedom requires of reason the absolute spontaneity, that is, the ability to initiate a series of appearances. However this question does not affect the consideration of the practical problems. Therefore we can set aside in the practical field transcendental freedom as having been already dealt with and as now indifferent. (Krv: A801-4/B829-32)

The text of the chapter probably derives from the manuscripts written in the 1770's. Rewriting and supplementing them, Kant inserted them in the last part of *Critique of Pure Reason*. Consequently the

context of the chapter is composed of two ingredients; 1) the thoughts which Kant held in the 1770's and 2) the thoughts which refer to the theory elaborated in the precedent parts of *Critique of Pure Reason*. His argument about the concept of freedom is regarded as suggesting this background. Practical freedom belongs to the former, while transcendental freedom belongs to the latter. And, what is the most important for us here, Kant asserts that transcendental freedom, of which the possibility was demonstrated in "Transcendental Dialectic of Pure Reason", is not needed at all for the inquiry into the practical problems. In spite of the results of the third antinomy Kant still keeps his earlier position and concedes by that the actual independence of the second question from the first.

2. Solution of the Third as well as the Second Question in *Critique of Practical Reason*

Against his own preconception Kant had *Critique of Practical Reason* published in 1788, that is, shortly after the publication of the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*. He treated the moral problems eventually in this *second critique*. This breach is probably ascribable to Kant's architectural interest. He was eventually influenced by it to found practical freedom on transcendental freedom, so that it seemed as if the theoretical and the practical investigations, as two continuous phases, constitute a systematic structure.

This change of course showed itself already in *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* which appeared in 1785. Kant distinguishes there between the hypothetical and the categorical imperative. In the former reason serves another purpose prescribed from elsewhere. In contrast to that, reason gives in the latter a prescription on its own initiative. This is the genuine moral law. In other words, the categorical imperative is the synonym to the moral law. Kant bases the categorical imperative on the will that gives the law to itself, that is, the autonomous will. However we must be concerned that this term is somewhat mistakable. It is reason that gives the law. The will can only comply with it. Therefore the autonomy has its roots not in the will, but in reason. We can talk about the autonomy of the will only in a secondary meaning insofar as the pure will is consistent with practical reason. We had better interpret the autonomous will as derivative of autonomous reason. Kant has discovered the

concept of autonomy. He has taken a big step towards the solution of the practical problems on the basis of transcendental freedom, that is, after the critical method, because the autonomy of reason can be regarded without any difficulty as coinciding with transcendental freedom as absolute spontaneity of reason.

We can recognize that through this background the following two premises are given to *Critique of Practical Reason*:

- (1) Freedom is the *ratio essendi*, or the grounds for existence, of the moral law, and the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi*, or the grounds for recognition, of freedom.
- (2) The consciousness of the moral law is a fact of reason.

The existence of the moral law in the form of categorical imperative can be based only on transcendental freedom of reason. On the other hand, the moral law demonstrates transcendental freedom and thus gives the reality in the practical meaning to this of which the reality was pending in *Critique of Pure Reason*. In this way freedom in the moral significance synthesizes transcendental and practical freedom. Moreover, Kant asserts that the moral law presents itself as fact of reason in our consciousness. He means by that that we as rational beings recognize freedom without exception through the moral law.

It is undisputed that Kant was convinced that he had given in *Critique of Practical Reason* a complete answer to the second question. He explicates in “the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason”, that is, Book I of the first part of *Critique of Practical Reason*, the moral law as determining ground of the will. His argument is quite convincing. When one recognizes the moral law as such and accepts it as motive into one’s maxim, one can do what one should do.

But *Critique of Practical Reason* contains a complete answer not only to the second, but also to the third question: “What may I hope?” This is explicated in “Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason”, that is, Book II of the first part of the work. In contrast to the second question, which is actually independent of the first, the third question is crucially dependent on the second. That is undisputable, since everyone realizes that it is not until one has done what one should do that one can ask the question, what one may hope. Kant himself already formulated in the chapter “on the Canon of Pure Reason” the question as:

“If I do what I should, what may I then hope?” He admits by that, the third question is conditional on the second. At the same time, we notice also the urgency of the third question in succeeding to the second. Once one is convinced that one has done what one should do, one cannot help immediately asking the question: “What may I hope?”, and seeking a favorable answer to it. If philosophy has given a complete answer to the second question, it must proceed with the third without losing momentum, as far as it wants to keep in step with the human mind. *Critique of Practical Reason* meets well this requirement.

Kant describes in “Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason” the highest good as object of the will determined by the moral law. It consists of *bonum supremum*, the supreme good, and *bonum consummatum*, the complete good. The former means the ideal concord of the will with the moral law, the latter means the happiness commensurate with one’s morality. The former presupposes that the soul continues to exist beyond the bodily death, because it will be only through an endless progress in one’s disposition that one can attain the perfect concord of one’s will with the moral law. The latter presupposes the existence of the Omniscient and Omnipotent who can distribute the deserved happiness to each one in accordance with one’s morality. These two things, the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, cannot be theoretically proved, as *Critique of Pure Reason* clarified it. But we must suppose them, because practical reason requires that. In other words, we postulate them. Kant defines the postulate of pure practical reason as “a *theoretical* proposition, though one not demonstrable as such, insofar as it is attached to an a priori unconditionally valid *practical* law”. (KpV, AA05: 122. 23-25.) Thus the immortality of the soul and the existence of God are postulates of practical reason. We may therefore hope that our soul survives our physical death and continue making progress in our disposition so that we finally attain the perfect concord of our will with the moral law and that God as omnipotent ruler of the world assigns us the happiness commensurate with our morality. It is true that Kant himself counts also “*freedom* considered positively” among postulates (KpV, AA05: 132. 19-29.), but we must say that he makes here an obvious mistake probably because of his adherence to the complete systematization. According to his argumentation hitherto, it is impossible for us to rank freedom, of which the reality is already confirmed, among postulates. However, aside from this mistake, we can recognize that Kant

has given in *Critique of Practical Reason* by means of the postulates a complete answer to the third question.

3. Repeated Attempt in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

Notice the following passage from Kant's letter to Carl Friedrich Stäudlin on May 4, 1794:

[...] The plan I prescribed for myself a long time ago calls for an examination of the field of pure philosophy with a view to solving three problems: (1) What can I know? (metaphysics). (2) What ought I to do? (moral philosophy). (3) What may I hope? (philosophy of religion). A fourth question ought to follow, finally: What is man? (anthropology, a subject on which I have lectured for over twenty years). With the enclosed work, *Religion within the Limits [of reason alone]*, I have tried to complete the third part of my plan. [...]

Br, AA11: 429. 10-18.

It is the covering letter to a complimentary copy of *Religion within the Limits of reason alone*, or *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Kant states here that he has tried to give a complete answer to the third question in this latter work, as if he would deny the result of *Critique of Practical Reason*. That is somewhat perplexing. What made him change his position? The clue to the whys and wherefores is *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), the work that appeared chronologically between the above two works. Probably Kant supplemented and revised in that work his previous answer to the first or the second question, so that he had to treat anew the third question in detail in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Therefore it is necessary for us to investigate *Critique of the Power of Judgment* with a view to setting the three questions in order.

As I already stated, the judgment is normally identified with the cognition in Western philosophical thinking. Therefore the title: *Critique of the Power of Judgment* indicates that Kant takes up the first question, which is a theoretical one, in that work. But as we saw above, he stated in the chapter "On the Canon of Pure Reason" that he had already exhausted all possible replies to the first question. The

attempt at critique of the power of judgment seems repugnant to his own previous assertion. First of all it puzzles us that he makes now an issue of the power of judgment which he did not rank among the cardinal faculties of cognition in *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is true that he mentioned the power of judgment also in that work. We are reminded that Book II of "the Transcendental Analytic" was entitled: "the Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment". But his argument was obviously based on the view that the power of judgment, as a sub-faculty, serves the understanding in the application of the pure concepts of the understanding to manifold things in the sensibility. Now, however, the power of judgment ranks as an a priori law making faculty with the understanding and reason. It is positioned between them, that is to say, is probably higher than the understanding.

Yet Kant's concept of the reflecting power of judgment clears away our puzzlement. Kant defines the power of judgment concisely as "the faculty for thinking of the particular as contained under the universal" (KU, AA05: 179.) The simplest form of the judgment is: B (=the particular) is A (=the universal). Kant's explanation goes further: When the universal is given, the power of judgment that subsumes the particular under that is the determining one, but when only the particular, for which the universal should be found, is given, the power of judgment is the reflecting one. It is most normally through the understanding that the universal, as the rule, the law or the principle, is given. And in the case of the moral judgment it is reason that gives the universal, that is, the law. Therefore the power of judgment, insofar as it should produce the determining judgment, is subordinate to the understanding or reason. In contrast to that, as the reflecting power of judgment, it produces the judgment on its own initiative. Thus it can rank with the understanding and reason. Kant asserts that this initiative of the power of judgment, called reflection, involves a peculiar conformity to the law, which to explicate is the necessary condition for the sufficient solution of the first question: "What can I know?"

The principle a priori of the reflecting power of judgment is the purposiveness. When the power of judgment encounters a particular thing not classified under any universal concept in advance, it creates an indefinite universal concept to which the particular can be correspondently related. This correspondence is called purposiveness. When therefore the power of judgment confirms the purposiveness, a reflecting judgment comes into form. The judgments that have such predicates as

“beautiful” and “sublime” expresses the purposiveness which is applied to the particular encountered through the intuition of the sensibility. Kant treats them in detail in the first part of the work entitled “Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment”. However, in view of the systematization of his philosophical thinking his treatment of the teleological judgment in the second part of the work is more important for us. Teleology means the judgment on the purposiveness of the parts, of which the cognition the understanding brings forth, in the correspondence to an indefinite whole, that is, the systematic unity just suggested through the idea of reason. Therefore, the power of judgment functions here as mediator between the understanding and reason, is nevertheless autonomic in itself.

In the introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant mentions as the basis for teleology the principle of the formal purposiveness of nature. It means the correspondence of the particular cognitions of nature according to the empirical laws with a systematic unity. The method of the classification of nature is proposed by it as guide for reflection. Although Kant introduces it here as “a transcendental principle of the power of judgment”, his readers have already seen it in *Critique of Pure Reason*. Namely he explicated in “Appendix to the transcendental Dialectic” under the title of “On the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason” the same principle. He stated that reason, whose ideas concern a systematic unity of the cognitions of nature of which the reality is not approved in the experience, can yet regulate them in the direction of a systematic unity, guided by that principle. The guidelines of the homogeneity, the specification and the continuity of the cognitions of nature with regard to their form come forward. That is the meaning of the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason. Therefore Kant allocates what he has once attached to reason anew to the power of judgment which should, though as an independent faculty, yet mediate between the understanding and reason. Teleology as function of the reflecting judgment is based on this formal purposiveness of nature. This can be characterized therefore as the potentialities or the latent phase of teleology.

Kant explicates in the second part of *Critique of the Power of Judgment* the material purposiveness of nature, that is, the application of teleology to the real world. In the organisms the parts are comprehensible with regard to their existence as well as their form only on the basis of their correspondence with the whole. Causes and effects, reciprocally affecting each other, they are

connected with the unity of the whole. On the other hand, the idea of the whole as the ground for cognition of a systematic unity determines the form and the connection of all the parts. Kant calls the organism natural end (*Naturzweck*). Since he adheres to the thoroughgoing determinability of nature through the mechanistic causality, he approves also in the field of the organism no other principle than the mechanism for the determining power of judgment. Yet in consideration of that peculiarity of the organism, he concedes that the research in this field must be guided at the same time by teleology, at least heuristically. In other words, he admits that teleology as a heuristic and regulative principle applies to the cognition of organism besides mechanism.

Therefore we can justly assert that *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, with the detailed explication of teleology in it, is crucial for the development of Kant's philosophical thinking. An important supplement is given to his previous answer to the first question: "What can I know?" It requires him to revise his answers to the whole series of questions. It is true that the material purposiveness is restricted to the organism. But, insofar as the teleological reflection is based on the universal principle of the formal purposiveness of nature, the power of judgment cannot be contented with that. Encouraged by its success in the field of the organism, it proceeds to build a teleological worldview (*Weltanschauung*) where all the beings are orderly connected to each other according to the relation of end and means so that they form the ultimate unity of the world. That is the teleology in the self-conscious phase. We can admit that Kant gives an outline of that worldview in the second half of Part 2 of *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. According to that, humankind, insofar as it complies with the moral law, stands as the final end of the Creation at the top of the world. With this view a new type of the proof of the existence of God becomes possible, because we can infer from the final end of the Creation the existence of a moral Creator and Ruler of the world. This form of the proof is the moral proof of God and the theology that is based on it is called: "ethicotheology".

4. New Solution of the third Question in the *Religion within the Boundaries of mere Reason*

We need not suppose that the supplement in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* influenced Kant into

revising his answer to the second question: “What ought I to do?” What one should do is what one should do. That is unshakable. But the circumstances in which the moral act is performed have drastically changed. Now it requires observing from the perspective of the ethicotheological worldview. As Albert Schweitzer justly recognized it, Kant succeeded in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in appreciating humankind as moral actor, while he had described in *Critique of Practical Reason* exclusively the individual person whose will is determined by the moral law. It is humankind as a whole that stands under the moral law and has the responsibility of bringing the Creation into completion. Therefore it is the duty for humankind to perform what the moral law tells. We should fulfill this duty in cooperation with each other in order to rise to God’s trust. These presuppositions involve a new prospect for the solution of the third question: “What may I hope?” The answer must be a revised one, for the previous answer in *Critique of Practical Reason* contained only the immortality and the happiness of the individual person. The new answer should be explicated in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

Although the work *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* consists of four articles which were to appear in separate numbers of *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (*Berlin Monthly Review*), the consistency of Kant’s argument through the whole work is undisputed insofar as we look at the work in the proper perspective of the development of Kant’s philosophical thought. Namely Kant analyzes in the work human freedom from the perspective of ethicotheology and elaborates on that basis the answer to the third question. As I stated it above, Kant tried to base practical freedom on transcendental freedom because of his architectural adherence to a system building against his earlier plan manifested in the chapter “on the Canon of Pure Reason”, *Critique of Pure Reason*. He identified in *Critique of Practical Reason* the moral law giving act of reason with its ability to initiate a series of causal relationship, so that he regarded the will complying with the moral law as free. Yet, according to his original plan, he should have treated the problem of freedom not in that way. He should have considered it as a problem pertinent to the power of choice (*Willkür*). It is true that reason, giving a law or a prescription, motivates us to act. The causality of reason is evident by that, since we can recognize it through experience as one among the various motives. Yet the problem is which we choose from

these in order to accept it into the maxim. It is not until now in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* that he explicates human freedom as freedom of the power of choice in conformity with his earlier intention.

In the first part of the book Kant makes a great issue of the fact that the propensity to evil, which prevents the power of choice from accepting the moral law in the maxim, indwells in human nature. Yet, after having treated in detail the obstinacy of this "radical evil", he draws the conclusion that the predisposition to good, that is, the competence to accept the moral law as motive, can outdo it in human beings. Thus it is reconfirmed in Kant's teaching that humankind, as the final end of the Creation, must recognize it as duty to do everything in its power for developing its predisposition to good. In the second part he introduces under the characterization of "the personified idea of the good principle" the model after which we human beings can surely hope for the victory of good; it is obvious that he means by that the demythologized Jesus as the perfect example of the morality. In the third part he describes the foundation of a moral community of humankind in their cooperation with each other after that model. The community is called "a people of God". In the fourth part a warning is given against the corruption of that community, because it cannot be immune from that danger even if it has been ideally founded. Thus we can realize that these parts contain satisfactorily Kant's new answer to the third question: "What may I, or we humankind, hope?"

Conclusion

I am convinced that I have succeeded in demonstrating my supposition: "Immanuel Kant's *Critiques as Fulfillment of the Philosophy in sensu cosmopolitico*". In order to remind the readers of the point of my argument, I itemize in conclusion the issues as follows:

- (1) The (once convinced) answer to the third as well as to the second question in *Critique of Practical Reason*
- (2) The important supplement to the answer to the first question in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and the involved necessity for newly answering the third question.

- (3) *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* that should be properly characterized as Kant's fourth *critique*.

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Notes

The part of the original text, from which I quote, or to which I refer, is given following the instructions of the editorial office of Kant-Studien on the basis of Akademie Ausgabe (AA), such as: the abbreviation of the title, the number of the volume: the number of the page. the number of the lines., for example: KpV, AA05: 122. 23-25. Only in the case of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*), also following those instructions, I give the number of the pages of the first edition in 1781 (=A) and the second edition in 1787 (=B), for example: KrV: A804-5/B832-3. These signs can facilitate the readers' reference to the parallel part in the English translation (the Cambridge edition of the works of Immanuel Kant).

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