Politics, history, critique: An interpretation of Kant's political philosophy in light of his critical-regulative method.

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POLITICS, HISTORY, CRITIQUE:
AN INTERPRETATION OF KANT’S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
IN LIGHT OF HIS CRITICAL-REGULATIVE METHOD

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I dedicate this work to my mother, who had to forgo her college education and career to be an at-home mom, so that her daughters could one day obtain higher education degrees and have fulfilling careers.
Abbreviations of Immanuel Kant’s Works

All abbreviated references to Kant’s works will refer first to original language editions. When two page numbers are given, separated by a comma, the first number refers to the original language edition and the second number refers to the English translation. There will be no reference to the English pagination when the English translators include pagination from the original language edition in their translation. Numbers given after the abbreviation but before the colon refer to volume numbers. Numbers given after the colon refer to page numbers.

All references to Kant will be AA (the “Academy Edition”).

AA Gesammelte Schriften, Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902-.


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 5
Implications of the Critical-Regulative Method for Kant’s Political Legacy 8
An Overview of the Chapters 11
An Additional Conception of “Critique” 17

CHAPTER ONE SITUATING THE CONTEMPORARY LEGACY AND
RELEVANCE OF KANT’S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY 19
The Question of the Systematic Status of Kant’s Historico-Political Writing 23
Recent Interpretations that Restore the Systematic Place of Kant’s
Historico-Political Essays 48
The Importance of the Historico-Political Essays and the Question
of Kant’s Contemporary Political Legacy: The Goals and Methodology of
This Project 55

CHAPTER TWO REGULATIVE TELEOLOGY IN THE
CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON AND THE HYPOTHETICAL USE OF
REASON IN HISTORY 56
Regulative Ideas and Principles in the Critique of Pure Reason:
Teleology and Systematicity in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic
“Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent:”
A Case Study in the Hypothetical Use of Reason 88
A Preliminary Critical Philosophy of History 116

CHAPTER THREE TELEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND
THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES IN THE CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT 119
Special Status of the Principle of Purposiveness: Reflective Judgment
and Its Limited Ontological Claims 122
Internal (Absolute) and External (Relative) Purposiveness: Organisms
versus Nature as a Whole 144
A Critical Philosophy of History in the Appendix to the
Critique of the Teleological Judgment 164

CHAPTER FOUR TELEOLOGY IN “PERPETUAL PEACE:”
MORALITY AND POLITICS 191
“Perpetual Peace” and Its Theoretical Commitments 193
The Articles for Perpetual Peace Among States: What a Theoretical Politician
Can and Cannot Accomplish 209
The Highest Good on Earth: What Kind of a Duty is Perpetual Peace? 222

CONCLUSION 233
The Critical-Regulative Basis of Kant’s Political Philosophy 233
Theoretical and Practical Significance of Regulative Principles for Politics 236
Re-interpreting Kant’s Political Philosophy in Light of his
Critical-Regulative Method 241

BIBLIOGRAPHY 246
INTRODUCTION

Contemporary interpretations of Kant’s socio-political philosophy place him in the tradition of liberal social contract theorists who defend cosmopolitan agendas. They would have us believe that Kant has at best a fragmentary political theory, which is found in bits and pieces in his so-called “minor” and “uncritical” works that either express the ideals of the Enlightenment or are offered as an application and extension of his moral theory. In either cases, Kant’s is claimed to be a theory of cosmopolitanism: thus, according to the standard view, Kant’s political legacy consists of the cosmopolitan ideas that he discusses in his Metaphysics of Morals as well as in his short essays such as “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” and “Perpetual Peace,” a political legacy that is not directly or indirectly linked to the critical system that he developed in his three Critiques. According to this interpretation, when we think of Kant’s political philosophy and its legacy today, we have a few limited options. We can either try to combine his political thought with his moral theory, directed by the Categorical Imperative and culminating in the ideal of the Kingdom of Ends (taken as the equivalent of a peaceful cosmopolitan world order), or else admit that Kant did not care too much about developing a political theory per se, for he most extensively wrote on history and did not dedicate a Critique to political philosophy. Thus, if he has a political legacy that is relevant for us today, it is usually understood to be a moral theory of cosmopolitanism as put forth in the above-mentioned texts, albeit not with greatest consistency or detail. What else can we expect from the man of the Enlightenment, who subscribed to the common-sense understanding of politics of his time?
This picture of Kantian socio-political philosophy is incomplete at best and misleading at worst. First, Kant’s short essays on history and politics are neither merely empirical, and so uncritical treatises on how one can apply either his moral theory or Enlightenment ideals to the historico-political realm in general, nor unsystematic and dogmatic musings on the fashionable subjects of his time. These texts, as I will demonstrate in the dissertation, are all written in light of a critical-regulative method, a method that comes out of Kant’s major works, i.e., the Critique of Pure Reason and Critique of Judgment, and one that has important implications for interpreting Kant’s political relevance and legacy for today. Second, the standard recent interpretations of Kant’s political theory, which discuss his legacy merely in terms of cosmopolitanism, disregard Kant’s concern with a regulative teleological conception of history for politics. That is, the fact that Kant wrote several texts dealing with history is not often thought to bear any significant relation to his political theory. The underlying assumption here is that Kant’s systematic claims in epistemology and metaphysics aim at ahistorical truth, therefore history has little to do with his critical philosophy. I will show that Kant’s critical-regulative method and teleological history made possible by this method thoroughly inform his political theory, and this allows me to integrate his short writings into the system and so interpret Kant’s work more consistently. Uncovering how his critical-regulative method brought him to posit a teleological understanding of history, and how it allowed him to bridge the gap between theoretical inquiry and practical concerns by means of such an understanding, proves crucial for the renewed interpretation I undertake in this project. Only through such an analysis can we
demonstrate the systematic place of Kant’s socio-political thought and have a fuller portrait of its legacy for us today.

My dissertation offers the following three benefits with regard to a renewed interpretation of Kant’s political philosophy:

1) I will demonstrate that Kant’s essays on history and politics are not dogmatic, unimportant, or of minor significance, but employ a critical principle of teleology, following on the critical-regulative method developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*.

2) Such a holistic and systematic reading of Kant’s historico-political writings will reveal that Kant’s political philosophy cannot be construed as a mere extension of his moral theory. There is a distinction between how Kant theoretically justifies his normative assumptions about history and politics and how he posits teleological practical goals based on these assumptions. Thus, I will question whether we can read any of Kant’s historico-political writings in unambiguously moral terms. In addition, I will show that cosmopolitanism, an idea that is often considered to be the centerpiece of these short writings, is not the only legacy of Kant’s political thought.

3) Finally, I will show that by means of his critical-regulative method Kant is able to reflect on his own historical circumstances with a view to propose a teleological universal history, and a political theory based on such a philosophy of history. Thus, a regulative teleological understanding of his own socio-historical reality is crucial to Kant’s political philosophy. This suggests that a philosophy of history is always already pragmatic in orientation and that for Kant there is a close relationship between history and politics.
Thus, Kant’s political thought builds on this critical-teleological account of history, and finds its confirmation in such a regulative ground.

In short, in this project as a whole I uncover the contemporary legacy of Kant’s philosophy of history and political theory through a close analysis of what I label his critical-regulative method. I argue that Kant’s often ignored writings on history and politics are closely connected to this method that he develops in his three *Critiques*; thus these minor writings are not dogmatic or insignificant but squarely fit in with his critical system. Then I show that his critical-regulative method has implications for Kant’s contemporary political legacy.

I

*Implications of the Critical-Regulative Method for Kant’s Political Legacy*

I label the methodology employed by Kant in his historico-political writings as “critical-regulative,” for this method is afforded to him by the very structures of his systematic critical philosophy and his conception of regulative principles found in the first and the third *Critiques*. The critical-regulative method is a heuristic that posits that the systematic unity that we seek in historico-political analyses is guided by the regulative principles of reason. The implications of this method for Kant’s political philosophy are twofold: first, this method, fleshed out mainly in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*, lies at the very core of Kant’s essays on history and politics, for these pieces continually emphasize the distinction and non-identity between our (subjective) regulative guiding principles and the actual (objective) empirical conditions themselves. I will show in my close analyses of Kant’s essays “Idea for a Universal History” and
“Perpetual Peace” that these writings operate with a regulative understanding of history as a whole. Thus, in these essays on history and politics, Kant seeks to preserve the non-identity between subjectivity and objectivity, a relation mediated by regulative principles that are useful for our theoretical and practical purposes. This shows that Kant’s historico-political philosophy has a critical-regulative orientation and by means of this avoids ahistorical metaphysical speculations. Second and relatedly, it is important to note that the specific regulative principle of Kant’s philosophy of history and political thought is the same as that of teleology, Zweckmässigkeit or purposiveness, the idea of God as the systematic unity of nature. When we make a teleological judgment, we compare what something is with the idea of what it ought to be.¹ This applies to the account that Kant offers of both history and politics, for what makes history and politics peculiar fields of inquiry in Kantian terms is exactly this question of the mediation between how things are and how they ought to be, or how they can be conceived in relation to our practical goals. I will show in the dissertation that according to Kant’s own methodological precautions, the conception of how things ought to be can only be given by a critical-regulative orientation toward the empirical realm under investigation; that is, without a theoretically and practically useful guiding principle, we cannot justify the use of a normative telos for history and politics. In the case of Kant’s philosophy of history and political thought, this regulative principle permits us to understand history as a teleological whole and to discern certain empirical elements in a way that coheres with our practical goals. This means that our theoretical inquiries into history and politics always already operate under

¹ This is Kant’s definition of teleological judgment in the Critique of Judgment. He writes, “A teleological judgment compares the concept of a product of nature as it is with one of what it ought to be.” (AA 20: 240)
regulative (subjective) assumptions about how to organize the empirical conditions in which we find ourselves with a view to a posited practical goal.

Therefore, on Kantian grounds we cannot have a political philosophy that lays out the objective principles of actions, institutions, policies, and rights. We are limited to a critical-regulative understanding of history and politics can for two related reasons: first, due to the peculiarity of our discursive intellect we need to resort to regulative not determinative principles when it comes to questions of a teleological philosophical account of history that reveals a purpose, because we do not directly experience such purposiveness in history; and second, our critical-regulative orientation in history and politics requires that we always reflect on the present conditions in which we find ourselves with a view to discerning whether or not we are approaching our practical goals. Thus, the method is closely tied to our discursive constitution: we cannot have direct access to how history will unfold so as to cohere with our practical goals, but we do employ the regulative principle of purposiveness that allows us to posit a philosophy of history that approximates to our historico-political purposes. In addition, our historical-situatedness means that our regulative interpretation is historically contingent, for the empirical evidence to which our guiding principle directs us is our current socio-political circumstances. The critical-regulative method reveals these two elements of anthropological and historical contingency in Kantian historico-political endeavor. These two elements remain invisible if, in our haste for empirical and concrete practical political principles, we do not reflect on our methods, as Kant proposes that we do.
An Overview of the Chapters

Chapter One will situate my project in relation to contemporary Kantian political philosophy and begin to argue that the widespread interpretation of Kant’s historico-political essays as dogmatic is wrong. I will start by analyzing the earlier attempts that highlight Kant’s contributions to political thought. These attempts often remain suspicious of his essays on history and politics. For example, Yirmiyahu Yovel argues for the importance of a certain conception of history for Kant’s critical system, but deeming the short writings on history and politics to be uncritical thus dogmatic, he turns to the Critique of Judgment and Critique of Practical Reason to argue for a teleological history culminating in the Kingdom of Ends on earth. On the other hand, Hannah Arendt offers a renewed interpretation of Kant’s importance for political thought, by locating a type of political judgment in the first half of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. Indeed, Arendt argues that, while Kant’s more explicit writings on history and politics do not comprise a systematic political philosophy, his notion of reflective aesthetic judgment, as elaborated in the first half of his third Critique, is essential to understanding how we make political judgments.2 Another popular trend in scholarship on Kant’s political thought has been to regard his moral philosophy as the foundation of his political theory, thereby making the latter an extension of the former. This approach considers Kant’s Categorical Imperative and the ideal of the Kingdom of Ends to be the apex of his political and judiciary thought, thus equating the goals of perpetual peace and cosmopolitanism with moral duties. Among these, we can count the Kant scholars who are inspired by a Rawlsian account of

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2 Hannah Arendt, Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982)
justice coming out of Kantian philosophy, namely O’Nora O’Neill and Susan Neiman. I will briefly focus on each interpretation in Chapter One in order to distinguish my method and goals from existing secondary literature on Kant’s political thought.3

However, recent scholarship has begun to challenge correct this trend of undervaluing Kant’s “minor writings.” Pauline Kleingeld has helped us to appreciate the value of the these writings: challenging Arendt’s agreement with Arthur Schopenhauer that Kant’s minor writings are rather boring and pedantic products of an ordinary common man, Kleingeld insists that Kant’s historico-political essays, even though not comprising a fourth Critique, are valuable in themselves.4 Thus, Kleingeld demonstrates that it is simply incorrect to dismiss Kant’s short writings on history and politics as dogmatic, for they follow on the regulative principles elucidated in the three Critiques. Nevertheless, Kleingeld in the end does not bring this interpretation to bear on Kant’s cosmopolitanism and does not investigate further the importance and the usefulness of a regulative understanding of history for Kant’s political theory. The holistic interpretation I hope to provide in this project will lay out the methodological continuities between the first and the third Critiques, which provide the basis for a renewed interpretation of his short writings in and of themselves.

In Chapter Two, I will offer a systematic reconstruction of the regulative principle of teleology stemming out of the Ideal of reason in the Critique of Pure Reason and show that Kant’s first text on history, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan

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Intent” (1784) must be read as a case study in this regulative principle of teleology found in the first *Critique*, for Kant had a developed conception of teleology by the time he wrote the “Idea” essay. Through these analyses, we begin to see that Kant’s historico-political essays are not stand-alone treaties on the popular ideas of his day but in fact stem out of and fit in squarely with the methodological considerations of his critical system. Kant in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic develops an important use for the Ideas of reason and the regulative principles stemming from these Ideas. Most important for our purposes here is the Ideal of reason, God, which gives us the regulative principle of *Zweckmässigkeit*, purposiveness. Here, Kant places teleological principles in his critical system as regulative, subjective maxims and shows that they need not contradict the mechanistic principles of causality. This means that Kant already had a notion of regulative teleology before he wrote the *Critique of Judgment*, thus the “Idea” essay is not a dogmatic text but one that uses this critical principle of purposiveness developed three years ago in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The philosophical import of this interpretation for Kant’s philosophy of history and politics is that the regulative principle of teleology in the critical system is always already justified indirectly (that is hypothetically and problematically) and in terms of its usefulness for theoretical and practical purposes. In the “Idea” essay, then, I will show that this regulative principle of teleology is being put to use *only because* it promises us more than what we can understand by mere mechanical considerations of historical events. Thanks to the principle of teleology, used regulatively, we can posit a universal
history as a collection of all historical events and further indicate that such a teleological consideration of nature and history is helpful for promoting our practical goals.

Chapter Three will turn to Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (1790), where Kant further develops his notion of regulative principles. This work is about reflective judgments that use regulative principles of formal (subjective) and material (objective) purposiveness of nature: the former are called aesthetic judgments and the latter, teleological judgments. Teleological judgments use the regulative principle of objective purposiveness. Here, Kant further distinguishes the principle of internal purposiveness, which must necessarily be applied to our judgment of organisms, from the principle of external purposiveness. External purposiveness is not an indispensible principle but a *useful* one for theoretical purposes, one that is applied to history and politics for pragmatic reasons in §§ 82-84 of the third *Critique*. Therefore, in this chapter I will show that Kantian philosophy of history and politics must be judged by means of regulative principles as teleological fields of inquiry, using the concept of external purposiveness.

In §§ 82-84 of the Appendix entitled the Methodology of the Teleological Judgment, Kant employs a regulative notion of external teleology in judging history and politics, one culminating in the idea of a cosmopolitan world order that is supposed to bring about peace on earth. These sections of the third *Critique* have not been taken seriously by prominent scholars, even those who claim to have offered a complete and unifying interpretation of the *Critique of Judgment*. I believe this is because they fail to see the conceptual and methodological parallels between these sections and Kant’s historico-political essays, in terms of the employment of the principle of purposiveness as

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first elucidated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and employed in the “Idea” essay. When we read these sections as integral to the general concerns of the third *Critique*, I will show that, in a certain way, they reiterate the propositions of the “Idea” essay, providing more conceptual background and methodological consideration to the notion of teleological history. Here, I will show once again the always already hypothetical character of Kant’s philosophy of history and political thought, for the main teleological principle of history, namely the principle of external purposiveness, is employed as an extension of the inner purposiveness of organisms, thus merely because of its usefulness for theoretical and practical inquiry.

Furthermore, in the third *Critique*, Kant formulates the application of the external principle of purposiveness to nature as a whole and history as experiments, and this notion of the experiment needs to be taken more seriously. We can focus on what is gained by this kind of an experiment, but we need to be mindful of what can be lost as well: this is taken up in the antinomy of teleological judgment, as I will show. This antinomy also has a great deal to teach us in terms of the philosophy of history and politics, for if we want to remain as critical political philosophers, we have to pay closer attention to how regulative teleology operates in general and in the field of history in particular, and how Kant delimits time and again the claims we can make by means of the principle of purposiveness. This will become clearer in the final chapter where I offer a renewed interpretation of Kant’s “Perpetual Peace,” keeping all these caveats in mind.

Chapter Four completes the portrait of Kant’s historico-political philosophy as informed by his critical-regulative method: having created an interpretive tool kit in the previous chapters in terms of how to understand the regulative principles and their uses in
philosophy of history and politics, here I will turn to the essay in which Kant’s historicopolitical philosophy culminates, namely “Towards Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” (1795) where Kant lays out the basic rights and governing principles of a cosmopolitan world. Kant begins to develop the idea of a cosmopolitan world whole as a useful concept in the “Idea” essay, where the history of the human species as a whole is interpreted as the realization of “a universal cosmopolitan existence [ein allgemeiner weltbürgerlicher Zustand].”6 This idea is more fully fleshed out in “Perpetual Peace.”7 I will argue in this chapter that this essay should also be read in light of the methodological underpinnings of Kant’s philosophy of history that I have unpacked in the previous chapters, that is, as an exploration and a further test of Kant’s problematic concept, cosmopolitanism, provided by his critical-regulative commitment to a teleological history.

Also in Chapter Four, I begin to draw conclusions regarding Kant’s contemporary political legacy. It is clear that Kant would not unconditionally argue that cosmopolitanism is a duty towards which we should aspire. In other words, we cannot cling to cosmopolitanism as if it is an ahistorical goal, because Kant himself justifies the usefulness of this concept based on the critical-regulative commitments of his philosophy of history. Thus, we cannot take for granted that cosmopolitanism is the best way to achieve perpetual peace: peace is a duty, but cosmopolitanism is not. By drawing a distinction between political and moral duties, I will show that merely focusing on Kant’s practical philosophy that claims that the highest good (perpetual peace) should be

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6 “IaG” AA 8: 21f., 44f.
achievable on earth misleads us into thinking that the normative basis of this claim is justified on determinative grounds.

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In this way I re-emphasize the significance of Kant’s critical-regulative method, for it is this method that I see as the legacy of Kant’s political theory for us today. In the interpretation I offer in this project, even if Kant’s views might be regarded as conservative, we still recognize a critical-regulative method that would seem to allow for the transformation of his own commitments to the goals of cosmopolitan existence, republicanism, and a league of free nations. I want to argue that his method allows and requires us to constantly critique our assumptions about reality, for it exposes the regulative orientation of historico-political inquiries.

III

An Additional Conception of “Critique”

It is important to maintain this dualism between a regulative teleological account of history and the empirical conditions within which Kant finds himself, because when philosophy of history is considered to fully and completely explain empirical history, then how one understands history is identified with how it is. In other words, there is a risk when teleological principles become determinative and not regulative of empirical history. The risk is that of suppressing any singularity in empirical history by positing an idea that envelops all actual events (claiming that the object of inquiry is fully determined by its purpose) or marks these singularities as unimportant or irrelevant, when they do not
fit into this overall purpose. In this way, we relapse to a pre-critical position where we identify what we know with what is and what ought to be the case. I will show that this pre-critical position is also an uncritical political one, for if we identify our subjective principles with the objective material conditions themselves, we cannot be critical of social reality. This is an additional conception of critique that I will investigate in the conclusion of the dissertation.

This second conception of critique as it relates to Kant’s historico-political philosophy comes out of the regulative underpinnings of its method. A political theory can be critical in an additional sense, that is, in the sense of being critical of current social reality. This sense of critique is admittedly not immediately apparent in Kant’s historico-political writings. However, especially when we first explore the critical-regulative method of the first and third Critiques and then see it in action in his historico-political writings, where Kant reflects on his own present reality (or social conditions) by means of regulative principles, we are able to trace this conception of the critical (critique in its social significance) back to Kant. His method helps us to understand the socio-political reality without fully determining it. That is, a Kantian teleological understanding of our social reality offers us a different way to address socio-political philosophy, for we find in Kant’s method an awareness of the hypothetical and pragmatic character of these fields of endeavor. Ultimately, my working assumption is that Kant’s critical-regulative method, and not a specific political doctrine, is his most important political legacy for us today.
CHAPTER ONE

SITUATING THE CONTEMPORARY LEGACY AND RELEVANCE OF KANT’S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

This chapter aims to situate my project as a whole in relation to the secondary literature on Kant’s political thought in general. I do this by emphasizing the goals and methods of my interpretation that offers a holistic and systematic reading of his historico-political writings in particular. I start in this Chapter with a brief exegesis of why these historico-political writings have been considered, for a long time, to be dogmatic. Thus, in section one, I will have an opportunity to look at the reasons why various interpreters do not take Kant’s short historico-political writings seriously and why, as a result, all they are thought to offer is a distorted and incomplete view of Kant’s political philosophy. In the second section, I turn to the recent interpreters who argue that these writings are in and of themselves significant to Kant’s political thought and in line with his critical system. These readers, even though they offer detailed and systematic reconstructions of Kant’s historico-political writings in light of his three Critiques, still fail to draw out the necessary and essential conclusions for Kant’s contemporary political legacy from such analyses, because in the end they are interested in reading these short writings essentially as empirical concrete policy recommendations that should be separated from the metaphysical caveat of the three Critiques. In the third and final section, I respond to each one of these approaches, spelling out the differences between their interpretations and the method and goals of this project as a whole.
As is well known, Kant did not write a *Critique* dedicated to political philosophy; rather, we find bits and pieces of his political thought in short essays. These essays have in the past often been interpreted as occasional, peripheral, and dogmatic, although recent scholarship has, in the past ten to fifteen years, begun to correct this trend of undervaluing Kant’s “minor writings.” In the following, I demonstrate the limitations of each of these approaches and mark out the advantages my renewed interpretation of Kant’s political philosophy offers. In addition to taking seriously Kant’s historicopolitical writings themselves, and analyzing these pieces in light of the Kantian regulative principle of unity and teleology coming out of his *Critiques*, my interpretation shows that first, picking out certain elements in Kant’s political texts as they suit one’s interests is untenable at best and dogmatic at worst, and second and relatedly, that his contemporary political relevance and legacy have to be conceived in terms of the methodological and systematic commitments of his political thought, not merely as a theory of cosmopolitanism or a metaphysics of rights. Furthermore, I will show that perhaps the most underappreciated aspect of Kant’s political thought, in addition to the general disregard for his critical-regulative method found in the scholarship, is the reliance of his political philosophy on a certain conception of history. This point has nowhere been analyzed by scholars of Kant’s political philosophy, and I will show that it is of utmost importance for unpacking fully Kant’s relevance for contemporary socio-political theory.

The approaches that consider Kant’s historicopolitical essays to be insignificant to his political philosophy can be grouped under three headings: first, those who find in Kant’s *moral* philosophy the sole basis of his political thought; second, those who argue that these essays are systematically (if not often chronologically) pre-critical and
dogmatic; and third, those who think that these essays merely reflect the musings of an ordinary man of the Enlightenment, do not contain anything serious, and that therefore we should look at Kant’s more systematic writings to carve out his notion of the political. While these groups are not mutually exclusive, there is a certain benefit to analyzing them in this order, as I will do throughout this chapter. The first group, whose strongest proponent is Yirmiyahu Yovel, argues that the notion of teleology often emphasized in Kant’s historico-political essays is dogmatic, because it presupposes an unconscious promotion of an end in nature; hence, these essays are themselves un- or pre-critical, therefore not very important for Kant’s philosophy of history or political thought. He then turns to the *Critique of Practical Reason* and its connection to the second part of the *Critique of Judgment* in order to put forth a Kantian philosophy of history that is purportedly subsumed under his moral philosophy. The second group is exemplified by O’Nora O’Neill, Susan Neiman, and John Rawls; these interpreters ignore the historico-political writings and focus on Kant’s moral philosophy or parts of his explicitly “legal-political” treatises in order to establish his political legacy. If they then go back to his short essays on history or politics, it is not with a systematic interest but to pick and choose those parts that fit in with the moral-political philosophy that they developed out of Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, and *The Metaphysics of Morals*. The third approach finds its origin in the work of Hannah Arendt, who turns to the *Critique of Judgment* and locates the notion of the political in the conditions of the reflective aesthetic judging, that is, in the notion of the disinterestedness of the judging spectator and the empirical conditions of judging that
presuppose an enlargement of the mind which permits us to put ourselves in the place of another while making political judgments.

In contrast to the three approaches sketched above, each of which minimizes Kant’s historico-political essays by either ignoring them or subsuming them under his major moral writings, Pauline Kleingeld has helped us to appreciate the value of Kant’s “minor” writings by insisting that Kant’s historico-political essays, although not comprising a fourth *Critique*, are important in themselves. Thus, the recent scholarship on Kant’s political legacy owes a lot to Pauline Kleingeld’s, as well as to Henry Allison and Allen Wood’s works on Kant’s historico-political writings. These interpreters show that Kant’s short essays on history and politics are *critical*, meaning that they do employ the critical-regulative principle of teleology as first hinted at in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and further developed in the *Critique of Judgment*. Having shown that these writings squarely fit in with Kant’s critical system, it becomes impossible to dismiss them as insignificant. The question then is what exactly Kant’s political philosophy consists of as exemplified in these writings and as coming out of his critical-regulative method. Those interpreters who take these short essays seriously often focus on *cosmopolitanism* as the single most important political legacy of Kant, for in these writings we find Kant elaborating on the idea of cosmopolitanism as the intent for a universal history and the precondition of perpetual peace, the highest political good.\(^8\) However, taking Kant’s critical-regulative method seriously requires that we re-interpret the goal of

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\(^8\)Not all readers of Kant’s historico-political writings are concerned with their systematic status. Several cosmopolitan philosophers turn to these writings in order to pluck out certain policy recommendations or implementations of political or judicial rights; therefore, they do not pay any attention the theoretical or systematic underpinnings of these writings, because they are merely interested in what kind of cosmopolitanism or a principle of justice is possible or viable for us today based on certain aspects of Kant’s thought. Among these we can see (a certain) Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, and Sharon Anderson-Gold. I will not be directly addressing their works in detail in the dissertation.
cosmopolitanism as well. Only by insisting on and separating Kant’s short texts into categorized pieces does cosmopolitanism seem like the sole important legacy of Kant’s political philosophy. I will provide a more holistic and systematic reading that demonstrates that this is not the case, that paying attention to Kant’s method as employed in his historico-political philosophy requires that we become aware of its regulative ground as well as the necessity to question the purported goals of his political thought.

I

The Question of the Systematic Status of Kant’s Historico-Political Writings

The importance of Kant’s writings on history for his political thought in particular and for his critical philosophy in general has not been seriously addressed in contemporary interpretation of Kant, because his writings on history are often regarded as minor treatises, compared to the voluminous “Critical” corpus. In these writings Kant seems to ascribe a purpose to history and politics, as if we know the end goal of history and it will come about regardless of our actions. This suggests that Kant uses a notion of telos unproblematically, that is, uncritically, since such a dogmatic conception of teleology has no place in a critical philosophy; a critique of reason supposedly demonstrates that reason cannot achieve teleological completion and that therefore such metaphysical, dogmatic, and trivial concepts cannot be maintained in philosophy. Thus, it has been argued that these writings that seem to propose that history has a definite goal should be regarded as “pre-critical” or dogmatic, or as just an indication of his concern with furthering the goals
of the Enlightenment, as insignificant to Kant’s systematic thought whose centerpiece is the notion of critique.

The strongest defender of the thesis that these writings are dogmatic is Yirmiyahu Yovel, as mentioned above. He argues that in the “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent,” for example, Kant has no conceptual basis for dealing with moral history as distinguished from natural progress. Thus, according to Yovel, the “Idea” essay commits the error that the first Critique forbids since this essay seems to attribute “historical progress to a hidden purposive schema working unconsciously in nature thus transgressing the boundaries of critical reason.” In addition, because Kant’s essays on history and politics seem to lack a systematic focus and do not constitute a Critique, some other commentators such as O’Nora O’Neill and Susan Neiman look for resources of political philosophy in Kant’s moral writings, arguing that Kant’s thought culminates in the Categorical Imperative as the supreme principle of reason and politics. Lastly, the same misconception about the alleged triviality of these historicopolitical essays leads Hannah Arendt to mainly focus on Kant’s Critique of Judgment and his notion of

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9 Yirmiyahu Yovel is not alone. Other interpreters, who dismiss the importance of Kant’s historicopolitical writings by deeming them uncritical, include: Michel Despland, who argues that the concept of progress is taken for granted by Kant, thus it has a dogmatic status in these writings in his Kant on History and Religion. (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1973); and Fritz Medicus and Klaus Weyand, who think that Kant did not have a critical conception of teleology before the Critique of Judgment; see respectively “Kants Philosophie der Geschichte,” Kant Studien 7/1-3: 1-22, and Kants Geschichte Philosophie. Ihre Entwicklung und ihr Verhältnis zur Aufklärung. (Köln: Kölner-Universitätsverlag, 1963). Rudolf Makkreel also argues in his Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment that most of Kant’s official writings on history and politics operate within a dogmatic notion of teleology, but it is possible to reinterpret them in light of the regulative principle of purposiveness introduced in the third Critique. Thus, he brings the notion of reflective judgment to bear on the historicopolitical writings, most of which are written long before the Critique of Judgment. He has to do so, because like Yovel and others, he does not think that there is a critical notion of teleology in Kant’s writings before the Critique of Judgment. See Rudolf Makkreel, Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).


11 Ibid., 127.
reflective aesthetic judgment in order to locate a political philosophy there. In this section, I will look at each of these approaches, explaining their take on Kant’s political philosophy as a whole. Doing so will put us in a better position to evaluate the viability of their claims, as well as to point out the differences between their projects and the dissertation at hand.

**Yovel and the Dogmatic and Critical Conceptions of Teleology: Before and After the Critique of Judgment**

Yirmiyahu Yovel argues in his *Kant and the Philosophy of History* that Kant’s essays on history and politics lack the conceptual vocabulary that he later develops to make a distinction between a regulative understanding of teleology and an ontological one.\(^\text{12}\) Thus, according to him, Kant’s “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” belongs to a pre-critical understanding of teleology, if not chronologically then conceptually and systematically.\(^\text{13}\) I will show after a brief sketch of Yovel’s interpretation that it is in fact possible and necessary to conceive of and interpret this and other explicit essays on history in terms of the regulative principle of teleology elaborated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*, thus within the critical framework, as consistent with Kant’s so-called Critical works.

The main thesis of Yovel’s *Kant and the Philosophy of History* is that Kant’s overt statements or his official essays on history do not play the most important role in

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\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., 8. He says that even the §83 of *Critique of Judgment* seems to assume a blind teleology at times, slipping out of the crucial distinction made in this book between reflective and determining judgments. (ibid, 8.)

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., 155. Here, he writes: “The Idea [essay] is indeed a vestige of his ‘dogmatic’ thinking, chronologically but not systematically simultaneous with the beginning of the Critical period.”
his philosophy of history, rather it is in his major systematic works such as the *Critiques* and *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* that we find Kant’s introduction of the concept of a history of reason.\(^\text{14}\) Kant’s first official essay on history, namely the “Idea for a Universal History for a Cosmopolitan Intent,” written in 1784, seems to operate with a concept of “the cunning of nature,” assuming a blind, natural teleology.\(^\text{15}\) This gives rise to the interpretation that Kant’s philosophy of history as a whole is dogmatic. However, Yovel suggests that this claim needs to be slightly modified: the concept of the cunning of nature acquires a regulative status in the *Critique of Judgment*, and therefore anything written after this point needs to be interpreted in regulative terms. According to Yovel, because Kant has neither addressed nor resolved the problem of teleology before the third *Critique*, essays written before this work do not have a clear conception of the principle of purposiveness, thus must be read as “pre-critical:” that is, what divides Kant’s philosophical development intro pre-critical and critical works should be taken as this reconceptualization of teleology in the third *Critique*. For this reason, Yovel argues that the “Idea” essay commits a major dogmatic error in ascribing to nature a hidden teleological plan: thus, even though this essay is published only three years after the *Critique of Pure Reason* and thus chronologically belongs to Kant’s critical period, it should be counted among his “pre-critical” writings. This essay is a vestige of his dogmatic thinking, because it employs a principle of teleology that is nowhere to be found in the first *Critique*; he writes, “We might safely say that teleology was the major problem of dogmatic philosophy that Kant was not completely successful in solving even

\(^\text{14}\) Ibid., x. Also see pages 4f., and again 140.
\(^\text{15}\) Ibid., 8.
after the first *Critique.*" In his close analysis of the “Idea” essay, Yovel argues that the cunning of nature acquires a dogmatic status in the end, because it attributes to nature something that is not given by a transcendental condition of experience. He says that this use of a teleological principle is in conflict with the first *Critique*, which permits only mechanistic explanations and that this difficulty cannot be resolved within the context of the “Idea” essay itself. We should therefore conclude that this essay still belongs to Kant’s pre-critical thinking, in content if not in time, according to Yovel.\(^\text{17}\)

Having contended that the regulative principle of purposiveness occurs for the first time in the *Critique of Judgment*, Yovel proceeds with a careful analysis of this guiding principle of reflective judgments as found in the third *Critique*. This principle applies to four areas of nature, according to Yovel: aesthetics, the organic world, the methodology of science, and most importantly for us, empirical history.\(^\text{18}\) All of these fields of inquiry have objects that are not fully accounted for by means of mechanical explanations and therefore they require teleological explanations, but any use of such principles is prohibited by the first *Critique*. Yovel states that the concept of reflective judgment or regulative principles is Kant's solution to this problem of teleology,\(^\text{19}\) a problem to which the whole of the third *Critique* is dedicated.\(^\text{20}\) For instance, while giving an account of history, we cannot rely merely on the categories or mechanistic principles [*Grundsätze*] since empirical history exceeds the categorial explanation and

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 154f.  
\(^{17}\) Ibid., 155.  
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 160.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 159.  
\(^{20}\) It does not mean that this principle asserts that those phenomena to which it is applied are purposive or teleological *in themselves*; since it only arises out of an intellectual need to make sense of things that do not fit into our categories, this teleological principle serves as a mere “*a priori*” (or “to some extent *a priori*”) condition for the intelligibility of these phenomena, only regulatively and only for us. In other words, its validity applies only to our subjective way of relating to those objects, not to the ontological structure of the object being reflected upon. (Ibid., 160).
requires a new form of explanation. This is sufficient, according to Yovel, “to invoke a new intellectual need, introducing a sense of lack or privation into our comprehension and prescribing new conditions for the intelligibility of the subject-matter at hand.”

These phenomena, as mentioned before, include empirical history as well. Thus, we do not necessarily assert that history is, in itself, rational and has a purpose, but only that we can and must understand it as such. When reflecting on history, we make use of the subjective principle of purposiveness, only to satisfy the need of reason to achieve a priori principles for all kinds of knowledge. As Yovel puts it, “We only use the pure form of purposiveness without assuming a real purpose; and while this procedure is necessary for our comprehension, it does not entail a metaphysical interpretation of the actual working of the universe or of the ontic structure of its entities.”

Yovel writes that by means of employing this regulative principle in history, “we have therefore a pattern in the organization of historical events that cannot be explained exclusively in mechanistic terms, since it presupposes even if only reflectively the concept of intent or purpose, while the laws of nature are indifferent to any purpose.”

Trying to understand these free and random actions of human beings is an intellectual need of reason: “we feel that without using the concept of purpose, we cannot approach this kind of phenomena in a fully rational manner and must fail to comprehend them in what makes up their most unique character.”

Thus we must approach history as if it is purposive, in an analogical or metaphorical sense, without ascribing any purpose to

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21 Ibid., 159f., my emphases. This initial reflection that occurs after we come to understand the phenomena under the categories, comes ex post facto, but still brings up further a priori conditions for our comprehension of certain kinds of phenomena.
22 Ibid., 165.
23 Ibid., 167-68, my emphases.
24 Ibid., 159-60.
history itself, and such an approach is made possible by the third *Critique*, according to Yovel.

Yovel concludes by stating that ascribing a purpose to history in itself would mean that we did not learn our lesson from the first *Critique* about the limits of reason. It would be dogmatic, if not irrational, to ascribe a purpose to something without having any objective grounds for it: this is why the “Idea” essay is seen as transgressing the limits set by the first *Critique*. While I agree with Yovel’s analysis of the regulative principles as applied to the realm of history, I do not find such principles only in the third *Critique*. My interpretation will show that the need to invoke a principle of purposiveness is not a new intellectual need, but is already—albeit not in great detail—addressed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, especially in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic. I will show that teleology is not a problem that has never been resolved before the third *Critique* but in fact Kant ascribes teleological principles a regulative status already in the first *Critique*, albeit without the terminiology of reflective judgment. Thus, there is no need to dismiss the “Idea” essay or any other official essay on history and politics as dogmatic, for they do in fact employ a regulative principle of teleology. The main difference between my reading of this essay along side the third *Critique*, and Yovel’s is the following: I do not think that the first *Critique* only allows for mechanistic principles of nature. The first *Critique* does allow for regulative principles of teleology, though we should be careful to note that this notion of *telos* is based on an intellectual need, not on the origin of the things we try to explain, so it does not cancel out mechanistic explanations.
Additionally, Yovel argues that the regulative approach is insufficient, for it leaves the question of what the relationship between reason and empirical history is, unanswered: he calls this question “the problem of historical schematism.”

He argues that within the Kantian terrain, one cannot give a comprehensive account of how rational history relates to empirical history at all; as he puts it, “since no satisfactory bridge is available between reason and the empirical world, rational history and empirical history cannot be united in a single process.”

I will argue that the principle of purposiveness is the bridge that combines rational history and empirical history, albeit regulatively and not constitutively. The problem Yovel points out is one of relating two different realms together, and in this sense, it arises out of the duality inherent in the Kantian system. The problem of schematism is a specifically Kantian problem in that only when one denies the immediacy between two realms is there such a problem of relating them back together. However, it seems to me that the problem of mediation between empirical and teleological history is not one of schematism in the strict sense of the term. We need to have some kind of a unifying account of empirical history if we claim to do philosophical history: while empirical history refers to a composition of historical facts, a philosophical history accounts for the unity of empirical events conceived as a whole. Since we cannot have a direct representation of this unified picture in a schema, we bring the principle of purposiveness to bear upon empirical history only regulatively so that we can have a

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25 Ibid., 21.
26 Ibid., 272. The label of the problem of “historical schematism” is interesting, and its resemblance to Hegel’s critique of Kantian dualisms is not accidental. Yovel attributes this problem to a major difference between Kant and Hegel, in that Kant’s philosophy does not admit of a dialectical logic whereby rational history is necessarily mediated by empirical history. Yovel writes, “[W]hereas for Kant empirical history is a challenge and a difficulty vis-à-vis the history of reason, for Hegel, empirical history is the medium, or the moment, in which the history of reason can alone take place.” (Ibid., 23f.). I will show that what Yovel considers to be a difficulty is actually an advantage for the Kantian philosophy of history, because the universal history does not fully and completely determine the empirical, as does the Hegelian world spirit.
philosophical history, one that will hopefully expose the direction of history in terms of our practical goals. The principle of purposiveness does not schematize empirical history (which is impossible since this principle is not a concept of the understanding and history as a whole is not an object of experience stricto sensu) but re-tells it in the form of a coherent story. In this sense, a philosophy of history that presents empirical history as purposive becomes a kind of regulative picture of the actual historical events, and any talk about empirical history in the “Idea” essay becomes a regulative exercise in an account of these events. I believe that Yovel is not able to see the Kantian solution to the so-called the problem of historical schematism because his analysis of regulative principles remains limited to the third Critique, thus incomplete. He cannot offer a detailed account of the significance and justification of the regulative principles without the first Critique, for there Kant tells us what kind of objective validity such regulative principles have, as I will show in Chapter Two.

To reiterate, in Yovel’s reading, the main thesis of the “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” essay is that “nature itself, even without the rational will, is working according to a hidden design, bringing about political progress by means of violence and passion.”27 He argues that Kant lacked the vocabulary to talk about a

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27 Ibid., 8. It should also be noted here that one important difference between my reading of Kant’s philosophy of history and that of Yovel’s is that for Yovel, Kant’s interest in history has primarily a moral significance. (ibid., 6) While it is true that in Kant’s philosophy of history the final end of nature is development of human beings as moral agents, the preparation to be moral comes from the ultimate end of nature, i.e., human beings utilizing their skills in order to develop their innate predispositions and become fully rational agents. The realm in which we get to develop these capacities is history. That is, history by itself does not make us moral: it prepares us to be moral agents. This distinction between a final end and an ultimate end of nature is to be found both in the “Idea” essay and the §§ 82-84 of the Critique of Judgment in slightly different terms. In the “Idea essay, Kant talks about the importance of creating a cosmopolitan world order as the matrix in which all inborn predispositions of human beings can fully be developed, a pathological whole which merely prepares us to become agents in a moral whole (“Iag,” AA 8: 21, 44f.). This distinction is thematized in §§ 82-84 of third Critique in terms of a final end of nature, culture and history on the one hand, and an ultimate end of nature, human beings considered as a noumenon, on the other hand. (KU, AA 5: 429f.) For Yovel, the goal of history is the highest good –a necessarily moral one;
critical notion of teleology before the third *Critique*. Although Yovel provides us with an interesting picture of the Kantian philosophy of history coming out of the significance of reflective judging and its regulative principle as analyzed in the third *Critique*, I will show that his interpretation is problematic for two main reasons: *First*, it misses the regulative function ascribed to the principle of purposiveness already in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Thus, the “Idea” essay is not a pre-critical piece that relapses into a dogmatic language due to the fact that Kant was not quite sure about where teleology fits in the critical system. I will show in my interpretation of this essay in Chapter Two that the “Idea” text must be read as *a case study in the hypothetical use of reason* that makes use of the regulative principle of purposiveness stemming from the Idea of God, as elaborated in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Because Kant already had a preliminary notion of regulative teleology before the third *Critique*, the claims made in the “Idea” essay acquire regulative status, thus this piece must be interpreted as consistent with Kant’s critical philosophy. *Second*, the problem of historical schematism pointed out by Yovel is already addressed and resolved both in the first and the third *Critiques* in terms of how regulative principles bridge the gap between the Ideas of Reason and the empirical conditions to which these ideas apply. I will address all of these issues at length in Chapter Two. My analysis will show that the “Idea” essay is crucial to Kant’s critical-regulative political philosophy, for it is in this essay that we find an application of the regulative principle of teleology, a useful principle for his philosophy of history and political thought as a whole.

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however, I believe that while progress in history prepares us to be moral agents by means of the development of our inborn rational capacities, it does not make us necessarily moral. Thus there is a distinction between the theoretical and practical significance of the goal of history teleologically conceived. This will become clearer in Chapters Two and Three.
Moral Philosophy as the Sole Basis of Kant’s Political thought: Neiman, O’Neill, and Rawls

Dismissing the importance of Kant’s historico-political essays leads other interpreters to turn to Kant’s moral writings in order to deduce the principles of his political thought from his moral philosophy. Therefore, more often than not, Kant’s political thought is understood to be a continuation or an extension of his moral philosophy, taking off from the categorical imperative and culminating in the idea of the kingdom of ends.

An important representative of this view is Susan Neiman. In *The Unity of Reason: Re-Reading Kant*, Neiman seeks to offer a coherent account of the notion of the regulative principles of reason and to show how these regulative principles shape our actions.28 She argues that the categorical imperative is the most important principle of reason because it provides us with a guideline for our actions in moral as well as political realms. It is a regulative principle of reason, for it “functions as a directive for ordering our experience without determining that experience directly.”29 Even though it is a merely regulative principle, it gives us very specific principles for the organization of political society: thus, Kant’s moral theory constitutes the basis of his political thought, and his political writings merely exemplify how the categorical imperative can and should be applied in empirical contexts.30 While Neiman does not dismiss Kant’s historico-political writings out of hand, she considers these writings to be important only insofar as they make clear what the empirical implementation of the Categorical

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29 Ibid., 105.
30 Ibid., 122.
Imperative as a regulative principle must entail.\(^{31}\) Thus, the historico-political writings are subordinated to Kant’s moral principle, and Kant’s major contribution to politics comes only from the regulative principle following from his practical principles concerned with autonomy and justice and not from his regulative principle of teleology. In short, she leaves out Kant’s conception of a teleological history and how it fits in with his political philosophy.

Another Kantian political philosopher who approaches Kant’s political philosophy in a similar manner is Onora O’Neill. O’Neill argues in *Constructions of Reason* that the task of critique should be understood as an implicitly political one that has to do with the construction of justice, because the categorical imperative is the supreme principle of reason.\(^{32}\) This view suggests then that Kant’s political philosophy, as well as his epistemology, needs to be subordinated to his moral principles. However, rather than showing that this principle must orient Kant’s political thought as a whole, O’Neill starts by arguing how it is *already* at the heart of the project of a critique of reason: she argues against the standard view that sees Kant’s political writings as at most a corollary of his ethical theory, and aims to show that the deep structure of the *Critique of Pure Reason* already reveals both a political and a juridical commitment, proposing that the *Critique* is profoundly political.\(^{33}\) She then proceeds with a detailed analysis of the metaphors of a trial and a tribunal of reason found in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and concludes that based on Kant’s insistence on open debate rather than a tribunal for the

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 122f.

\(^{32}\) According to O’Neill, if the practical use of reason is more fundamental than its theoretical and speculative use, and if the categorical imperative is the supreme principle of practical reason, then it follows that the Categorical Imperative is the supreme principle of reason. See Onora O’Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant’s Practical Philosophy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 4.
plan of reason, reason’s authority must be seen as a practical and collective task, like that of constituting political authority. According to O’Neill, Kant further solidifies the notion of political critique in the third *Critique*, with his notion of the *sensus communis* that offers us a way to integrate the Categorical Imperative and its negative force with the ability to put ourselves in another person’s place.  

While this is a fascinating interpretation with regard to the always, already political orientation of the project of the critique of pure reason, it again does not offer a way to read Kant’s historico-political essays but further marginalizes them by subsuming their significance under that of “exercises in the public use of reason,” as prescribed by the task of critique and Kant’s conception of reason. Additionally, in her recent essay, “Historical trends and human futures,” O’Neill argues that the main reason why we are justified in assuming that history is progressing has to do with Kant’s practical concern for bringing about such progress: thus, Kant’s philosophy of history is subservient to his practical philosophy and at best offers a self-fulfilling prophecy, for she argues in the end that an active commitment to a specific future makes it more likely that it will come about. The importance and relevance of a philosophy of history for politics is further diminished, for in O’Neill’s view “history looks backward, politics forward.” However, as I will argue, the significance of history for Kant does not lie only in what has passed or what moral lessons we can infer from it but its theoretical and critical-regulative grounding is important overall for Kant’s political philosophy.

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34 Ibid., 27.
In the end, O’Neill’s account of Kant’s political principles remains subordinated to a constructivist view of justice, albeit a reformed version of the Rawlsian theory of justice that is interested in spelling out the concrete universal principles of how to distribute social justice to everyone. As well known, John Rawls in his early work formulates justice as fairness, and tries to lay out certain principles of justice with which everyone would mutually agree. Like Rawls, then, O’Neill sets out to determine a universalistic view of ethics and politics. O’Neill’s aim, to find a way to spell out a detailed theory of justice from Kantian grounds, becomes especially clear in her more recent work *Bounds of Justice*. Here, she explores the ways in which we can remain Kantians in political reasoning, thus once again focusing on Kant’s moral writings in order to tease out a tenable notion of political reason in Kant. She develops models of practical reasoning through which she accounts for our individual and collective actions in terms of agency, autonomy, liberty, deliberation, and so on. Again, she dismisses a teleologically-oriented practical action because she cannot locate it unproblematically in Kant’s moral writings, which constitute the main focus of her Kantian analysis of justice.  

As we can see, the relationship between Kant’s conception of morality and justice and his historico-political writings has been taken for granted by the projects of both Neiman and O’Neill, and they both connect the political in Kant mostly with the practical and moral principles of reason. However, the significance of a regulative teleological understanding of nature and history for politics is thematized by neither of the two. For this reason, they do not offer systematic interpretations of Kant’s historico-political writings and his contemporary political legacy but merely suggest that they can be read as

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case studies of the Categorical Imperative (Neiman) or as exercises in the public and practical use of reason (O’Neill). My project takes Kant’s historico-political writings seriously in and of themselves as well as in terms of their systematic and methodological connection to the three *Critiques*: by means of unpacking the underlying theoretical commitments of these works, I will show that these essays must be read as operating with a regulative principle of teleology paralleling Kant’s theoretical commitments in his *Critiques* and not necessarily and merely as examples or case studies of Kant’s practical-moral principles. In fact, the way in which Kant justifies his empirical policy recommendations in these essays such as a cosmopolitan world order, a federation of free states, and a republican constitution is explicitly teleological, not moral. He puts forth these conditions insofar as they help us to achieve our practical goal, peace, therefore not as unconditional moral requirements in and of themselves, as I will show later. Thus, I will also question whether and to what extent Kant’s political thought can in fact be deduced from his moral philosophy, as Neiman argues that we should. Kant’s moral theory, even its supreme principle of the categorical imperative, does not give us specific political principles of action. To be sure, the categorical imperative is a principle against which we should check our policies, but in and of itself, this principle provides only a negative criterion (a principle of non-contradiction), and cannot by itself be the supreme principle of Kant’s political philosophy. I aim to show that Kant’s historico-political thought cannot be understood without an explicit reference and analysis of his conception of teleology, afforded to him by his critical-regulative method.

Both Neiman and O’Neill’s projects remain deeply embedded in a Rawlsian political theory, for they turn to Kantian philosophy in order to define the principles of
justice in terms of Kant’s notion of autonomous and rational subjects and his conception of critique, in which case Kantian historico-political philosophy becomes a peripheral part of Kant’s critical system. Such an allegedly Kantian enterprise cannot help but become uncritical because, as I will argue, it fails to pay attention to the critical-regulative method that is at the heart of Kantian socio-political philosophy. Taking Kant’s regulative claims as determinative of the actual conditions of the socio-political realm is an uncritical approach, which, as I will show in the dissertation, becomes simply untenable both in theoretical and in practical philosophy. The Rawlsian theory of constructive justice seeks to define the ideal conditions of justice as fairness, and Rawls, in this context, claims that his project follows Kant on many important issues; however, in *A Theory of Justice*, he appeals to Kant only in so far as such an appeal justifies his definition of human beings as reasonable and free in the so-called “Original Position” where these free and rational subjects would choose mutually acceptable principles of justice. Rawls also positions himself in the tradition of the social-contract theorists, who, in his view, also include Kant, even though he admits that this original contract for Kant remains hypothetical. However, it is philosophically suspect to overlook all of Kant’s explicit discussion of politics in his other writings. Choosing certain points in Kant’s texts as the focal points of his political philosophy is unacceptable, for these points do not come without the critical-regulative method. I will show that the points chosen by Rawls, while they certainly help him to make his points about justice, may not be the most important or most essential elements of Kant’s political theory, if we analyze his historico-political thought more closely.

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38 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), 221f. He further claims that the veil of ignorance (the idea that the people in the original position must have no knowledge of where they are in the system of nature) is so natural a condition that it must have occurred to many people, and it is in fact implicit in Kant’s Categorical Imperative. (Ibid., 118). Rawls also positions himself in the tradition of the social-contract theorists, who, in his view, also include Kant, even though he admits that this original contract for Kant remains hypothetical (ibid., 11). However, it is philosophically suspect to overlook all of Kant’s explicit discussion of politics in his other writings. Choosing certain points in Kant’s texts as the focal points of his political philosophy is unacceptable, for these points do not come without the critical-regulative method. I will show that the points chosen by Rawls, while they certainly help him to make his points about justice, may not be the most important or most essential elements of Kant’s political theory, if we analyze his historico-political thought more closely.

39 Rawls writes, “I assume that the outcome of working out the law of peoples for liberal democratic societies only will be the adoption of certain familiar principles of justice and will also allow for various forms of cooperative association among democratic peoples and not for a world state. Here I follow Kant’s
a theoretical short-cut by appealing to Kant on this problem; for once he says that Kant is inconsistent in his formulation of a voluntary league of nations, he does not need to discuss whether it is desirable or what aspects of it can still be helpful for contemporary politics.\footnote{Pauline Kleingeld, “Approaching Perpetual Peace: Kant’s Defense of a League of States and his Ideal of a World Federation,” \textit{European Journal of Philosophy} 12/3 (2004): 304f. Kleingeld then proceeds to show that a more Kantian approach is necessary, for Kant himself is not inconsistent on the issue of the league of states. She takes Rawls’ point as an opportunity to show that for Kant “the full realization of perpetual peace does require a federal state of states backed up by the moral dispositions of the individuals within the member states, but that this goal should be pursued mediatly, via the voluntary establishment of a league, and not via premature attempts to institutionalize a state of states immediately.” (Ibid., 318). Despite the detailed and systematic analysis that Kleingeld offers in the larger body of her work on Kant’s philosophy of history and political thought, she continues to engage in these debates on what parts of Kantian political philosophy is still viable, which, I will show in the next section, gives us a merely fragmented picture of Kant’s contemporary political legacy. That is, despite her systematic reconstruction of Kant’s historico-political thought at large, she addresses Kant’s political suggestions without asking about their place within the system as a whole.} Furthermore, in “The Law of Peoples,” he makes other explicit appeals to Kant’s political thought, claiming, for example, that he is following Kant’s lead on our political duty to leave behind a state of nature and submit ourselves to rule of reasonable law.\footnote{John Rawls, “The Law of Peoples,” 61.} While these ideas can indeed be found in Kant’s texts, they cannot be taken in isolation from all the other concerns that lead to these formulations. Thus, plucking out from Kant’s texts what best suits one’s interests in political theory does not make one a Kantian political philosopher. In the following chapters, my aim will be to read Kant’s historico-political statements in the context of Kant’s broader system.
A different and important contribution to Kant’s political thought comes from Hannah Arendt and has been very influential in recent interpretations of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*. Arendt argues that, while Kant’s more explicit writings on history and politics do not comprise a systematic political philosophy, his notion of the reflective aesthetic judgment, as elaborated in the third *Critique*, is essential to understanding how Kantian politics must be conceived. In her *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* and her essay “Truth and Politics,” Arendt argues that the principle of political judgment is to be sought in Kant’s notion of the *sensus communis*, the underlying capacity to think by putting ourselves in others’ positions, which makes disinterested aesthetic judgments possible.\(^\text{42}\)

Arendt is not interested in simply dismissing Kant’s minor writings on history and politics, but rather she seeks to interpret them in light of Kant’s major works. This is among the reasons why she turns to the third *Critique*. She writes,

> If I am right that there exists a political philosophy in Kant but that, in contrast to other philosophers, he never wrote it, then it seems obvious that we should be able to find it, if we can find it at all, in his whole work and not just in the few essays that are usually collected under this rubric. If his main works, on the one hand, contain no political implications at all, and if, on the other hand, the peripheral writings dealing with political subjects contain merely peripheral thoughts, unconnected with his strictly philosophical works, then our inquiry would be pointless, at best of antiquarian interest.\(^\text{43}\)

Thus, it is clear that Arendt is convinced that Kant has a political philosophy, albeit not necessarily, or perhaps merely, found in his explicitly historico-political writings but in


\(^{43}\) Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, 31.
his philosophical system as a whole. The motivation to provide an account of the relationship between Kant’s major works and his “peripheral” writings to present a fuller portrayal of Kant’s political philosophy is one that I share with Arendt; however, we disagree about the importance of the methodological continuities between the major and the minor works. Her approach in the end subsumes Kant’s short writings on history and politics under the notion of reflective aesthetic judgments as elaborated in the first half of the third *Critique*.

Arendt’s view of the first half of the *Critique of Judgment* is that she believes that it is more closely connected with the political than any other critique or even the historico-political writings themselves. According to her interpretation, Kant’s conception of human beings in this *Critique* is unique in the sense that in the third *Critique* he presents a view of humans as “earthbound creatures, living in communities, endowed with common sense, *sensus communis*, […] needing each other’s community even for thinking.”44 In addition, she argues that the Enlightenment spirit in Kant’s works requires a critical attitude, and such critical thought could only be possible by means of the communicability of thought and impartiality. Such communicability requires that we can put ourselves in the position of others: this is what Kant calls “the enlargement of mind,” or simply, “comparing our judgment with the possible rather than actual judgments of others, and by putting ourselves in the place of any other person.”45 Kant

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44 Ibid., 27. It can also be claimed that the pleasure that we take in judgments of beauty is closely related to the fact that man is made for and fits into this world, which is what Kant says in a letter to his friend (Ibid., 42).
45 KU, AA 5: 294. This is quoted by Arendt in Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy more than once as the definition of *sensus communis*. 
names this the maxim of the common human understanding in §40 of the *Critique of Judgment*.\(^46\)

In addition, Hannah Arendt sees the *sensus communis* as providing the resolution to the problem concerning the dispute about matters of taste. The saying “There can be no dispute about matters of taste” dissipates and so the antinomy of taste is resolved in her view, since we all have a faculty of imagination and common sense: this is the underlying capacity to judge that all human beings share.\(^47\) In the same vein, political actions and choices, although they are not strictly speaking a matter of taste, can be enhanced by the freedom of discussion and the enlargement of the mind thanks to our shared faculty of imagination, communicability of thought and *sensus communis*.

An important theme of Kant’s political philosophy, namely cosmopolitanism, is also explained by Arendt in terms of the underlying shared common sense that all human beings have. Cosmopolitan existence is our goal, because only under such a condition does a person become a member of a world community by the sheer fact of being human.\(^48\) In this way, Arendt concludes that Kant’s political writings share the same assumptions elaborated by him in the third *Critique*: if we can assume that there exists an original compact that originates from the general communicability of taste or disinterested pleasure, then we can specify the political actions necessitated by such a compact.\(^49\) Such an original compact would serve as a regulative idea that inspires our actions. This then offers us a unique way to interpret Kant’s “Perpetual Peace,” for example, because such a compact provides the basis for political action, as if in these

\(^{46}\) KU, AA 5: 294f.
\(^{47}\) Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, 71f.
\(^{48}\) Ibid., 75.
\(^{49}\) Ibid., 74f.
deliberations about peace Kant is reformulating the categorical imperative as it should apply to politics. As Arendt writes, “The, as it were, categorical imperative for action could read as follows: Always act on the maxim through which this original compact can be actualized into a general law. It is from this viewpoint, and not just from love of peace, that the treatise *Perpetual Peace* was written.”\(^{50}\)

These are the conclusions that Arendt provides in her political reading of the *Critique of Judgment*. She further considers the possibility that, since Kant wrote on history more than he did on politics *per se*, he might have substituted a philosophy of history for a political philosophy. But then she quickly dismisses this thought as well as the importance of Kant’s philosophy of history for his political theory, saying that we turn to Hegel or Vico when we want to read about history, not to Kant.\(^{51}\) This is because Arendt sees Kant’s conception of history as a part of his philosophy of nature. Kant’s philosophy of history, in her view, still conceives of human beings as a part of nature and thus remains entangled in the secret ruse of nature: this secret ruse of nature is the cause of historical progress.\(^{52}\) She writes,

> In the center of Kant’s moral philosophy stands the individual; in the center of his philosophy of history (or rather, his philosophy of nature) stands the perpetual progress of the human race or mankind. (Therefore, history from a general viewpoint). The general viewpoint or standpoint is occupied, rather, by the spectator, who is a ‘world citizen’ or, rather a ‘world spectator.’ It is he who decides, by having an idea of the whole, whether, in any single, particular event, progress is being made.\(^{53}\)

By making Kant’s philosophy of history subservient to the political agency she finds in his work, Arendt fails to offer a systematic account of history and to show its significance.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 75.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., 8.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 8f. This also makes nature’s final design a cosmopolitan whole. (Ibid., 53)
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 58.
for Kant’s political philosophy. History becomes one area where we can measure how much political progress we have made towards becoming world citizens or world spectators. A universal idea of history is needed merely for this practical purpose, and its theoretical status and importance are thus unrecognized and undervalued by Arendt.

While I see a real gem in Hannah Arendt’s provocative reading of the Critique of Judgment and her locating there a principle of political judgment, I find such a principle not only in the aesthetic judgment or the notion of the sensus communis, but more explicitly in the notion of the reflective judgment, which also includes the teleological judgments and principles that Kant makes use of in his so-called historico-political writings. Thus I want to look at the third Critique in its entirety, not only to the first half of it as Arendt does. Because Arendt’s analysis of the notion of reflective judgment remains oriented by the empirical and practical conclusions to be drawn from the capacity to reflectively judge and by the empirical version of the sensus communis, she is unable to see Kant’s underlying theoretical commitments, or how the empirical conclusions are in fact drawn from and mediated by the regulative ideas. This is evident in her interpretation of Kant’s philosophy of history, because history for Arendt becomes the empirical realm where we can measure progress, as if we have immediate access to the historical facts and where they are headed. I will argue that see that the cautiousness in Kant’s historiography is the most valuable insight for his political philosophy, and in order to carve out Kant’s political thought we must turn to his writings on history, because perhaps in some sense Arendt might be intimating that history and the writing of it are crucial for any political philosophy. Unfortunately, such an analysis is lacking in Arendt’s account of Kant’s political philosophy.
Therefore, Arendt’s interpretation remains limited for a number of reasons: first, she cannot offer a way to understand the two parts of the *Critique of Judgment* together; in her view, the connections between taste and teleology are loose, especially because teleological judgment seems no longer to apply to particulars but to nature as a whole.\(^{54}\) Thus she only focuses on the first part of the third *Critique*. In addition, because she thinks that history remains a part of nature, she dismisses the importance of the relationship between nature and freedom in history, where the regulative principles are useful for their reconciliation, as I hope to show in this project.\(^{55}\) And finally, in her attempt to turn to Kant’s major writings to locate his political philosophy, she only focuses on the third *Critique*, and such an approach subsumes the historico-political writings under the principle of the enlarged mind or communicability; however, there are other resources in Kant that suggest a stronger systematic connection between his *Critiques* and the historico-political essays, as I will show in this project. In this way, Kant’s theoretical and practical philosophies are brought to a closer connection, which my renewed interpretation of Kant’s socio-political thought will make clear.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 12-13. Judgments of taste use the subjective principle of purposiveness, whereas judgments of teleology employ the objective principle of purposiveness, and both principles are regulative. Teleological Judgments apply to 1) organisms 2) and by extension and as an experiment, to the external relationships among organisms and nature as a whole. See Chapter Three on the connection between the two parts of the third *Critique* and the different uses of the objective principle of purposiveness.

\(^{55}\) I will show that philosophy of history attempts to offer a point of mediation between the mechanistic processes of nature and the actions of human beings, and it accomplishes this by means of the regulative ideas: thus, Kant’s philosophy of history is significant for bridging the so-called “gap” between his concept of nature and freedom, for it offers us a way to conceive of them working in tandem.
What is lost when we do not pay attention to the underlying critical-regulative teleological commitments in Kant’s short essays?

In his historico-political essays, Kant integrates theoretical concerns regarding how to conceive of history as a whole with the practical goal of promoting the rational and moral development of human beings and perpetual peace. My interpretation will offer the tools to analyze these concerns both together and separately, for it is just as wrong to say that these writings should be subsumed under Kant’s practical philosophy as to claim that they are squarely part of his theoretical philosophy. At this intersection of theoretical and practical goals, history and politics prove to be fruitful fields of inquiry, for they exemplify perhaps the most important deployment of the use of regulative principles in Kant’s philosophy: such principles are justified because they are useful for both theoretical and practical purposes and granted by the hypothetical use of reason (and later on, by the reflective judgments) for the needs of completion of both a speculative and practical system. To say that these writings are unimportant leads us to evaluate them as mere musings of an ordinary Enlightenment man, and trivialize the very important claims made therein with regard to the goals and methods of the philosophy of history and political thought, universal history, the rational and moral development of human beings, cosmopolitanism, and peace.

Kant employs regulative principles of unity and teleology in his historico-political writings, and this provides a clue for the link between his political thought and more systematic writings, as I have said before. The idea of teleology is nowadays seen as an embarrassment for the political philosopher, and this is another reason why the
teleological language in Kant’s historico-political essays is downplayed—when it is not judged to be dogmatic—by certain interpreters of Kant. A distinguished Kant scholar, Karl Ameriks, for example, seems to have missed the significance of the teleological language used in Kant’s first text on history, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim,” for his analysis of this text simply ignores the traces of teleological language found therein.56 In his recent essay, “The Purposive Development of Human Capacities,” Ameriks argues that Kant’s rather nonchalant and ambivalent attitude towards matters concerning human history and development must be understood as a part of his “overall strategy in these essays…[and] largely [as] an attack on the excessive importance given to history as such by writers like Herder.”57 According to Ameriks, Kant in these essays on history and politics, “casually mix[es] theoretical and practical topics…and avoid[s] focusing on metaphysical complications.”58 This must be the case because according to Ameriks Kant is still developing his account of human freedom and the final end of humanity, as evidenced by a revision of the first Critique and by the vast differences between Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, Critique of Practical Reason and the Critique of Judgment. In the end, the “Idea” essay is an “unfortunate relic, a matter of trying to keep too much in step with the fashions and science of one’s youth.”59 While this reading certainly draws on credible biographical evidence and it may be the case Kant needed to address the question of history because it was a fashionable topic of his times, I believe that a more complete interpretation would take Kant’s

57 Ibid., 48.
58 Ibid., 55.
59 Ibid., 67.
methodological commitments seriously, in order to demonstrate the philosophical import of his interest in history and politics. Ameriks’ and others’ oversight no doubt springs from the non-systematic character of Kant’s relatively short essays on history and politics and the outdated dogmatic notion of teleology found therein. However, I believe that a more careful analysis of these minor writings will reveal a far richer tapestry of ideas that would help us to come to a fuller understanding of Kant’s notion of regulative teleology and its uses in history and politics, despite the non-systematic character of the minor writings. I will show that Kant’s contemporary legacy lies not in the extension of the categorical imperative for achieving peace, an enlarged mindfulness, or cosmopolitanism, but in the way in which he approached history and politics, building his political philosophy on a certain critical conception of history by means of regulative principles.

II

Recent Interpretations that Restore the Systematic Place of Kant’s Historico-Political Essays

Challenging the widespread view that Kant’s minor writings are uncritical or rather boring and pedantic products of an ordinary Enlightenment man, Pauline Kleingeld, Henry Allison, and Allen Wood argue that these writings deserve to be taken seriously in and of themselves, for they employ the critical vocabulary that Kant develops in his philosophical system. Kleingeld argues that Kant already had a notion of regulative ideas in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and this is the idea of systematicity that Kant applies to universal history in his “Idea” essay, while Allison and Wood mainly turn to the *Critique
of Judgment and its analysis of regulative teleology in order to unpack the claims made in this essay. In this section, I will mainly focus on Kleingeld’s account, for I take her interpretation to be the most systematic, careful, and comprehensive in terms of its scope and focus. It seems, however, that Kleingeld is unwilling to rethink cosmopolitanism as the legitimate goal of Kantian politics in the end, even though she is the one that demonstrates with admirable clarity that Kant’s philosophy of history and political thought operate under regulative assumptions. In the end she does not offer a convincing and Kantian way in which we can tease out the relationship between regulative theoretical ideas and practical postulates, other than saying that the former acquires the status of a postulate and a rational belief once we unpack the theoretical status of the regulative ideas in history.

Those who take cosmopolitanism as Kant’s most relevant contemporary political legacy, including to a certain extent Kleingeld as well, seem to still hold that Kant’s moral philosophy is the apex of his political thought, for once peace becomes a duty, then cosmopolitanism is seen as the only way to achieve this, and the contemporary political philosopher merely needs to offer the best set of institutions to approach and maintain a cosmopolitan world order. However, peace and cosmopolitanism cannot be collapsed to each other, for peace is a political duty but cosmopolitanism is only a means that we hope will get us there. Therefore, focusing on cosmopolitanism as if it is in itself an unconditional requirement would be analogous to just plucking out what we like in

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Kant’s political writings without paying attention to the critical-regulative method of his historico-political philosophy. In other words, a Kantian cosmopolitan theory does not come without the theoretical-critical-regulative caveat. Although Kleingeld herself is so careful to unpack Kant’s regulative principles in history and politics, she does not develop this in her writings and does not recognize the overall significance of such a method for political philosophy, but rather engages in debates with Rawls or Habermas over which view of Kant’s cosmopolitan federation of states, for example, is more viable today.\(^6\) Thus, despite her careful and valuable analysis that proves that Kant’s philosophy of history is regulative and important for his political thought, she seems trapped in the standard interpretation of Kantian politics as a dogmatic cosmopolitan one.

**Kleingeld’s Rehabilitation of Kant’s Critical Philosophy of History**

Among all the works that attempt to offer a systematic and careful reading of Kant’s historico-political writings, Pauline Kleingeld’s book *Fortschritt und Vernunft: Zur Geschichtsphilosophie Kants* is unique in its scope and clarity. Here, Kleingeld offers a startlingly new picture of Kant’s philosophy of history, starting with extensive analyses of Kant’s “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent,” “On the Common Saying: This May be True in Theory but not in Practice,” “Towards Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” “The Conflict of the Faculties,” and the Sections 82 through 84 of the *Critique of Judgment* on history and politics. In the second part of her book, she situates the questions of teleology, unity, and history in Kant’s critical system as a whole,

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\(^6\) This is the question that frames Kleingeld’s article “Approaching Perpetual Peace: Kant’s Defense of a League of States and his Ideal of a World Federation,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 12/3 (2004): 304-325.
as comprised in all three Critiques as well as in the Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals and Metaphysics of Morals, providing illuminating analyses of how to understand the key concepts in Kant’s philosophy of history such as progress, the highest good, the development of the rational capacities, cosmopolitanism, peace, and so on. Overall, she demonstrates the systematic place of the philosophy of history in Kant’s critical philosophy, not only as important for his practical theory but also for his speculative philosophy. It is mostly thanks to this work that Kant now has a renewed place in contemporary political thought, for this book has changed the course of the scholarship on Kantian political philosophy by creating a new appreciation for Kant’s philosophy of history and the use of regulative principles.

Perhaps the most important contribution of Kleingeld’s book to the scholarship on Kantian political philosophy is her insistence on the use and significance of the regulative principles in the Critique of Pure Reason. By showing that Kant already had a regulative and thus critical notion of unity and teleology in the first Critique, she renders the dogmatic and uncritical interpretation of the historico-political essays textually and chronologically suspect and ultimately untenable. She further claims that Kant’s use of the regulative ideas of human history as a whole may still be fruitful, for he maintains

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that such ideas are *fallibilistic* in their epistemic status.\(^{63}\) Thus, she rehabilitates Kant’s philosophy of history and its use of regulative ideas and shows that such an idea for a universal history can and should be applied to empirical material insofar as it can indeed be used fruitfully, although we have by no means proven it theoretically.\(^{64}\)

Kleingeld is also careful to distinguish the theoretical and practical aspects of Kant’s philosophy of history throughout her analyses: she points out time and again that Kant does not claim truth for his idea for a universal history but that he is confident that it will be useful practically. This is why history is an important field of inquiry where our theoretical interest for unity and systematicity coincides with our practical goals. While history does not merely provide the conditions for moral and political development for the sake of morality, as Kleingeld argues, the teleological view of history fulfills an important role for both Kant’s theoretical and practical philosophy.\(^{65}\)

However, once we concede that a theoretical hypothesis about a teleological history can be useful for practical purposes of the development of our rational and moral capacities, Kleingeld claims that “the epistemic status of the belief in progress changes from that of a mere regulative idea to that of a practical postulate,” which in turn justifies a rational belief (still no knowledge).\(^{66}\) According to Kleingeld, then, here Kant reaches out to his moral theory in order to develop a practical political philosophy and his main argument in the “Perpetual Peace” essay thus becomes unambiguously practical (moral and judicial).\(^{67}\) It seems that once again Kant’s moral philosophy is the most important

\(^{63}\) Pauline Kleingeld, “Kant on historiography and the use of regulative ideas,” 523f.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 528.

\(^{65}\) Pauline Kleingeld, “Nature or Providence? On the Theoretical and Moral Importance of Kant’s Philosophy of History,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 75 (2001), 208f.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 217f.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 218.
ground of his political thought for Kleingeld, despite the theoretical caveat that brought him to positing a cosmopolitan world order and perpetual peace as so-called normative ideals.

If Kant’s regulative philosophy of history is both theoretically and practically important, how can we negotiate the relationship between these two types of claims? How can we claim unreservedly and uncritically that the cosmopolitan ideal is and ought to be the end goal of history, if, as Kleingeld quite successfully demonstrates, Kant’s philosophy of history is fallibilistic because it depends on regulative ideas of systematicity and teleology? Why does Kleingeld think that a teleological view of history is insufficient to generate a political philosophy such that we must reach out to Kant’s moral philosophy? I will show that Kant’s political philosophy is grounded in his regulative conception of history as a whole approaching a cosmopolitan condition, which provides a pragmatic hope that this condition as the matrix in which all inborn rational capacities of human beings can be developed in everlasting peace, can indeed be realized. There is no theoretical guarantee that this will come about, because Kant’s claims about such a teleological process is circumscribed by the regulative commitments of his idea of unity and purposiveness, as I will emphasize in the chapters that follow.

Therefore, I will argue that Kant’s political philosophy rests on critical-regulative grounds, and this radically transforms how his contemporary political legacy and relevance must be conceived. The theoretical commitments that brought him to such a normative ideal as a cosmopolitan world whole are not unquestionable commands but are based on regulative commitments in his philosophy of history. This regulative ground of Kant’s philosophy of history makes his political thought also hypothetical, fallibilistic,
and open to critique. By engaging in debates with Habermas and Rawls over the most viable version of cosmopolitanism, we get further and further away from exploring the significance of the Kantian methodology as a whole, which lies in the unique insight that our historico-political philosophy always already has regulative grounds and its goals must be constantly critiqued and re-conceived based on our vision of the empirical events. By giving an account of what a critical-regulative approach to history and politics entails, in the dissertation overall, I hope to shift the debate on Kant’s political philosophy and his contemporary relevance from a discussion on various forms of cosmopolitanism to an exploration of the significance of a critical regulative philosophy of history for political theory. By doing so, I will show that Kant’s critical-regulative method maintains a distinction between our interpretation of the historical or political realms as a whole and the historical-political events themselves, thus leaving room for constant critique of and reflection on our political goals.
III

The Importance of the Historico-Political Essays and the Question of Kant’s
Contemporary Political Legacy: The Goals and Methodology of This Project

I have thus far distinguished three main approaches to Kant’s political thought on the
basis of whether and how his short writings are interpreted and the connection between
these historico-political writings and critical system is thematized. What differentiates my
interpretation from that of the recent secondary literature on Kant’s political philosophy
such as the works by Rawls, O’Neill, Neimann and Arendt, is that I rely on the historico-
political writings themselves, showing that Kant’s language and method are consistent
with his critical philosophy, for his teleological language found in these writings is
already regulative. Thus, I show, following Kleingeld, that teleology has been a
regulative concept for Kant beginning with the first Critique and that these “minor”
 essays are methodologically in line with it. In addition, drawing on Kleingeld, Allison,
and Wood’s recent essays on Kant’s philosophy of history, I provide a stronger
interpretation of Kant’s philosophy of history and his political thought, rather than trying
to trivialize those “occasional” essays as nonchalant musings of Kant, as, for example,
Ameriks and Arendt do. This stronger interpretation of Kant’s political thought not only
shows and emphasizes that Kant’s philosophy of history has an important place in his
overall critical project, but also reveals the relevance of philosophy of history and his
method (critical historiography or critical-regulative philosophy of history) for
contemporary social-political thought. In his historico-political writings, Kant is very
careful to distinguish his task as a philosopher of history or political theorist from that of
an empirical historian or politician, and this has important consequences for us. Kant starts out by marking out the empirical territory to be investigated, distinguishing this field from the conditions for its possibility, and still relies on a regulative concept of telos or unity. I emphasize this method, and it is this emphasis that radically differentiates my contribution to Kant’s historico-political philosophy from those who consider it to be an extension of his moral philosophy, for I resist the temptation to take Kant’s political thought as offering a definite plan of action. Following Kant’s critical-regulative method to its conclusion requires that cosmopolitanism, the idea that is considered to be Kant’s major contribution to contemporary political theory, needs to be rethought.

It seems that the recent scholarship is on my side regarding the importance of these historico-political essays, though there is still disagreement on how exactly they fit in with the larger project of the Critiques or how Kant’s contemporary relevance and legacy should be conceived, as I have shown. The argument for the fact that Kant’s historico-political essays are not dogmatic is best captured textually, and therefore in the following chapter, I turn to a detailed exegesis of his first text on history, “Idea” essay, in order to show the methodological continuities between this essay and the first Critique, thereby offering a preliminary response to those interpreters who think that this and other official essays on history and politics are dogmatic.
CHAPTER TWO

REGULATIVE TELEOLOGY IN THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON AND THE HYPOTHETICAL USE OF REASON IN HISTORY

Kant’s philosophy of history uses an explicitly teleological language. However, as I have shown, there is still disagreement among Kant scholars as to whether Kant’s use of teleology in his historico-political essays presupposes a closed, dogmatic system of ends and so one at odds with the critical system, or whether it is in line with the Critiques (especially the Critique of Judgment), therefore offering a regulative understanding of the principle of purposiveness. It is my goal in this chapter to demonstrate that the traditional labeling of Kant’s historico-political essays as dogmatic or occasional is suspect. In order to do this, I will be draw on textual evidence and show that Kant’s use of teleological principles in these pieces parallels his methodological commitments in the Critique of Pure Reason, for a regulative notion of teleology has already been anticipated in the first Critique and thus is an important part of Kant’s critical system. It may be surprising that I do not here turn to the Critique of Judgment, where teleological judging is systematized in terms of its regulative character and analyzed in more detail. I will return to the third Critique in the next chapter; however, I am here looking at the development of Kant’s work in the area of teleology prior to the 1790 publication of the third Critique, for most of Kant’s so-called historico-political essays are written long before the third Critique, during the few years following the publications of the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason. More important than this chronological reason for turning to the first Critique, I show that once we unpack the preliminary notion of teleology as a regulative
accomplishment in the first *Critique*, we will be in a better position to analyze the “Idea” essay that employs such a regulative principle of teleology in giving a philosophical account of history. And then I will show that Kant already had a regulative notion of teleology and that he employed this principle in his first writing on the philosophy of history, the essay entitled “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” (1784). By the end of this chapter, I will show that Kant’s “Idea” essay should be read not as dogmatic or pre-critical, but as a *case study in the “hypothetical use of reason,”*\(^\text{68}\) using the regulative principle of teleology. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, I show that even before the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant employed a regulative notion of teleology in his writings, albeit a preliminary one, as I will analyze in more detail below.

I begin in the first section by considering Kant’s preliminary account of teleology provided in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). By going back to the Appendix where Kant gives teleological principles a regulative status, we will be in a better position to understand the methodological commitments of his essay, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” (1784), which was written only three years after the publication of the first edition of the first *Critique*. In this essay, to which I turn in the second section, Kant relies on a regulative notion of teleology, which can be found in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first edition of the first *Critique*. Locating the question of unity and purpose together with the use of the principle of purposiveness in the first *Critique* then provides us with important materials for a close analysis of the “Idea” essay and reveals what is at stake in this essay in terms of its method and use of teleology. I show first that Kant had a regulative understanding of teleology before he wrote the

\(^{68}\) KrV, A 647/B 675.
“Idea” essay and second that he employs teleological language in this essay. This suggests that his teleological understanding of history announced in this essay fits squarely within the regulative notion of teleology that he begins to provide in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

After I have laid out the points of convergence between the first *Critique* and the “Idea” essay in terms of the use of teleological principles, in the next chapter, I will move on to the text where regulative teleology has been most systematically analyzed and further developed by Kant, namely the *Critique of Judgment*. That is, the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique*, and in particular the regulative principles of teleology provided by the rational concept of God or the theological idea found therein foreshadow Kant’s later development of the concept of teleology in the *Critique of Judgment*. With this in mind, I also begin to argue, though not fully until the next chapter, for the continuity between the regulative principle of teleology and the hypothetical use of reason addressed in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique* and the reflective teleological judgment of the third *Critique*.

I

Regulative Ideas and Principles in the Critique of Pure Reason: Teleology and Systematicity in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic

The reason why Kant’s historico-political essays are considered dogmatic is that in these essays Kant seems to invoke a teleological language, which, many argue, is in direct

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69 And against, for example, Yovel’s claim that Kant has neither addressed nor resolved the problem of teleology prior to the third *Critique*. For commentary on this problem of whether teleology has been addressed prior to the *Critique of Judgment*, see Chapter One.
opposition to the accomplishment of the *Critique of Pure Reason* where teleological pursuit is supposedly denied to reason, and the only scientific principles that reason can employ are shown to be those that rely on cause and effect relationships supported by a deterministic view of mechanism. However, Kant in the first *Critique* denies neither the significance nor the usefulness of teleological principles; what is more, he rehabilitates the concept of teleology and provides a place for a principle of purposiveness in addition to mechanism in his critical system. In this section, I analyze the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic of the first *Critique*, in order to show that Kant would already have a regulative understanding of teleology by the time he wrote the “Idea” essay, therefore to claim that this or other historico-political essays employ a dogmatic teleological language is not only chronologically but systematically and textually suspect.

The status and importance of the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic for the first *Critique* is controversial in Kant scholarship, to say the least.\(^70\) I will argue in the following that the Appendix follows up on the themes of the Transcendental Dialectic and offers us a preliminary version of teleology, one that is further developed in the third *Critique*.\(^71\) Before I turn to a close reading of the Appendix, I will situate this section in

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\(^70\) Paul Guyer thinks that the claims made in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic go beyond the first *Critique*, and in this sense the Appendix anticipates the third *Critique* where Kant reconsiders and revises his position regarding systematicity and teleology, among other things. See Paul Guyer, *Kant* (New York: Routledge, 2006), esp. 155-173. Thus, in Guyer’s reading, the Appendix to The transcendental Dialectic is in explicit contradiction with the earlier accomplishments of the first *Critique*. In addition, for an example of those interpreters who argue that the Transcendental Dialectic does not add anything significant to what has already been accomplished in the earlier parts of the first *Critique*, see Strawson’s interpretation that Kant’s epistemological project is largely accomplished in the Transcendental Analytic and that therefore the Transcendental Dialectic merely aims to expose the errors and illusions of reason thus its achievement is only negative in P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*. (London: Methuen, 1966), esp. 155f. This interpretation of the Transcendental Dialectic as unimportant and merely negative in its implications has become the norm after Strawson’s work.

\(^71\) As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Pauline Kleingeld and Henri Allison agree with me on the fact that Kant already had a notion of regulative teleology in the first *Critique*, especially in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic. In addition, Paul Guyer also thinks that there is a continuity between the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment* in
terms of the overall project of the first *Critique*, showing that it is indispensible for this project. When we move to the historico-political writings, I will show that Kant’s philosophy of history and political thought depend on the use of these regulative principles of pure reason first elucidated here in the Appendix. The main goal of the essay “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim” is to investigate the epistemological grounds for presupposing a universal history. Thus, this essay is in essence a treatise on historiography; as opposed to aiming at an empirical reconstruction of historical events, Kant here is interested in drawing out the methodological procedures for a philosopher to write a universal history, one that provides a systematic account of what seems to be a random collection of events. This question of how reason organizes mere aggregates of empirical cognition into a systematic whole is addressed in the detail three years before the publication of this essay, in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant here argues that reason, in its demand that the understanding’s cognition be systematic, presupposes an idea,

namely that of the form of a whole cognition, which precedes the determinate cognition of the parts and contains the conditions for the determining *a priori* the place of each part and its relation to the others. Accordingly, this idea postulates complete unity of the understanding’s cognition, through which this cognition comes to be not merely a contingent aggregate but a system interconnected in accordance with necessary laws. One cannot properly say that this idea is the concept of an object, but only that of the thoroughgoing unity of these concepts, insofar as the idea serves the understanding as a rule.\(^{72}\)

The concepts of the understanding, the categories, do not give us the totality of our experience; that is, the understanding is not concerned with totality at all, but with the

\(^{72}\) KrV, A 645/B 673.
connections that can be discerned by means of the categories. It is the task of reason to turn to such a totality and to direct understanding in its inquiries.\(^73\) In order for the understanding to have determinate cognition, as Kant says above, some sort of a unity of the whole of cognition must be presupposed, so that the sum total of determinate cognitions is not a haphazard collection, a merely contingent aggregate, but rather a complete system. Reason, as the faculty that seeks the unconditioned, is not satisfied with the cause-effect relationships that explain the conditioned interconnectedness in the world in a contingent way. Thus, because reason demands such a necessary unity, it presupposes an idea that serves as a rule for the understanding.

Let me illustrate by means of an example in which the unity of cognitions is presupposed in order for our inquiry to be conceived as a systematic whole. Kant explains this problem in his discussion of the resolution of the transcendental problems of pure reason, the antinomies, in the following way: cognition, in its empirical character, can never yield a unified whole, for in the Kantian model of knowledge what we know is always already conditioned by the categories and never unconditioned or absolute. In other words, a completed synthesis and the consciousness of its absolute totality are not possible through empirical cognition, because such an object—the totality of nature, the unconditioned—can never be given in any experience.\(^74\) For this reason, causal explanations of natural occurrences would always have to remain incomplete and thus contingent. In the third antinomy, for example, reason is relieved of the contradiction between absolute mechanism and absolute freedom only when we realize that we can simultaneously hold that everything in the world, that is, the appearances, can be

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\(^73\) KrV, A 644/B 672.  
\(^74\) KrV, A 482/B 510.
explained solely in accordance with laws of nature (determined in accordance with mechanistic laws) and also, as things-in-themselves, in accordance with another causality through freedom. The reason why our faculty of reason is able to hold both positions without a contradiction is that we do not have access to the totality of the cause-effect relationships among appearances, that is, such a totality is not given in experience, but in order to consistently hold that mechanism is a universal law of nature, we must presuppose that the series of causes and effects is completed in a world-whole. This comes from the regulative use of the cosmological idea, the world. We can also hold, according to the regulative use of the transcendental freedom, that some of these events can also be explained in terms of freedom, again, not because we observe in appearances a certain type of freedom but because this idea, when used regulatively, gives us a chance to explore some relationships as independent of mechanistic laws. This is the point of the third antinomy: for when we transfer the category of causality, a concept of the understanding, to the whole of nature in its totality, we fall into illusions, because nature as a whole is an unconditioned unity, for which our categories are of no use because nature taken as a whole can never be given in any single cognitive experience.

Nevertheless, it is unavoidable and natural for our reason to seek the unconditioned and resort to well-known concepts of the understanding in this search. However, critical philosophy provides us with an idea of reason, or in the case of the whole of causal relations in nature, an idea of the world as a whole, which needs to be presupposed a priori, so that the aggregate of empirical cognition in accordance with mechanistic causality can be thought of as an interconnected system pertaining to nature.

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75 KrV, A 479f./B 507f.
76 KrV, A 506f./B 534f.
The cosmological idea, while it cannot refer to any object of experience, when presupposed as a unifying point of all causal relations, makes possible both the presupposition of the sum total of appearances as mechanistically determined and explicable by causal laws on the one hand, and allows room for an explanation of their intelligible character by means of the transcendental idea of freedom on the other. Rather than being caught between a dogmatism of the universal law of causality as the sole determinant of all appearances and a skepticism of this law because of absolute freedom and contingency, in critical philosophy we can posit these two types of laws as *regulative principles* in our investigations aimed at systematic unity presupposed by the idea of the world.77 This unity is an imagined or projected unity, one that we posit for the sake of the systematicity and interconnectedness of our cognitions, as I will show below.

The Unity of all Cognitions as a Focus Imaginarius: The Hypothetical and Apodictic Uses of Reason

As I have mentioned above, reason has its goal in directing the understanding and this relationship between reason and the understanding is the main topic of the Appendix. As Kant writes at the beginning of this section:

Reason never relates directly to an object, but solely to the understanding and by means of it to reason’s own empirical use, hence it does not create any concepts (of objects) but only orders them and gives them that unity which they can have in their greatest possible extension.78

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77 KrV, A 508f./B 536f.
78 KrV, A 643/B 671.
Reason’s main role lies in directing the understanding so that it can unify them as a whole. The idea of the unity of all cognitions, an idea of reason, can be seen as the imaginary converging point of all the rules or categories of the understanding. As Kant writes, ideas of reason have the regulative use of:

> directing the understanding to a certain goal respecting which the lines of direction of all its rules converge at one point, which, although it is only an idea (focus imaginarius) – i.e., a point from which the concepts of the understanding do not really proceed, since it lies entirely outside the bounds of experience – nonetheless serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension.\(^79\)

Reason, together with its ideas, constitutes this imaginary focal point from which we can figuratively say the categories emerge. This figure of the focus imaginarius helps us to understand the relationship of regulation between reason with its principles (ideas) and the understanding with its pure concepts (categories). We can see here that the ideas do not relate to our experience directly, and thus their validity will be of a different nature than direct objective validity: the regulative use of ideas, as I will explain later in the third section of this chapter, has only “indeterminate objective validity” with respect to experience.\(^80\)

It should be emphasized again that this idea of unity, while useful for theoretical inquiry, is not constitutive with respect to experience. Kant explains in the first Critique that the presupposition of such a unifying idea is a task of the hypothetical use of reason as opposed to its apodictic use, and thus, we should take a brief look here at what each of these uses of reason accomplishes. Kant writes:

> If reason is the faculty of deriving the particular from the universal, then: Either the universal is in itself certain and given, and only judgment is required for subsuming, and the particular is necessarily determined.

\(^79\) KrV, A 644/B 672.  
\(^80\) KrV, A 664f./B 692f.
through it. This I call the “apodictic” use of reason. Or the universal is assumed only problematically, and it is a mere idea, the particular being certain while the universality of the rule for this consequent is still a problem; then several particular cases, which are all certain, are tested by the rule, to see if they flow from it, and in the case in which it seems that all the particular cases cited follow from it, then the universality of the rule is inferred, including all subsequent cases, even those that are not given in themselves. This I will call the “hypothetical” use of reason.81

While the apodictic use of reason determines its object by means of subsuming it under a given universal concept, the hypothetical use of reason posits a universal idea as a problematic concept, then tests whether all (given or not yet given) particular cases would follow from it. As I have shown above in the example of the cosmological idea (the world-whole), the unity of cognitions must be presupposed as a problematic concept.

All transcendental ideas in this way function as problematic concepts and all investigations aimed at a systematic unity invite the hypothetical use of reason. In other words, the hypothetical use of reason, which starts out with particulars and seeks to find a problematic universal concept for them, helps the extension of the categories of the understanding, even though strictly speaking ideas of reason and their regulative use will not have direct objective validity or constitutive use with regards to the objects of experience. The figure of the focus imaginarius is appropriate here, because the hypothetical use of reason will only attempt to bring particular cognitions into a unity as

81 KrV, A 646f./B 674f.. This distinction between apodictic and hypothetical uses of reason is what many Kant scholars see as a prefiguration of determining and reflecting judgments of the third Critique. I think that this connection is right, and I follow Henry Allison here in his “Is the Critique of Judgment ‘Post-Critical’?,” in The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy, ed. Sally Sedgwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 78-92. According to Allison, the hypothetical use of reason is the precursor to what Kant names as reflective judging in the Critique of Judgment. (See Chapter One on this connection, where I have shown that Pauline Kleingeld also agrees with this thesis) Thus, by providing a detailed analysis of the hypothetical use of reason and its significance for teleology in the next section, I also begin to consider this link between the two Critiques. I will have the opportunity to say more about this connection in the next chapter.
far as possible, thus *approximating* the rule to universality, just like a projected focal
point would never be exact but always approximately placed.\(^8^2\)

Instead of the apodictic certainty of a universal concept and the subsumption of
the particulars under it, then, we have a regulative use of this problematic universal
concept, aimed at a systematic unity. This unity is merely hypothetical and it must be
sought by us for the benefit of reason, for setting up certain principles [*Prinzipien*].\(^8^3\)
These principles then “serve as a rule of possible experience, and can even be used with
good success, as heuristic principles.”\(^8^4\) I will explain in the following how these
transcendental ideas serve as a logical rule of possible experience and in what sense they
are necessary heuristic principles of research.\(^8^5\)

Kant in the first *Critique* further argues that the presupposition of such a guiding
thread, which is a logical principle, also requires a *transcendental principle* that
postulates the suitability of nature for the kind of systematic unity that we are seeking
after:

> For the law of reason to seek unity is necessary, since without it we would
> have no reason, and without that, no coherent use of the understanding,
> and lacking that, no sufficient mark of empirical truth; thus in regard to the
> latter we simply have to presuppose the systematic unity of nature as
> objectively valid and necessary.\(^8^6\)

This seems like a tricky discussion: here, what was merely a logical principle becomes a
transcendental principle, and this claim is among the chief reasons why the Appendix is

\(^{8^2}\) KrV, A 647/B 675.
\(^{8^3}\) KrV, A 649/B 677. As I have shown, in the case of the cosmological idea, we had two regulative ideas
springing from the hypothetical use of reason: the regulative idea of the world, which affords us a
mechanistic view on one hand and transcendental freedom on the other. In the case of theological idea,
which I turn to in the following, we also get the regulative principle of teleology that complements
mechanistic principles.
\(^{8^4}\) KrV, A 663/B 691.
\(^{8^5}\) This obviously encompasses not only the theological idea from which the regulative principle of
purposiveness stems, but the cosmological and the psychological ideas as well.
\(^{8^6}\) KrV, A 651/B 679.
seen as a contradictory and confused section, one that is inessential to the entirety of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Indeed, Kant makes a very strong claim here with regards to the possibility of knowledge: he says that without presupposing a systematic unity, we cannot even apply the understanding to sensibility (which is its primary use) and without this application, we would not have any empirical truth. It follows that even mechanism, the supposed apodictic principle of scientific explanations, requires this regulative presupposition of a unity, for Kant writes, without this unity there would be “no sufficient mark of empirical truth.” Therefore, there must be more than a mere logical use of these principles of unity, for without them we cannot seem to make secure use of even the categories. However, it should be clear from my analysis thus far that this principle is not transcendental in the sense of constituting the conditions for the possibility of all experience, but it is based on the subjective need to unify all experience under one law. Thus, while it is in some sense *a priori*, its status is based on its *utility* for the systematic pursuit of reason, for without this principle the categories would be only abstract rules.

But, how is it that without presupposing such a unity we do not even have a sufficient mark of empirical truth? Is systematic unity the sufficient condition of empirical truth? If it is, then this unity is not a mere wish of reason, but it is in some sense necessary for arriving at empirical truth. However, we need to be careful about interpreting the claim that without this idea of unity there is no empirical truth. Such a presupposition is not an unjustified assumption, but put forth for epistemological reasons: it is actually justified without determining the world in itself. Because the main task of reason is to direct the understanding in its pursuits, as I will explain further in the following, without guidance from reason the understanding and its concepts could not be
of any empirical use and the laws that it attributes to nature would remain contingent or abstract, that is, without application. Although it seemed as if in the Analytic of Concepts and Principles in the first *Critique* Kant had given us the categories together with the principles [*Grundsätze*] that direct them, we should remember that these are “merely formal principles” and “should properly be only a canon for the assessment of empirical use.” Thus, categories by themselves do not have any empirical use, for they are merely the general and formal rules for what may count as laws, but they do not give us any details as to how these rules apply to objects of experience or how specific their application can be, given the infinite possibilities of the objects of experience. We have to presuppose the unity of these concepts, so that the understanding can follow the guidance of reason in its use and be assured that it can arrive at truth. Because such unity is not given by experience but nevertheless necessary for knowledge, it is rightly presupposed by the critical philosopher without making it into a determining principle for research. As I have explained with respect to the regulative principle of cosmology, we are not able to make any judgments about the cause-effect relationships in the world and determine how far they extend, unless we *problematically but necessarily* assume a concept of the world-whole (the cosmological idea) to guide our research. Without assuming this, we would not be able to have any certainty as to whether mechanistic principles apply to the objects of experience, for their application would remain contingent. This is why Kant says that without such a presupposition of unity, we do not have any sufficient mark of empirical truth.  

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87 KrV, A 63/B88.

88 As Allison says, the claim here is not that without systematicity there is no mark of empirical truth. That is, systematicity, in and of itself, is not a sufficient criterion of empirical truth. The claim is rather, as I have explained, that without presupposing such a systematicity, we cannot make a valid use of the
This transcendental principle of unity, because it is granted to us by the hypothetical use of reason, is a regulative one and already in use by many philosophers,\textsuperscript{89} although they are not always aware of it. It can be thought as a rephrasing of the famous scholastic formula known as Ockham’s razor, which claims “one should not multiply beginnings (principles) without necessity.”\textsuperscript{90} For Kant, this is the same thing as saying that nature itself offers material for the unity of reason, for if this were not the case, that is, if there were an infinite multiplicity of the content (not only the form) of the appearances, then any universal law such as the logical law of genera would not hold necessarily but only contingently.\textsuperscript{91} We should not be discouraged by the seeming infinitude of the sensible manifold, and proceed \textit{as if} unifying all empirical cognitions under a system is possible. I will elaborate later on how this principle is \textit{already} a guiding principle of all scientific and philosophical inquiry and this will take us to the relationship between mechanistic and teleological principles in the first \textit{Critique}; thus far, it should be clear that even mechanism, which we often take to be a determining principle of all appearances, depends on a regulative principle of the unity of all the cause-effect relationships which is not readily observed in the world. What we should take from this analysis so far, then, is that the idea of reason that presupposes a systematic unity of mere aggregates is \textit{a logical principle} of all research concerned with systematic wholes, and it further presupposes as \textit{a transcendental and regulative principle} that nature is suitable for

\begin{footnotes}\footnote{I use “philosophers” here in a broad sense that includes researchers, scientists, etc.}{\textsuperscript{89}}\footnote{KrV, A 652/B 680.}{\textsuperscript{90}}\footnote{KrV, A 653f./B 681f.}{\textsuperscript{91}}\end{footnotes}
such systematization. Therefore, we see that the use of regulative principles is actually justified in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

**Reason and the Understanding: Prinzipien and Grundsätze**

In the Appendix, Kant discusses in further detail the regulative principles of reason, springing from its transcendental ideas, namely those of the Soul, World and God, and the indispensability of these ideas for the systematic use of the understanding. The regulative use of these ideas is called the *hypothetical* use of reason, which is to be distinguished from the apodictic use of reason, as I have said before. Having exposed the dialectical inferences of pure reason with respect to the Soul, the World, and God in the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic goes on to explain that these transcendental ideas can never have a transcendent use, for they “effect a mere, but irresistible illusion, deception by which one can hardly resist even through the most acute criticism.”⁹² Just as the categories are natural to the understanding, transcendental ideas are natural to reason. The major difference between the two kinds of concepts, however, is that there are no objects corresponding to the transcendental ideas: while the agreement between the categories and their objects are called “truth,” the mere attempt to seek corresponding objects for the ideas of reason will always be futile and lead reason to inevitable contradictions.

This does not mean, however, that the ideas of reason are empty, useless concepts. The task of reason for Kant is not to relate to objects directly, but to the understanding, as I have shown:

⁹² *KrV*, A 642/ B 670.
[t]hus reason really has as object only the understanding and its purposive application, and just as the understanding unites the manifold into an object through concepts, so reason on its side unites the manifold of concepts through ideas by positing a certain collective unity as the goal of the understanding’s actions.93

The fact that reason always directly applies to the understanding and not to experience is explained earlier on in the Introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic.94 It is a demand of reason, according to Kant, that there be a thoroughgoing unity of the understanding’s cognitions, and only reason can bring the understanding into a unity with itself.95 In addition, he says that if the understanding is called a faculty of rules, reason is the faculty of principles [Prinzipien].96 These principles of reason differ from the rules or the principles [Grundsätze] of the understanding, for they do not apply to the manifold of sensibility, but to the understanding itself, and only by means of this application of the principles of reason can the cognitions of the understanding be brought under a systematic unity.

It is necessary to briefly explain the differences between the principles [Prinzipien] of reason and the rules or the principles [Grundsätze] of pure understanding.97 Kant presents an

93 KrV, A 643f./B 671f.
94 “If the understanding may be a faculty of unity of appearances by means of rules, then reason is the faculty of the unity of the rules of understanding under principles. Thus it never applies directly to exxperience or to any object, but instead applies to the understanding, in order to give unity a priori through concepts to the understanding’s manifold cognitions, which may be called “the unity of reason,” and is of an altogether different kind than any unity that can be achieved by the understanding.” (KrV, A 302/B 359)
95 KrV, A 305/B 362.
96 KrV, A 299/ B 356.
97 Kant is explicit about the crucial role of the Grundsätze in transcendental philosophy; categories, by themselves, are not cognitions but mere forms of thought that need given intuitions in order not to be empty (KrV, B 289). Thus, cognition is not possible if we have nothing given that allows us to go beyond a concept. The power of judgment, a special faculty of subsuming under rules, will need rules or principles in order to relate the concepts to their objects a priori and these rules are the Grundsätze that “ground all cognition a priori” (KrV, A 136/B 175). If there is no principle that makes the application of categories to the sensible intuitions possible, then we have no grounds to assume that we can have synthetic a priori cognition. Thus, the Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment with its Schematism and Principles [Grundsätze] are the sine qua non of transcendental philosophy because they ground the harmony between objects and concepts.
extensive explanation of the two in the Introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic. While it is impossible for an object for the Prinzipien to be given, as I have said above, Grundsätze yield cognition when applied to the sensible manifold. Thus, cognition from Prinzipien can only mean cognition from concepts, not empirical or synthetic a priori cognition. Kant writes,

[t]hat objects in themselves, as well as the nature of things, should stand under principles [Prinzipien] and be determined according to mere concepts is something that, if not impossible, is at least very paradoxical in what it demands.\(^{98}\)

It is paradoxical to ask for objects themselves to be determined by Prinzipien because, as I have emphasized, Prinzipien do not pertain to objects but to the concepts of the understanding, and if one asks that objects be known and determined by means of Prinzipien, they are asking for empirical cognition from Prinzipien to be possible, which is absurd.

Principles of pure reason can never determine objects and constitute experience, because we cannot have a schema of sensibility given for them (like we do for the Grundsätze), and therefore they cannot have an object in concreto.\(^{99}\) Again, the principles of pure reason are not about cognition or experience directly, but about the unity of understanding.

The only legitimate use of these principles of reason, then, lies in their relationship with the understanding:

Thus reason relates itself only to the use of the understanding … in order to prescribe the direction toward a certain unity of which the understanding has no concept, proceeding to comprehend all the actions of the understanding in respect of every object into an absolute whole.

\(^{98}\) KrV, A301f./B 358f.

\(^{99}\) KrV, A 664/B 692. Although there is no schema given for these ideas, an analogue of such a schema can be found in the principles that they afford us. (KrV A 665/B 693). This is how the indeterminate and indirect objective validity of these ideas and their principles is justified. I will explain this further in the final section of this chapter, when I turn to the question of how exactly we are justified in using regulative principles or what exactly they afford us.
Hence the objective use of the pure concepts of reason is always *transcendent*.\(^{100}\)

It should therefore be clear from what I have said about the ideas of reason thus far that they are not just arbitrary: without them, the understanding will not have principles to connect its cognitions in a system. The ideas of reason prescribe to the understanding the direction towards a unity; however, this unity, the absolute whole of appearances, is *only an idea, or a problem* for the speculative reason.\(^{101}\) To say that they are only ideas does not mean that they are superfluous, for they

serve the understanding as a canon for its extended and self-consistent use, through which it cognizes no more objects than it would cognize through its concepts, yet in this cognition it will be guided better and further.\(^{102}\)

Here, we can see that although these ideas do not extend our cognition beyond possible experience, they are nevertheless necessary for the cognition through understanding to be better and uninterrupted; that is, thanks to these ideas guiding our cognitions, the understanding can have a better sense of how to proceed when it is stuck during certain investigations and conceive of certain relations in nature as necessary. Therefore, the significance of the ideas guiding the understanding lies in their *usefulness* for the advancement, gradual perfection, or the systematization of philosophical inquiry. This is the way in which these ideas are in some sense both *a priori*, that is, free from experiential content, but nevertheless useful –to a certain extent– for experience.

\(^{100}\) *KrV*, A 326f./B 383f..

\(^{101}\) *KrV*, A 328/B 384.

\(^{102}\) *KrV*, A 329/B 385.
The Theological Idea, System, and Purposiveness

The concepts of pure reason concern the unconditioned systematic unity of all cognitions in general, as I have already explained. Since I argue later that the unity at stake in Kant’s philosophy of history concerns a teleological one, and the principle of teleology is provided by the third idea of reason, God, in the first Critique, I will in the remainder of this section focus exclusively on the meaning and uses of this idea, which is also called the ideal of reason. An ideal is even further remote from reality than an idea, for it refers to an individual thing. While this ideal is not an attainable, individual being, that is, not an object in existence, it serves as a rule and an original image for following or judging. That is, it provides the understanding with an originary image of how all cognitions should come together in accordance with a priori rules. Such an originary image is only found in an idea of a necessary, highest being, God.

“God” does not refer to any object in reality. All proofs of the existence of such a being necessarily fail, according to Kant, because they attempt to show the necessity of a higher being, while we, because of the way our understanding is conditioned, have no grounds for assuming anything in itself as necessary. A dialectic of reason occurs when we want to arrive at a systematic completion of all of our cognitions in an archetypal image on

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103 See also KrV, A 334/B 391.
104 KrV, A 570/B 598.
105 “It is a transcendental ideal which is the ground of the thoroughgoing determination that is necessarily encountered in everything existing, and which constitutes the supreme and complete material condition of its possibility, to which all thinking of objects in general must, as regards the content of that thinking, be traced back. It is, however, also the one single genuine ideal of which human reason is capable, because only in this one single case is an –in itself universal– concept of one thing thoroughly determined through itself, and cognized as the representation of an individual.” (KrV, A 576f./ B 604f.)
106 This is shown in the Third Chapter (entitled the “Ideal of Pure Reason”) of the Second Book of the Transcendental Dialectic, especially in Section Four (On the impossibility of an ontological proof of God’s existence), Section Five (On the impossibility of a cosmological proof of God’s existence), and Section Six (On the impossibility of a physico-theological proof) (KrV, A 592f./B 620f.)
the one hand, and are aware of the fact that we cannot find anything unconditioned in experience on the other. In other words, the ideal of reason consists in the (im)possibility of determining everything in accordance with a priori rules: as Kant says, the aim of reason with its ideal is

a thoroughgoing determination in accordance with a priori rules; hence it thinks for itself an object that is to be thoroughly determinable in accordance with principles [Prinzipien], even though the sufficient conditions for this are absent from experience, and thus the concept itself is transcendent.\(^{107}\)

Thus, when we posit our demand that everything be objectively determinable by means of Prinzipien, we are acting in accordance with the ideal of reason and fall into illusions, because we take this demand to mean that an objective ground of all experience or the objective necessity of the transcendental ideal of reason must be possible for and demonstrable by us. However, this illusion disappears as soon as we realize that this ideal of reason can be rightly demanded as a subjective principle of reason. So, the ideal of reason directs us to hold together the necessity of an originary ground and also the contingency of such necessity, thus to recognize its regulative function, given the peculiarity of our understanding and its reliance on intuition. Kant writes:

> If I must think something necessary for existing things in general but am not warranted in thinking any thing in itself as necessary, then it follows unavoidably from this that necessity and contingency do not pertain to or concern the things themselves, because otherwise a contradiction would occur.\(^{108}\)

In other words, if we must think of an originary ground that exists necessarily and unconditionally, and yet we are only able to know objects as conditioned by means of our categories, then it seems like there is a contradiction here between the demand of knowing

\(^{107}\) KrV, A 571/B 579.  
\(^{108}\) KrV, A 616/B 644.
the necessity of an original ground or the unity of things and the contingency of their appearances for our faculties.

However, if we think of these two demands as subjective heuristic principles for research, the contradiction disappears; they only seem contradictory if we take these demands to pertain to the objects themselves. That is, when we critically reflect on what these two seemingly contradictory principles claim, we see that they do not lead to a confusion: one says that we should proceed as if there is a first ground for everything in existence and the other reminds us of the fact that we cannot stop at such an assumption of a necessary being but must continue to treat everything existing as contingent. As Kant writes,

\[
\text{hence neither of these two principles is objective, but they can in any case be only subjective principles of reason, namely, on the one side, for everything given as existing to seek something that is necessary, i.e., never to stop anywhere except with an a priori complete explanation, but on the other side also never to hope for this completion, i.e., never to assume anything empirical as unconditioned, thereby exempting oneself from its further derivation.}^{109}
\]

These two principles, which have the status of maxims, are given by the regulative use of the ideal of reason and can be put forth as follows:

Principle 1: For everything given, seek for something that is necessary and keep seeking for this complete a priori explanation ceaselessly; or as Kant puts it,

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\text{you should philosophize about nature as if there were a necessarily first ground for everything belonging to existence, solely in order to bring systematic unity to your cognition by inquiring after such an idea, namely an imagined first ground.}^{110}
\]

Principle 2: Never assume that you will find this a priori complete explanation or a necessary, unconditional ground, but keep searching for a further cause:

\[109\] KrV, A 616/B 644.
\[110\] KrV, A 616/B 644.

Politics, History, Critique
Huseyinzadegan
[do] not [...] assume any single determination dealing with the existence of things as such a first ground, i.e., as absolutely necessary, but always hold the way open to further derivation and hence always to treat it as still conditioned.\footnote{KrV, A 617/B 645. These two principles anticipate the thesis and the antithesis of the antinomy of teleological judgment in the \textit{Critique of Judgment}: the first principle advises us to use the principle of purposiveness for some things (the antithesis in the antinomy of teleological judgment), and the second principle claims that we must judge everything, as much as we can, in accordance with mechanistic principles (the thesis of the antinomy of teleological judgment). Thus, mechanism and teleology are already regulative principles here in the first \textit{Critique}. For my analysis of the antinomy of teleological judgment, see Chapter Three.}

If we take these principles as subjective principles for research, there is no dialectic or contradiction between the two; rather, they complement one another in that one demands that we search for the \textit{a priori} explanations as much as we can, even though, as the other one says, we may never be able to have completed explanations. Kant says, “In such a significance both principles can very well coexist with one another, as merely heuristic and regulative, taking care of nothing but the formal interest of reason.”\footnote{KrV, A 616/B 644.} The first maxim that tells us to proceed \textit{as if} there is an unconditional first ground gives us a reason to connect various cause-effect relationships in a single cause, \textit{as if} they stem from this first cause. That is, the first principle gives us an imagined first ground and tells us to explain natural phenomena in purposive terms. The second maxim, which forbids us to assume such a first cause, motivates us to use the mechanistic principles further, as much as we can, in trying to explain the appearances. Because if only the former were the maxim for our research, then we would have to give up on mechanistic explanations of cause and effect, getting too comfortable in the idea that there is a first cause for everything, without being able to explain how such an unmoved mover, so to speak, acts. On the other hand, if we only had the second maxim of mechanism, we would then not be able to unify our cognitions in a system, and thus not be able to discover interrelatedness among the phenomena that we observe. These
two maxims of research, then, should be seen as complementary, and must be used in tandem, without one erasing the other.

Such subjective principles that are not taken from the constitution of the object but from the interest of reason in regard to a certain possible perfection of the cognition of this object are called “maxims” of reason in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic.\(^{113}\) They seem like objective principles; however, once we reflect on them, it is clear that they cannot give us any knowledge of the objects. In addition, as I have shown above, thinking that they are constitutive objective principles leads us to contradiction, but when we consider them merely as maxims, this conflict of reason is resolved. In that case, there are only two different interests of reason—the two maxims I have put forth above. Kant says that it is more appropriate to call these maxims of research rather than principles, because they originate from an interest of reason.\(^{114}\) As long as we know that they are maxims pertaining to the perfection of our knowledge, no contradiction can occur between the two: It is not a true conflict when two principles are considered merely as maxims, but it is, merely a different interest of reason that causes a divorce between ways of thinking. Reason has in fact only a single unified interest, and the conflict between its maxims is only a variation and a reciprocal limitation of the methods satisfying this interest.\(^{115}\)

Since neither of the two principles cited above rests on any objective ground but stem only from our way of inquiring into nature and from the interest of speculative reason, they are rightly called maxims and not principles.\(^{116}\)

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\(^{113}\) KrV, A 666/B 694.  
\(^{114}\) KrV, A 667/B 695. It is important to note here that the maxim of teleology/purposiveness elaborated in detail in the *Critique of Judgment* is such a maxim: it is a critical principle of judgment for the benefit of our faculty of cognition. I will have the opportunity to say more about this connection in the next chapter.  
\(^{115}\) KrV, A 666/B 694.  
\(^{116}\) KrV, A 667/B 695.
I have indicated above that we already use the teleological maxim, that is, the principle of purposiveness in all scientific and philosophical inquiry, when mechanistic maxims cannot give us the kind of knowledge that we seek: mechanism does not tell us how the causal relations among phenomena are interconnected in a system. The idea of God, while its referent cannot be proven to necessarily exist since there is no sensible intuition corresponding to it, gives us the regulative principle of purposiveness, that is, it gives us a maxim “to regard all combination in the world as if it arose from an all-sufficient necessary cause.” According to Kant, this idea of God:

means nothing more than that reason bids us consider every connection in the world according to principles of a systematic unity, hence as if they had all arisen from one single all-encompassing being, as supreme and all-sufficient cause…This highest formal unity that alone rests on concepts of reason is the *purposive* [Zweckmässige] unity of things; and the *speculative* interest of reason makes it necessary to regard every ordinance in the world as if it had sprouted from the intention of a highest reason.

Reason has to make this systematic unity, order, and purposiveness [Zweckmässigkeit] of the world’s arrangement into a regulative principle of its investigation of nature, not a constitutive one, for we have no insight into the existence of such an originary ground. Thus, the idea of God, when used regulatively, provides us with the principle of purposiveness, which then must direct our inquiry into nature. While we cannot prove, in either an *a priori* or an *a posteriori* manner, that nature itself is governed by this teleological principle, the principle of purposiveness as a regulative principle is *useful* in many ways, because it opens up the possibility of “connecting up things in the world in accordance with teleological laws, thereby attaining to the greatest systematic unity

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117 KrV, A 619/B 647.
118 KrV, A 686f./ B 71f..
119 KrV, A 697/B 725.
among them.\textsuperscript{120} Hence it is \textit{useful} to assume such purposiveness in nature, as a heuristic principle of research, in addition to mechanistic principles. Therefore, Kant assigns the principle of teleology a regulative function in the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, without undermining the importance of mechanistic principles, albeit without specifying just what kinds of objects of inquiry necessitate that we resort to the principle of purposiveness or for what kinds of inquiries this principle proves useful.

In this way, then, we come to see the relationship of direction or regulation between reason and the understanding more clearly. Kant claims:

Reason thus prepares the field for the understanding [\textit{Die Vernunft bereitet also dem Verstande sein Feld}]: 1. by a principle of \textit{sameness of kind} in the manifold under higher genera, 2. by a principle of the \textit{variety} of what is same in kind under lower species; and in order to complete the systematic unity it adds 3. still another law of the \textit{affinity} of all concepts, which offers a continuous transition from every species to every other through a graduated increase of varieties.\textsuperscript{121}

These three principles [\textit{Prinzipien}] are called the principles of the \textit{homogeneity}, \textit{specification}, and \textit{continuity} of forms and the third one unites the first two. These maxims all aim at unity. The principle of homogeneity allows us to consider two similar organisms under one genus; thus, by assuming this concept of one homogeneous genus, we are able to subsume various species under the same higher genera. The second principle does this in the opposite way, to double-check whether subsumption of two particular species under one genus can also be considered, from the point of view of the problematic universal concept, as a variation of this genus. The third combines the two by means of concluding that if it is possible both to \textit{ascend} to a problematic universal genus from two species \textit{and} if these two species can also be considered as varieties of this

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{120} KrV, A 687/B 715.
\item\textsuperscript{121} KrV, A 656f./B 685f.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
universal genus, then there must be an affinity between the two species.\textsuperscript{122} As we know by now, such principles are regulative (and not determining) maxims for research. Without these, reason is free to admit an infinite number of species because there is nothing in experience that shows that there is a unity among the multiplicity of forms in nature. These principles, however, make a non-trivial presupposition about our research, for they assume that there is a continuity among the forms given to us. By means of these three subjective principles, which are called maxims as we now know, the understanding has some further direction in its inquiries. From the interest of reason in a completed series and a thoroughgoing (continuous) unity thus perfection of the cognition, these three maxims are accepted as grounded on solely reason’s speculative interest, not on the constitution of the object.\textsuperscript{123}

Remember that each transcendental idea provides us with certain regulative maxims. In the case of the ideal of reason, the goal at hand is a thoroughgoing unity of all cognitions of the understanding, as I have explained above, and this idea offers us two maxims to accomplish that goal. In addition, Kant says that the maxims that are provided for us to continue our investigation with the goal of arriving at a systematic unity of all cognition can only be followed \textit{asymptotically}, or \textit{merely by approximation}.\textsuperscript{124} We can therefore call these maxims “rules of approximation.” We can only approximate to the

\textsuperscript{122} KrV, A 657/B 686.
\textsuperscript{123} KrV, A 666/B 694. Note that these three maxims parallel the three maxims of the teleological judgment in the \textit{Critique of Judgment}. In the published Introduction, in Section V entitled “The principle of a formal purposiveness of nature is a transcendental principle of the power of judgment,” Kant writes that this transcendental principle of formal purposiveness is expressed in the following propositions: “that there is in nature a subordination of genera and species that we can grasp; that the latter in turn converge in accordance with a common principle, so that a transition from one to the other and thereby to a higher genus is possible; that since it seems initially unavoidable for our understanding to have to assume as many different kinds of causality as there are specific differences of natural effects, they may nevertheless stand under a small number of principles with the discovery of which we have to occupy ourselves, etc.” (KU, AA 5: 185). This will be elaborated in more detail in the following chapter.
\textsuperscript{124} KrV, A 663/B 691.
ideal of systematicity and unity, because it is impossible for such an archetypal image to 
be found in experience, in concreto. I have shown that insofar as we do not claim to have 
insight about the constitution of nature itself, we are safe from error and the endless 
disputes between our maxims of research. We can investigate nature all we want, in the 
smallest details possible, in order to find out what its ultimate intentions are or from 
where these intentions originate, but this would be in vain. However, this does not mean 
that we should not even attempt at unifying our cognitions based on a principle; Kant 
writes:

The method for seeking out order in nature in accord with such a principle [Prinzip], on the contrary, and the maxim of regarding such an order as 
grounded in nature in general, even though it is undetermined where or to 
what extent, is a legitimate and excellent regulative principle [Princip] of 
reason, which however, as such, goes much too far for experience or 
observation ever to catch up with it; without determining anything, it only 
points the way toward systematic unity. 125

We can see again that this principle of systematic unity and the maxims of research 
pertaining to that are rules for approximation, for they “only point the way toward 
systematic unity.” This is what a regulative principle means. Kant’s answer to the 
question of what objective significance the regulative use of reason has comes from this 
character of the Prinzipien: they function as rules of approximation, in analogy with the 
schema of sensibility.

Therefore, we are entitled to assume a teleological nature coming out of the first 
Critique, insofar as we keep this principle a regulative one, for it is useful for 

systematizing our cognitions. It is by means of this idea that “reason bids us consider 
every connection in the world according to principles of a systematic unity, hence as if it 
had all arisen from one single all-encompassing being, as supreme and all-sufficient

125 KrV, A 668/B 696.
cause.” Such a unity is not given to us by experience, but positing that such unity can be found or keeping it as a question or a problem is productive in terms of guiding and advancing our empirical inquiries. According to Kant, such regulative use of reason allows for teleological explanations in addition to mechanistic ones, and in this way it presents us with new ways of connecting mechanical laws, thereby making new discoveries possible:

> Such a principle [Prinzip], namely, opens up for our reason, as applied to the field of experience, entirely new prospects for connecting up things in the world in accordance with teleological laws, and thereby attaining to the greatest systematic unity among them. The presupposition of a supreme intelligence, as the sole cause of the world-whole, but of course merely in the idea, can therefore always be useful to reason and never harmful to it.\(^{127}\)

We already proceed in our scientific inquiries both as if everything can be explained in terms of mechanistic laws, in the light of the \textit{a priori} concepts of the understanding, and as if we can arrive at a systematic unity that is teleological. Insofar as we know that these two ways of proceeding are maxims of reason, we do not need to worry about making a mistake or claiming to know more than we can by means of our cognitive faculties, as I have shown in the resolution of the ideal of reason’s contradictions.

\textbf{The Search for Systematicity: Lazy and Misguided Uses of Reason}

To seek for the greatest systematic and purposive unity is the most important task of reason: Kant claims that this unity is “the school and even the ground of the possibility of the greatest use of human reason. Hence the idea of it is inseparably bound up with the

\(^{126}\) KrV, A 686f./B 714f.  
\(^{127}\) KrV, A 687/B 715.
As long as we understand the teleological maxims to be regulative, we are safe from error, because when we explain something in terms of final ends, the worst that can happen is that we discover a mechanical-physical connection where we expected to find a teleological one. On the other hand, if we take the principle of teleology and thus the rational concept of God to be constitutive, “reason will be misled in several ways.” In this case, two things can happen that are harmful to reason and its pursuits: reason either becomes “lazy,” [faule Vernunft or ignava ratio] or it becomes “misguided” [verkehrten Vernunft or perversa ratio, hysteron proteron rationis]. In other words, if we understand teleology together with a creator of purposiveness (God) to be constitutive of nature and discard mechanism, we become incapable of gaining knowledge of nature: reason becomes inconsistent with itself and we cannot make progress in our inquiries because all research is either given up or made arbitrary. In this way, we get too comfortable in our power of reason because it grants us grand theories that seem to explain everything in the world, thanks to considering God as the necessarily existing guarantor of a systematic and necessary knowledge of nature.

Laziness of reason means that a teleological unity is taken for granted, and reason gives up the search for mechanistic explanations altogether, as if it has accomplished its business completely. To avoid this, the principle of purposiveness should be made the ground of all arrangements of nature so that these are more or less discernible by us, and

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128 KrV, A 694f./B 722f.
129 KrV, A 687f./B 715f.
130 KrV, A 689f./B 717f.: translation altered.
131 KrV, A 689f./B 717f. This is a general risk in mistaking regulative principles and ideas for constitutive ones (such as the psychological idea and the cosmological idea), as Kant says, but the disadvantageous consequences of such an attitude of reason can be seen “even more clearly in the case of the dogmatism of our idea of a highest intelligence and the theological system of nature (physico-theology) that is falsely grounded on it.” (KrV, A 690f./B 718f.) This risk will come up again in the antinomy of teleological judgments, which, if not constantly critiqued, can lead us to infer the existence of a necessary being as the ground of all purposiveness in nature. I will explain this antinomy in the next chapter.
this teleological connection cannot be assumed in advance but is only to be expected
“while pursuing the physical-mechanical connection according to universal laws.”\textsuperscript{132}
Thus, mechanism should not be given up, just because teleology gives us a more
comprehensive way of explaining things, since such explanation is built on the laws that
mechanism explains.

\textit{Misguided [verkehrten]} reason, on the other hand, posits the existence of God as a
necessary condition of experience, one that imposes ends on nature, so rather than trying
to find them itself, reason is forced to see ends and purposes everywhere, grounding this
purposiveness on laws that are alien to and contingent for it.\textsuperscript{133} In this case, what should
come last comes first and this is why this misuse of reason commits the fallacy of
\textit{hysteron proteron}: rather than assuming a principle of purposiveness which should direct
our research into systematicity, we start out with the existence of a purposive nature, thus
making this unity inexplicable, forced, and unfamiliar to our understanding.\textsuperscript{134}

In short, purposiveness, in itself contingent for our reason, that is, not something
we directly experience, is assumed by us (subjectively) in order to further our
understanding of nature: this should not be forgotten. If purposiveness were to be made
into a constitutive principle –and there are strong albeit problematic motivations to do so,
as I have explained above– we would see God’s purposes wherever we wanted to see
them, and the principle of mechanism would have to be given up. In this way, reason
would be deprived of its highest task and essence, namely, the search for systematicity.

This is what is at stake in reason becoming lazy or misguided. To avoid this, all
principles stemming from the ideas of reason in general and the principle of

\textsuperscript{132} KrV, A 691f./B 719f..
\textsuperscript{133} KrV, A 692f./B 720f.
\textsuperscript{134} KrV, A 693/B 721.
purposiveness in particular should always be understood as regulative. This is how ideas of reason and their regulative principles can and should be utilized according to the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

I have thus far shown that Kant already in 1781 had a conception of teleology in the first *Critique*. His first essay on the philosophy of history, namely the “Idea” essay, written three years after the publication of the first *Critique*, employs this regulative principle of teleology. In the next section, I take a closer look at the “Idea” essay and the teleological language used therein. I will suggest that because Kant already had a conception of regulative teleology at the time of writing this essay, this piece must be understood as a case study in the hypothetical use of reason as described in the first *Critique*. By analyzing the “Idea” essay in detail, I will establish a strong connection between the regulative idea of teleology in the first *Critique* and the methodological claims of this essay, and thus show that the “Idea” essay is not a peripheral or a dogmatic treatise on history and politics. I will show that when we posit an idea for a universal history, we do not mean that this idea determines the actual historical events themselves. The concept in question in the “Idea” essay, namely an idea for a universal history, is a problematic concept in this sense, because we do not know all the particular cases which we can possibly subsume under this idea, that is, some of these events have not come about yet. Thus, we have an imagined or projected unity of all empirical cognitions, thanks to the hypothetical use of reason and its regulative ideas. With the help of this idea of unity, cognition is no longer a mere aggregate but can be seen as an interconnected whole, a system. This is what is at stake in the “Idea” essay, insofar as Kant is seeking an idea for a universal history, one that will unite the collection of seemingly random events.
in a system. Therefore, the idea he offers in this essay should be understood in the technical Kantian sense of the term, as a rational concept for which no empirical representation is possible, but is nevertheless useful for connecting what otherwise remains a mere aggregate of events brought together in terms of causal explanations. Idea for a universal history, if such an idea can be discovered and justified on philosophical grounds, would then serve as a guiding principle for the philosopher of history, who attempts at a unifying account of historical events. Now that I have elucidated the hypothetical use of reason and its regulative principles in the first Critique, I will show them at work in Kant’s philosophy of history in my analysis of the “Idea” essay in the following section.

II

“Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent:” A Case Study in the Hypothetical Use of Reason

I have in the previous section analyzed the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, where questions of systematicity of empirical laws together with a regulative notion of purposiveness coming out of the hypothetical use of reason’s theological idea are elaborated in most detail. In Kant’s philosophy of history, we face these challenges in terms of systematicity and teleology. Clearly, the question of whether or not historical events reveal a unity or a purpose immediately invokes a notion of final causes. If we take into account the problem of attributing a lawful unity to seemingly contingent events, we can see that philosophy of history, as a discipline that investigates the meaning
and purpose of history, finds itself in need of rehabilitating the questions of teleology. The reason for this is that mechanistic explanations that resort to cause-effect relations do not account for a lawful unity, a rational purpose or a meaning in history. To be sure, empirical history, understood as a series of events taking place in time and space, can be accounted for in terms of causal relationships, but when taken as a whole, it seems like an impossible task to explain these events only by means of the categories, for categories cannot constitute a unified account by themselves. Providing this kind of a coherent narrative is the task of the philosophy of history. Categories are not quite helpful enough for the philosophy of history, because first, we do not have access to all of the causal relations that brought about a particular event; that is, the totality of these causal networks can never become an object of experience. Second, and more importantly, even if we did have access to this causal network, what would result from this mere collection of facts would be an empirical composition of history, an aggregate of historical events, as opposed to a systematic account that might reveal a purpose or meaning: a completion of all mechanistic causes, as I have shown, is impossible for us. For Kant, empirical history is composed of such mechanistic explanations, taking into account cause-effect relationships, among other categories. The philosophy of history, however, since it is a systematic account of historical events, requires another sort of explanation, and this account does not come from the use of mechanistic principles for which the categories lay the foundation, but from teleology. I shall argue that it is apparent in the “Idea” essay that mechanistic principles accomplish an empirical composition of history, whereas teleological explanations are employed in a philosophical narrative of history. Although mechanism and teleology accomplish different things, neither repudiates the usefulness
or the value of the other; on the contrary, they can be used together in a way to complement each other: this argument is already found in the first Critique, as I have previously shown. In the following, I will show that such is the procedure that is employed in Kant’s philosophy of history as well: in order to offer a philosophical account of history we need to start with the particular historical events and try to infer from these events a pattern, a universal yet problematic concept that would unite these events.

The Highest Purpose of History

The highest purpose of history is presupposed by Kant to be the development of all the rational and innate “predispositions [Anlagen]” of human beings. This idea, which is grounded on a teleological understanding of nature, is further elucidated in all of Kant’s writings on history and politics, starting with his first text on history, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim” (1784). In the “Idea” essay, Kant explicitly claims that the highest aim of nature is the development of the natural predispositions of human beings. He further points out that the ideal environment in which these predispositions could be fully and completely developed would be a “civil society” [bürgerliche Gesellschaft], which in turn depends on bringing about a “cosmopolitan whole” [weltbürgerliches Ganze]. In addition, the social antagonism or what he calls the “unsociable sociability [ungesellige Geselligkeit]” of human beings is seen as the means for promotion of culture and skill, and that nature must have had a purpose in making our lives harder, full of inequalities, wars, and destruction. Therefore, if the

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135 "IaG," AA 8: 22f., 44f.
136 "IaG," AA 8: 20f., 44.
development of our predispositions is the highest aim of nature and a cosmopolitan world order the necessary matrix in which this can be best achieved, then a philosophy of history that attempts a universal history should take this idea of the prefect civil union if humankind as its guiding thread. Such a Kantian account of history, then, must try to organize the otherwise meaningless aggregate of historical events in accordance with our approximation to the idea of a cosmopolitan world order where all our natural dispositions can be developed in the best possible way.

The universal history provided in Kant’s “Idea” essay, which I will analyze in detail in this section, is a teleological account, which works with an idea of a purpose, as I have briefly explained above. While all these historical events occur as a succession of events determined under the conditions of space and time and the categories, thus they can be explained by using mechanistic principles, to be historically accounted for these actions and events need to be represented as a coherent whole, and for Kant, as a developmental story that supplements a mechanistic explanation. Telling such a story requires that we connect all the cause-effect relations involved in an event into a unified story, which is impossible if all we use are mechanistic principles. Therefore, while we do not deny the significance of mechanistic explanations that are afforded to us by the categories, a strictly mechanical account is not enough to make history into a coherent whole since, taken individually, these events do not look as if they are interrelated in accordance with a plan. The philosophy of history necessitates that we resort to

138 The “Idea” essay also provides the theoretical basis for Kant’s later writings on history and politics, in the sense that the teleological understanding of history presented here is also utilized in his other historico-political essays, albeit for different purposes, such as in “Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History” (1786), where Kant makes educated guesses about the pre-history of reason, using the Genesis story as his map, and later on in his “Towards a Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” (1795), where he explores the practical (constitutional and institutional) issues coming out of the idea of a cosmopolitan world order. I will turn to the latter text in Chapter Four.
teleological explanations, being aware of the fact that such explanations do not tell us what the goal of these events in themselves is, but only grant the further presupposition of a problematic concept or an umbrella-term that explains the entirety of them. The question, however, is whether Kant’s use of teleology in this essay is dogmatic, that is, whether or not Kant here is going back to a pre-critical understanding of teleological principles and ascribing unconscious purposiveness to nature, and so denying the significance of mechanistic explanations for empirical inquiry. As such, this question will lead us to Kant’s methodology.139

While interpreting the “Idea” essay, it is important to be mindful of the following few points: first, let us recall that the “Idea” essay is written in the so-called critical period, only three years after the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason. Therefore, the traditional labeling of it as dogmatic is at least chronologically doubtful. In addition and more importantly, I have shown in the previous section (by drawing on textual evidence) that Kant already had a notion of regulative teleology in the first Critique. In the remainder of the chapter, I argue, against Yovel and others, the views of which I have explored in the previous chapter, that this notion of a regulative teleology provided in the first Critique is the background of the teleological language found in the “Idea” essay, thus it is possible and necessary to conceive of and interpret this essay within the critical framework, i.e., as consistent with Kant’s so-called Critical works. While I believe that Kant does not have the vocabulary of the reflective teleological judgment and the regulative principle of purposiveness [Zweckmässigkeit] of the third Critique available to him in the “Idea” essay, his theoretical commitments in this essay are in line with a

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139 As I have shown in Chapter One, Yirmiyahu Yovel does not interpret this section at all so in his account Kant does not have an early account of teleology.
critical teleology as a regulative pursuit afforded to us by the hypothetical use of the rational concept of God, as elucidated in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique*. This gives us further reason (one that is not merely chronological) to affirm a continuity between the “Idea” essay and Kant’s critical philosophy, for even before the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant already had a notion of regulative teleology in the first *Critique*. It should be noted, however, that I do not propose this interpretation only for the sake of proving the integrity of the Kantian system of thought—though this might be one of the results—but I believe that such a continuity between Kant’s critical system and his writings on politics and history is found in these latter historico-political texts themselves, and this interpretation, while offering us a richer picture of Kantian philosophy, has significant implications for understanding Kant’s historico-political thought in light of his critical-regulative method.

*The Question of Method as the Central Theme of “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent”*

Keeping in mind that Kant’s critical-regulative method that he started to develop in the *Critique of Pure Reason* already entitles him to use a notion of teleology, let us now turn to the methodological commitments of the “Idea” essay. Kant begins this essay by conceding that human actions, due to the fact that they take place in the world of phenomena, are determined in accordance with natural laws. To be sure, as parts of the cause-effect relationships in the phenomenal world, these actions and events are subject to natural laws and thus explicable by means of mechanistic principles or the categories.

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140 “IaG,” AA 8: 14, 41.
However, giving a *unifying account* of these phenomena, which is the object of a philosophy of history, is different than just investigating the causal network that gives rise to a particular event. The laws that determine human actions or “the will’s manifestation in the world of phenomena,” are too complex to be given in a system, so it seems that no strictly law-governed history is possible.\(^1\) We are not (yet) rational cosmopolitans whose actions are in accordance with a prearranged plan,\(^2\) and thus we feel a certain distaste looking at history which does not *seem* to be unfolding in a planful manner.\(^3\) If we then attribute everything to a blind mechanism or to providence, we risk becoming frustrated, because it looks like our actions have no real effect in the world. In other words, a merely mechanistic or causal explanation of historical events does not reveal whether or not history has a purpose or a plan, and without *discovering* such a plan, we cannot *hope* that history is progressing.\(^4\) In order to discover such a plan, we need to make use of regulative teleological principles, for only in this way can we hope that history is conducive to our moral progress. Thus, we can begin to see that this hope is pragmatic, one that we will be able to discern among historical events if we have an idea of a universal history that is useful for making sense of these events as a whole. This is connected to the utility of the hypothetical use of reason, for the apodictic use of the reason does not grant a unified vision of the entirety of historical events which may or may not induce hope. This is why Kant says that only a novel [*Roman*] could result from a historical account written according to an idea of how world events must develop, but

\(^1\) “IaG,” AA 8: 17f., 41f.
\(^2\) “IaG,” AA 8: 17, 41.
\(^3\) “IaG,” AA 8: 18, 42.
\(^4\) Note that we can clearly identify the theoretical significance of history insofar as an *explanation* of the historical events is at stake, and its practical significance, where a *hope* is at stake.
this idea has nevertheless has its uses, for it serves as a guide for a plan of human history, which grounds our hope.\textsuperscript{145}

To reiterate, all historical events \textit{can} be explained in terms of causal laws, but because we will never be given the whole network of causal relations that brought about a certain event, we have to understand that an empirical collection of these events will always remain incomplete. Even if we were given all the causes, it would still be impossible to know these events in their entirety, because all of our concepts would be too narrow for what we are trying to describe. This notion of history, that is, an empirical composition of it, remains a mechanistic view of all historical events. A unifying notion of historical events that makes the purpose of history explicit has to come from another notion, one that makes this aggregate of human actions into a coherent whole. Therefore, an idea of the systematic order in history needs to be posited—in some sense—\textit{a priori}, as a \textit{guiding thread}, so that the cognitions of the understanding can be organized around that idea. However, this idea does not correspond to an object and can never become cognition itself. Rather, it serves as a rule for research and saves us from the \textit{skepticism} of never arriving at a complete unity of cognition on the one hand, and from the \textit{dogmatism} of assuming that our causal cognition is complete and cause and effect relationships can all be discerned by us to their fullest extent, without leaving any room for contingency in history. If such an \textit{a priori} idea for universal history can be found, then it will guide us in our interpretation of the historical events as whole: in other words, such an idea is \textit{useful} for theoretical inquiry and provides hope for practical pursuits of morals and politics.\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{145} “IaG,” AA 8: 29f., 52

\textsuperscript{146} The connection between “to some extent a priori” and usefulness will be addressed later in this Chapter.
The philosopher cannot assume that humankind follows any rational purpose of its own, because such a purpose is not given in experience. Thus, ascribing such a purpose or plan to history unproblematically would be dogmatic. However, this does not require that we give up searching for such a plan altogether. History, Kant claims, “allows us to hope that, if it examines the free exercise of the human will on a larger scale [im Grossen], it will be able to discover a regular progression among freely willed actions.”\(^{147}\) Therefore, while there is not much empirical evidence as to whether history is progressing towards a certain goal, the philosopher of history, if she can discover a principle [Prinzip] behind all these actions and events as a whole, can unite them into a systematic account. In other words, a Kantian philosophy of history consists of telling a story of human actions and events which will form a coherent and developmental narrative when these actions are investigated on a larger scale or as a whole as if they were made possible by a unifying guiding principle. While we cannot calculate with apodictic certainty the rules to which marriages, births, and deaths are subject in advance, they make sense once we reflect on them, trying to organize this otherwise random collection of events around a guiding principle and a unifying concept, as if they were occurring in accordance with an “unconscious promotion of an end.”\(^{148}\) Thus, we do not have a given universal concept that connects all historical events, but we can start with the empirical collection of them and posit a universal concept that encompasses them.

\(^{147}\) “IaG,” AA 8: 17, 41.

\(^{148}\) “IaG,” AA 8: 17, 41. Kant here gives the example of weather: changes in weather are subject to natural laws (difference in air pressure results in rain, drop in temperature below zero results in snow, and so on) even though in themselves they cannot exactly be determined in advance. Overall, although we cannot pinpoint individual occurrences of the natural laws causing weather to change, we can see that they still sustain the “growth of plans, the flow of rivers, and other natural functions in a uniform and uninterrupted course.” Thus, nature acts according to laws in the changes in the weather, even though unbeknownst to us except through their effects. Even if we tried, we could not exactly figure out the relationships between specific occurrences in weather and their overall results, but that does not mean that as a whole they are unlawful or purposeless.
problematically, so that we can make sense of the whole. This is the hypothetical use of reason in action, employing the principle of purposiveness: as have seen in the previous section, the hypothetical use of reason starts with the particular for which no universal concept is readily given, and ascends to the universal that we have to posit problematically. Thus, this universal is not assumed dogmatically but necessitated by the need to unify these empirical cognitions. The philosopher of history thus needs to look at this otherwise senseless collection of historical events and needs to:

attempt to discover a purpose in nature behind this senseless course of human events, and decide whether it is after all possible to formulate in terms of a definite plan of nature a history of creatures who act without a plan of their own.\textsuperscript{149}

We need to discover a guiding principle that makes our judgment of human actions a purposive story, which then provides us with a clue as to where history is headed, even though this judgment will neither tell us the real purpose of nature or of human beings in themselves nor prove that it is empirically the case that humankind is progressing towards a certain ideal. It will only be useful for deciding whether it makes sense or is fruitful to work towards this end.

The ontological status of the teleological principles as employed in Kant’s philosophy of history has been far from obvious, and this is perhaps among the most important reasons why Kant’s historico-political essays have not been considered to fit in with his critical project. However, it should be clear from the above analysis that textual evidence suggests that his “Idea” essay uses a principle of teleology that is regulative, one that is squarely within the critical framework provided by the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}. In the “Idea” essay, I have shown that Kant explains his task as one of providing

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\textsuperscript{149} “IaG,” AA 8: 18, 42.
\end{footnote}
a guideline to a future historian and not substituting the empirical composition of history with a philosophical history. The concept of a cosmopolitan world order helps us to make sense of certain historical events as a whole, and this concept originates from our understanding of nature as purposive. This conception of nature does not mean to suggest that the end of history is the complete development of human capacities in a cosmopolitan world order, although such a teleological understanding of nature helps us to identify certain processes in history in a purposive manner as if they are approaching a certain condition that is in accord with our practical goals. In other words, it is thanks to the teleological understanding of nature as a system and its corollary, the problematic concept of cosmopolitanism, can we discern the empirical evidence that we are approaching this condition.

_The Guiding Principle of Universal History and Its Implications: The Propositions of the “Idea” essay_

This guiding principle, as I have indicated above, comes from the demand of reason, which is the need to unite what seems like a mere _aggregate_ of empirical events in a _system_. The hypothetical use of reason presupposes a problematic universal concept as a regulative idea, a guiding principle, as I have shown. Therefore, the idea for a universal history provided in the “Idea” essay serves as a mere rule to organize a seemingly random collection of events under a system, and also further presupposes that history is suitable for such systematization. Provided that a universal history aims at a unified whole, the underlying notion that this essay utilizes in the philosophy of history is that
“Nature does nothing in vain,” an explicitly teleological principle. In the following, I will explain how the propositions in this essay prepare the theoretical and practical ground for a teleological philosophy of history. Taking this as my starting point, I will show that nature itself is not dogmatically assumed to be teleological in this essay, that is to say, the dictum that “nature does nothing in vain” does not tell us that nature has a purpose of its own; rather, it is a principle that we presuppose, in order to connect the historical events by subsuming them under an idea of a universal history, as granted by the first Critique and the analysis of the hypothetical use of reason and its regulative principles found therein.

To begin with, it is important to note that the essay proceeds by means of propositions that are necessary in order for us to have a theoretical framework that can posit a universal history. It is hard to make sense of this peculiar structure of the essay, unless my interpretation above is true that Kant’s philosophy of history illustrates the hypothetical use of reason in action by proceeding with the guidance of a problematic regulative idea. Unless the idea for a universal history is understood to be a problematic one, necessitated by our reason to make sense of a collection of events, the propositional nature of the essay remains somewhat trivial. There is a systematic reason why this essay proceeds by means propositions that will make a teleological universal history possible, and thus we cannot ignore the way in which this essay is formatted in terms of propositions as opposed to statements of facts. If we know from the beginning that this text mainly elaborates on the method of philosophy of history and uses a cautious language with respect to teleology, it makes sense that Kant here resorts to propositions that may regulatively ground a teleological history, rather than to statements of facts. The
first three propositions concern most explicitly the theoretical presuppositions of a universal history, preparing us for a critical teleological universal of history, and the rest proceed based on those presuppositions, showing us how this idea can be tested and thus proves to be useful in other ways as well.

The first three propositions of the “Idea” essay are further extensions of the “nature does nothing in vain” principle in preparation for a universal concept of history. They assume a teleological theory of nature and then account for both why this is a necessary presupposition in historical inquiry, and why we are left clueless in our endeavors without it. The first proposition states that the highest aim of nature is the necessity for the “natural predispositions [Naturanlagen]” of living beings to be developed completely and purposefully, according to a teleological theory of nature. If we do not assume that this is necessary, we are then confronted with a random nature and the guiding principle of reason [Leitfaden der Vernunft] is replaced by the “dismal reign of chance.” As Kant writes,

> An organ which is not meant for use or an arrangement which does not fulfill its purpose is a contradiction in the teleological theory of nature. For if we abandon this basic principle, we are faced not with a law-governed nature, but with an aimless [zwecklos], random process, and the dismal reign of chance replaces the guiding principle of reason.\(^\text{150}\)

That is, if we do not presuppose that nature is teleological, we cannot account for some of the capacities or organs that we have, because we cannot ask the question for what they are used. It would look like they have no use or purpose, and we would not know where to start when we are investigating them: this is the problem of being limited to merely mechanistic principles.

\(^{150}\)“IaG,” AA 8: 18, 42.
One can still ask here: Why must history be teleological? The answer again comes from the first *Critique*. While the first sentence in the citation above seems like a dogmatic presupposition, if we read the next sentence in light of my analysis of the guiding principles provided in the previous section, we see immediately that Kant does not dogmatically presuppose that nature is teleological, first because this idea is explicitly referred to as a “guiding principle of reason,” which, as we now know, means a regulative principle, and more importantly, because Kant has already justified the regulative use of teleological principles in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique*. As I have shown, the teleological understanding of nature comes from the regulative use of the third idea of pure reason, the rational concept of God.\(^{151}\)

Therefore, we are entitled to assume a teleological nature coming out of the first *Critique*, insofar as we keep this principle a regulative one, for it is useful for systematizing our cognitions and making the connections between them tighter, which is exactly the issue here in the philosophy of history. We are allowed to use teleological principles in the sense of avoiding a foray into dogmatic metaphysics.

The next two propositions of the “Idea” essay proceed similarly. The second proposition claims that the natural predispositions of human beings are to be developed not in the individual but only in the species.\(^{152}\) This again follows from the guiding principle of teleology, which is a logical principle that presupposes a transcendental one,

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\(^{151}\) Remember that the idea of God “means nothing more than that reason bids us consider every connection in the world according to principles of a systematic unity, hence as if they had all arisen from one single all-encompassing being, as supreme and all-sufficient cause…This highest formal unity that alone rests on concepts of reason is the *purposive* [Zweckmässige] unity of things; and the *speculative* interest of reason makes it necessary to regard every ordinance in the world as if it had sprouted from the intention of a highest reason.” (KrV, A 686f./ B 714f.)

\(^{152}\) “IaG,” AA 8: 18, 42.
as I have explained in the previous section. If this is not assumed, then these natural capacities would seem purposeless and wasted, for no significant development can be observed during one individual’s lifetime. Nature needs a number of generations for the predispositions to be fully and completely developed and this must be the goal of our aspirations, at least as an idea in our mind. That is, without having a goal in mind in terms of the promotion of our natural predispositions, these predispositions would seem unintelligible.

The third proposition states that nature has given human beings reason and freedom of the will in order for them to be able to produce everything entirely out of themselves. Here Kant says that because nature does nothing in vain and we presuppose this principle of purposiveness to be a necessary principle of nature, the fact that nature did not do human beings a special favor by placing them in external conditions that are easier to deal with must have been for the very purpose of testing their capacities. That is, nature must have enjoyed, as it were, giving many hardships to human beings to overcome. It seems that nature did not want human beings to live well but wanted them to work very hard through these obstacles. This must have been for the purpose of providing many opportunities for human beings to develop their predispositions fully and completely. Or else, we cannot explain why the earlier generations had to endure such hardship and suffering.

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153 KrV, A 654/B 682.
154 “IaG,” AA 8: 19, 43.
155 “IaG,” AA 8: 19, 43.
156 “IaG,” AA 8: 19, 43.
157 This is something Hannah Arendt briefly reflects on in her Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy, 77f. She argues that the very idea of progress (in the sense of developing our capacities) contradicts the Kantian notion of human dignity, because it assumes that progress can be discerned only when human beings are taken as a whole; however, human dignity requires that we be seen in our particularity, as individuals. Furthermore, progress understood in this way seems to justify the earlier sufferings of human beings.
In short, Kant claims in these three preliminary propositions that the natural capacities given to human beings must be fully developed, that this is possible only in the species, and that this must be the way that nature intended for us to use our reason and freedom of the will, for it throws numerous obstacles and great hardships at us. Nature must be understood in teleological terms, or else we cannot account for why we have certain capacities, why we do not observe a significant development in one individual’s lifetime, and why earlier generations had a harder life. Based on this teleological understanding of nature, we should then investigate what kind of a philosophy of history of the human species must be presupposed in order to articulate this goal of developing all of our innate predispositions.

Starting with this guiding principle of philosophical reflection on history—a principle none other than the principle of purposiveness, a distinctively teleological principle—sketched out in the first three propositions of the “Idea” essay, Kant then lays out in the fourth proposition of the essay the way in which human species must develop in history, or what the universal history of human beings should look like if we are to fulfill the highest purpose of nature. Therefore, assuming that the highest purpose of nature is the development of the natural predispositions of our species, that there is a fit between nature and the capacities of human beings, the fourth proposition claims that antagonism must be the means for the development of inborn capacities of humans.\textsuperscript{158} This antagonism is nothing other than the famous “unsociable sociability” [ungesellige Geselligkeit] that Kant attributes to human beings, that is to say, the inclination to be in a

\textsuperscript{158} “IaG,” AA 8: 20, 44.
society on the one hand and wanting to break free from anything that will limit their freedom on the other. He explains it as follows:

[t]he predisposition for this obviously lies in human nature. The human being has an inclination to live in society, since he feels in this state more like a human, that is, he is able to develop his natural predispositions. But he also has a great tendency to live as an individual, to isolate himself, since he also encounters in himself the unsocial characteristic of wanting to direct everything in accordance with his own ideas.\(^{159}\)

While other interpreters have argued that this attribute of human beings is a dogmatic presupposition of Kant’s,\(^{160}\) it can be seen from what I have argued for thus far that that is not necessarily the case. Even the principle of the “cunning of nature” or one of its manifestations, the antagonism among human beings, appears to be an aid for our interpretation of the world history, not a condition for the possibility of the unfolding of historical events. For it will be necessary for nature to have some sort of means to create an environment in which our innate capacities can be developed further. That is, Kant’s concept of unsociable sociability, which is the root of both all evil and self-cultivation, helps us to see what the goal of history should look like, if we want to overcome this tendency.\(^{161}\) If we presuppose that nature and history are teleological, we should be able to show that there is a reason why we show this tendency and a means for overcoming it.

The fifth proposition says that the highest purpose of nature can be fulfilled only in society by establishing a perfectly just “civil constitution [bürgerlichen Gesellschaft].”\(^{162}\) The sixth points out the difficulty of such a task, and reminds us that this task remains an idea to which we should approximate. While the seventh one addresses the problem of

\(^{159}\) “IaG,” AA 8: 20f., 44

\(^{160}\) This is what Yovel calls “the cunning of nature” in his *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, 8f. and 140, among others. He says that he uses this term, which is strikingly similar to Hegel’s “cunning of reason,” on purpose, in order to emphasize the continuity and the difference between the two thinkers.

relations with other states and the idea of a federation of peoples with a united will and
power, the eighth proposition gives us the necessary condition for the highest purpose
of nature to be fulfilled: the history of the human species as a whole as the realization of
“a universal cosmopolitan existence [ein allgemeiner weltbürgerlicher Zustand]”.

Here, it seems, we have come full circle: we have been investigating the purpose
of history in a way to make sense of human actions as a whole in the light of human
progress (a teleological presupposition), and we have found it in the idea of a universal
cosmopolitan existence. This is the idea for a universal history under which seemingly
random historical events must be grouped and understood: this is the concept that needs
to be used in order for us to represent history to ourselves as a systematic unity with a
purpose. The idea of universal history with a cosmopolitan aim is not posited as a
transcendental condition of the experience of nature, but only as a heuristic concept
that can generate an understanding of history as a whole. In other words, the question from
the beginning was: “What should the history of the human species as a whole look like so
that all natural capacities of humankind can be completely developed and that the random
aggregate of human actions makes sense in accordance with a teleological notion of
nature?,” and the answer comes from the idea of a cosmopolitan world order as the most
suitable condition in which we can become fully developed agents. This idea, while does
not directly refer to the actual unfolding of historical events, serves as a notion to which
we must approximate, according to Kant. This teleological philosophy of history, then, is
granted by the regulative use of the ideal of reason, as the Appendix to the

Transcendental Dialectic explains.

162 This is among the ideas later to be developed in Kant’s “Towards a Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical
Sketch.” We turn to this essay in Chapter Four.
Testing the Utility of the Hypothetical Use of Reason and the Idea for a Universal History

After laying out the propositions pertaining to an idea for a universal history, Kant, in the remainder of the essay, goes on to test the intent of his philosophy of history, to see whether this cosmopolitan intent that he develops helps us to make sense of this otherwise meaningless collection of historical events. In addition, he investigates whether this idea would also motivate us to do something about history such that our collective actions can be modeled accordingly, in a way to contribute to its purposive unfolding.\textsuperscript{164}

In trying to determine the significance and usefulness of the concept of a cosmopolitan order, the intent of his philosophical account of history, Kant turns to the socio-political conditions in which he finds himself. When we look at experience, reason, according to Kant, can discover a little of the guiding plan of human actions; once we reflect on historical events as a whole, a perspective made possible by regulative teleological assumptions about nature, we do not directly perceive a purpose of nature to bring about a determinate end such as a rational cosmopolitan existence.\textsuperscript{165} However, what we do observe is a gradual increase of freedom and enlightenment and it all seems to point to a future with a happy ending. “It seems as if a feeling is beginning to stir in all its

\textsuperscript{164} We can see here that the meaning of history is both theoretically and practically significant and that one of the main goals of this essay is to integrate these two concerns by means of demonstrating the importance of the principle of purposiveness in a system of critical philosophy. Nevertheless, it is not because of its moral implications that a future historian should adopt this model. Pauline Kleingeld argues, I think rightly, that while the moral reasons to adopt this view contributes to the feasibility of the idea of progress, they are only further motivations to adopt this model, separate from the theoretical purpose of this essay, which is to provide guidance to future historians. See Pauline Kleingeld, “Kant, History, and the Idea of Moral Development,” History of Philosophy Quarterly 6, no. 1 (1999): 59-90. On the distinction between theoretical and practical significance of history, see also Allen Wood, “Kant’s Fourth Proposition: the unsociable sociability of human nature,” 112f.

\textsuperscript{165} “IaG,” AA 8: 27, 50.
members, each of which has an interest in maintaining the whole,”\textsuperscript{166} writes Kant; and for him, this gives us hope that “the highest purpose of nature, a universal \textit{cosmopolitan existence}, will at last be realized as the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop.”\textsuperscript{167} The meaning of history or of certain historical epochs is not a question to which human beings can remain indifferent,\textsuperscript{168} so we need to be able to discern whether or not there is hope for the improvement of the human condition. The gradual increase of freedom and the ideals of enlightenment that we discover in experience is interpreted as \textit{a sign} that shows us that we are progressively emancipating ourselves from the rule of nature and the despotic reign of political and judicial institutions, and approaching a condition in which we will be able to develop our capacities further, provided that this is what nature intended us to do. Even if we do not observe such progress in history, we cannot help but understand history teleologically and as conducive to our practical goals, for otherwise it would be meaningless and a cause of frustration and cynicism. That is, without a teleological guiding idea of where history is headed, we would not be able to discern and interpret the current developments in which we find ourselves. The teleological view further permits us to reflect on historical events as a whole \textit{as if} they are approximating a certain telos. Thus, the idea for a universal history given by a purposive conception of nature is philosophically justified and furthermore useful. Its usefulness lies in the fact that it allows us to discern the larger trends in the world and further posit that they are all progressing toward a happy ending.

An additional reason to make use of such an idea for a universal history comes from practical and moral concerns, as pointed out by Kant in the “Idea” essay. However,

\textsuperscript{166} “\textsuperscript{1aG},” AA 8: 28, 51.
\textsuperscript{167} “\textsuperscript{1aG},” AA 8: 28, 51.
\textsuperscript{168} “\textsuperscript{1aG},” AA 8: 27, 50.
to consider Kant’s main goal in this essay as motivated by morality is a big mistake, as many commentators pointed out. It is possible and indeed necessary to make a distinction in the “Idea” essay between history as a natural process and a moral one, i.e., between theoretical and practical aspects of history. We know that it is not the case in this essay, at least for Kant, that because we understand it as a purposive and rational whole, history is *in itself* rational and that anything that occurred in history has, had and will have a purpose, even though unbeknownst to us. The Kantian principle of purposiveness, as mentioned before, does not mean that the actual events in history have a purpose, but rather that *we need to consider them as such*. This principle by itself does not provide us with a theoretical guarantee that things *will* turn out the way we postulated them. Just because we must look for a purpose in history and posit one, it does not mean that we will definitely find this purpose there or in fact reach it one day. Nevertheless, a philosophy of history that posits a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose “must be regarded as possible and even as capable of furthering the purpose of nature itself.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, the idea for universal history proves useful: this is why the hypothetical use of reason has a certain kind of utility, as I have explained before, and this is the additional motivation to adopt such a view of history, one that has practical implications. Hence Kant’s statement in the “Idea” essay that says that it is only by postulating a purposiveness of history “do we have grounds for greater hopes.”¹⁷⁰ While a teleological conception of nature and history is significant for practical purposes, the moral aspect of a universal history conceived in this way is not the only thing that is important for Kant’s philosophy of history, therefore the theoretical commitments embedded in a teleological

¹⁷⁰ “IaG,” AA 8: 30, 52.
understanding of history should not disappear from our sight. History or progress in history by itself is not about morality. This conception of history as a teleological order approaching a cosmopolitan situation is conducive to furthering the practical goals of human species. It provides us with a hope, a pragmatic one, that a social union which was pathologically enforced, i.e., enforced due to the unsociable sociability of human beings, can eventually be transformed into a moral one. Thus, there is a distinction between history as a natural process and a moral one: history prepares us to be moral, but by no means makes us moral agents. Emphasizing the practical and moral concerns that emerge in this text loses sight of the theoretical and methodological considerations that prompted the writing of this essay, as I have shown in this chapter as a whole.

To claim that Kant’s use of the principle of teleology in the “Idea” essay is dogmatic is to overlook not only the account of teleology in the first Critique, but so too the precautions Kant takes at both the beginning and the end of the essay, when he identifies his task as a philosopher of history. He is very clear about the fact that his account of universal history is not an empirical composition, that he is not assuming the role of an empirical historian who will collect some historical data and present them as they are. Kant is not even saying that this idea of a universal history should supersede the task of empirical composition. Indeed, he admits, it is rather an absurd task “to write a history according to an idea of how world events must develop if they are to conform to certain rational ends.” However, this idea of a universal history “to some extent follows an a priori rule,” a rule, which, as I have shown, the philosopher comes to

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171 “IaG” AA 8: 21, 45.
172 “IaG,” AA 8: 30, 53.
174 “IaG,” AA 8: 30, 53. This will be explained in the next chapter.
discover guided by a teleological theory of nature and the regulative idea of the unity of historical events. It proves useful to explore this idea and problematically apply it to empirical events, because it helps us to make sense of historical events as a whole: this is its theoretical significance and usefulness. It further gives us hope that we are making progress: this is its practical significance and usefulness. When we posit an idea for a universal history, we do not mean that this idea determines the actual historical events themselves – this would be indeed dogmatic and absurd. What Kant accomplishes with his discovery of the idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan aim is that from the general regulative premise that nature does nothing in vain and that its purpose must be thought as the cultivation of human capacities, and from the observation of political institutions and the gradual increase of enlightenment oriented by this idea, we can conclude with sufficient certainty – though not conclusively prove – that history is moving towards the goal of accomplishing a rational cosmopolitan existence.\(^{175}\) This is what a philosophical mind can attempt from another standpoint, other than that of the empirical historian.\(^{176}\) If, as he says, it may be assumed that nature has a plan, even for the seemingly contingent human actions, then this idea is \textit{useful} in that it may “serve as a guide to us in representing an otherwise planless aggregate of human actions as conforming, at least when considered as a whole, to a \textit{system}.”\(^ {177}\) We can then hope that a future philosopher of historian, who, making use of the concept of a cosmopolitan world order, will be able to write a universal history. By means of the set of propositions he

\(^{175}\) An example from astronomy that parallels this structure is given in this essay; Kant writes, “It [proving from experience that history has a purpose] is no easier than it is to determine, from all hitherto available astronomical observations, the path which our sun with its whole swarm of satellites is following within the vast system of the fixed stars; although from the general premise that the universe is constituted as a system and from the little which has been learnt by observation, we can conclude with sufficient certainty that a movement of this kind does exist in reality.” (\textit{IaG}, AA 8: 27, 50)

\(^{176}\) “\textit{IaG},” AA 8: 30, 53.

\(^{177}\) “\textit{IaG},” AA 8: 29, 52.
puts forth in this essay, therefore, Kant prepares the ground for such a philosophy of history, similar to the way in which Kepler, who united different empirical laws governing the motions of the planets under one theory, paved the way for Newton, who then systematized Kepler’s theory, explaining it in terms of a universal natural cause.\footnote{“IaG,” AA 8: 18, 42.}

\textit{Yovel and the Answer to the Problem of Historical Schematism}

At this juncture, Yovel brings up a question regarding the subjective character of a regulative teleological philosophy of history – a problem that he calls the “problem of historical schematism.” He asks the following question: If the idea of a universal history is a merely subjective way of accounting for an aggregate of historical events, that is, if a teleological account is required for our understanding of history, then what is the link between such a subjective account and the actual unfolding of events, in their objectivity? How are we entitled to make a claim with regard to history in its actual unfolding, if the principle we use is not justified objectively but only subjectively? Furthermore, how are we to do justice to the particular experiences and events in history, if the philosophy of history is always a unifying and perhaps a reductive account of these experiences? Because Yovel does not think that Kant had a notion of teleology before the \textit{Critique of Judgment}, he cannot formulate a Kantian answer to the question of the relationship between a regulative teleological account of history and an empirical one. So his major question about Kant’s teleological philosophy of history boils down to this: at first sight, there seems to be no such thing as merely empirical history (a collection of historical events in terms of cause-effect relationships) for Kant, for all history is to be considered as organized around a principle of purposiveness—
because if it is not, then we have no way of making sense of the whole. \textsuperscript{179} We are then forced to ask the question: what does a teleological philosophy of history really say about empirical history?

The question mainly concerns the relationship between the particular events in history and the universal idea of history provided by Kant. One can therefore think of it as a problem of representation: how is empirical history mediated by means of the idea for a universal history? How can such a subjective idea of universal history, a concept with which we have to come up in order to make sense of the particular historical events as a whole, make any substantial claims about its object? A teleological philosophy of history in the Kantian sense does not seem to say anything, objectively, about the actual course of events. I have already considered the possibility of whether Kant’s philosophy of history claims that empirical history \textit{in itself} has a purpose and answered it in the negative. It should be clear from the analysis I have offered thus far that one way to account for the relationship between empirical history and a teleological philosophy of history in a way that does not violate Kantian distinctions is to keep in mind that the teleological philosophy of history rests on a theoretical guiding principle, a regulative one that is necessitated for our comprehension. I have explained the implications of this guiding principle and shown that for Kant’s answer to this question comes from the ideas used as \textit{analogues} of the schemata of sensibility. \textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{179} Yirmiyahu Yovel, \textit{Kant and the Philosophy of History}, 21. For a more detailed account of this problem as formulated by Yovel, see Chapter One.
\textsuperscript{180} When Kant elaborates on the question of the validity of the regulative principles in the first \textit{Critique}, it is always put in terms of \textit{approximation}, and I believe that an account of gradual approximation is the most Kantian answer to the problem of the mediation between subjectivity and objectivity, or between the subjective explanations and empirical events in the case of history. On Kantian grounds, we cannot posit a direct correspondence or identity between empirical history and a teleological philosophy of history: this much should be clear. However, we are entitled to use the ideas of reason and the principles provided by them as regulative principles and maxims of research. I have already demonstrated that principles of reason cannot be constitutive, because we can give no corresponding schema of sensibility for them: we do not have an intuition of God, soul or the world. Kant then asks “[H]ow will I nevertheless secure for them a regulative use, and with this some
Now, although we can find no corresponding empirical intuition or a schema for the thoroughgoing unity of all concepts and cognitions of the understanding, we are entitled to project such a unity, as I have shown above. We do not experience history as a unified coherent whole but we project such a unity on to the historical events. This projected unity is based on an idea of reason, which in this case, functions as an analogue of a schema of sensibility. The “objects” to which the ideas of reason refer should not be assumed in themselves, but as analogous to the schemas of sensibility that would relate pure concepts of the understanding to empirical intuitions. Just as the schema is the third term between something purely intellectual (concepts) and another thing purely sensible (intuitions), the ideas of reason relate regulative principles to cognitions, operating in the field between the two. That is, they should be considered as analogues of the things-in-themselves. However, they are not exactly like the schemata of sensibility, because unlike the latter, ideas of reason do not make cognition possible. Thus, as Kant writes:

the idea of reason is an analogue of a schema of sensibility, but with this difference, that the application of concepts of the understanding to the schema of reason is not likewise a cognition of the object itself (as in the application of the categories to their sensible schemata), but only a rule or principle of the systematic unity of all use of the understanding.

That is, even though we know that ideas of reason and the principles springing from them do not directly apply to the objects of intuition, they have some sort of indirect objective validity for our experience. Because they do apply to the concepts of the understanding

objective validity? And what sort of meaning can that use have?” (KrV, A 664/B 692) The answer lies in this comparison between ideas of reason and schemata of sensibility. Regulative principles and their justification are further developed in the Critique of Judgment, to which I turn in the next chapter.

See On the Schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding, KrV, A 137f./B 176f.

KrV, A 665/B 693. This is the analogy: Concepts of the Understanding (Categories) to Regulative Principles as Schemata to Ideas of Reason.
and guarantee their unity, we can safely take these ideas and principles as analogues for the collection of the empirical intuitions to which they refer. In the case of the concept of the universal history, the idea of a cosmopolitan world order would be an analogue for the actual unfolding of events at the time, a rule to interpret all particular empirical occurrences under a unified story, which we come to discover thanks to a regulative teleological conception of nature that is indirectly valid for these historical events.

By means of the categories of the understanding, we can give a mechanistic account of history, one that refers to the causal relationships between historical events; however, a unifying account has to come from a teleological principle used regulatively. The use of the ideas of reason as analogues provides us with a direction for connecting the cause-effect relationships in history. The teleological unity presupposed by means of these analogues points us towards a certain goal, in this case, towards a cosmopolitan existence, and this claim is valid a priori only indirectly for universal history: this seems to be what Kant means when he says that history follows a “certain kind of a priori rule” in the “Idea” essay.\textsuperscript{183} It is a priori because it is not based on experience but it is not a priori like the categories are, because it is indirectly valid for the objects of experience (historical events) without determining them. That is, the thoroughgoing unity of the categories is valid indirectly for the object of experience and therefore, the principles of pure reason will always have objective reality in regard to this object, yet not so as to determine something in it, but only to indicate the procedure in accordance with which the empirical and determinate use of the understanding in experience can be brought into thoroughgoing agreement with itself, by bringing it as far as possible into connection with the principle of thoroughgoing unity, and from that it is derived.\textsuperscript{184}

\textsuperscript{183} “\textit{JaG},” AA 8: 30, 53.
\textsuperscript{184} \textit{KrV}, A 665f./B 693f.
The objective reality of the concepts of the understanding lies in their application through schematism and the *Grundsätze*, whereas the indirect or indeterminate “objective” reality of the ideas of reason and its *Prinzipien* comes from their *usefulness* for directing the understanding towards a possible unity. The ideal of reason, whose existence can never be demonstrated, will nevertheless be an *analogue* for the systematic unity of all knowledge and provide regulative maxims for directing our research without determining the objects under investigation. This is what it means to use the ideal of reason as a regulative principle, and regard all combination in the world *as if* it arose from an all-sufficient necessary cause.\(^{185}\) The “as-if” here signifies an analogical relationship between what is being presupposed regulatively, namely a God, and what is being explained by means of it, all order and purposiveness in the world.

I have shown that the relationship between a teleological account of history and the actual unfolding of empirical events is not one of direct correspondence for Kant: a teleological explanation of history is not constitutive of its object. It follows from the special status of the teleological principle as analyzed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the relationship between this principle and the empirical composition of historical events is one of regulation or direction: the principle of purposiveness functions as a regulative one that applies to a field that is not fully determined by means of mechanistic categories. It seems then that the teleological philosophy of history in the “Idea” essay presents *only an analogue* of empirical history *for our purposes of making better sense of it* and this schema does not explain how these events *themselves are constituted*. Therefore, the principle of purposiveness applied to history is not thereby *objectively* justified, for it does not establish that empirical history has a determinate purpose. Rather, this principle

\(^{185}\) KrV, A 619/B 647.
is justified only on subjective or indirectly objective grounds, in order for us to treat history as if it unfolds purposively, and to tell ourselves a coherent story in the end.

III

A Preliminary Critical Philosophy of History

By insisting on a textual continuity between the first Critique and the “Idea” essay, my interpretation emphasizes the strong connection between the early version of the critical notion of teleology and the history essays in the Kantian system. I insist on this, because chronologically Kant had already developed this conception of teleology before he wrote the “Idea” essay.186 I have shown that the “Idea” essay suggests that we must understand history as having a purpose, which is the development of all inborn capacities of human beings in a cosmopolitan world order. Even though we have no direct representation of this purpose in experience and thus do not know it, it is the telos of history insofar as we come to understand and want to research it. While the use of this principle as a guiding thread is necessary for our comprehension, it by no means intends to capture how the world actually is. In other words, Kant insists on the fact that the idea of a world history with a cosmopolitan intent does not determine empirical history as such, but has to do with only our way of relating to it: remember that this guiding principle of history is not given to us by experience but it must be discovered by the philosopher.187 We come to discover this plan in history first by means of regulative teleological understanding of nature and second from the observation of the

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186 Yovel labels the “Idea” essay as a dogmatic one and claims that the reasons for Kant’s relapse into a dogmatic notion of teleology only three years after the publication of the Critique of Pure Reason, which denounces the constitutive use of teleological principles, should be sought in Kant’s temperament and biography. As I have shown in Chapter One, Karl Ameriks attempts to provide such biographical and historical justification in his recent essay, “The Purposive Development of Human Capacities” in Kant’s Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide. Ed. Amelie Oksengerg Rorty and James Schmidt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 46-67.

187 “IaG,” AA 8: 19, 42
empirical conditions that signal progress toward this plan. The philosopher of history, in her claims about how the world ought to be, does not prescribe this purpose unproblematically to the actual unfolding of events. In fact, when we engage in giving an overarching account of history, we already use teleological explanations as if we are in possession of the knowledge of the final causes. The need to use such explanations comes from a lack we experience when we attempt mechanistic explanations of historical events, from the fact that we are unable to connect all the causal relationships by reference to a bigger picture. Mechanistic explanations of historical events help us to a certain extent, but they need to be supplemented by teleological ones, when we look for a systematic account of the whole. In fact, we already make reference to a bigger picture when we account for history: historical facts are meaningless unless given meaning through such interpretation that makes use of a teleological account of universal history.

In order to underscore the importance of regulative ideas in Kant’s historico-political philosophy and to understand better what entitles Kant to make a teleological claim at all with regards to history and politics, I will turn in the next chapter to the *Critique of Judgment*, and explain what teleological judging achieves and what its special principle of purposiveness entails. I turn to the *Critique of Judgment* in the next chapter not only because this is the work where teleological judgment is further developed in terms of its regulative and reflective character, but also and perhaps most importantly because in §§82-84 of the third *Critique* Kant returns to the subject of history, using terms strikingly similar to the ones in the “Idea” essay such as the civil society, and cosmopolitan world order. I will show that the claims made in the *Critique of Judgment* with regard to a civil lawful order and a cosmopolitan condition must be read in the light
of Kant’s distinction he makes in this work between internal and external purposiveness, only the latter of which has a place in his philosophy of history and political thought. I will now turn to an analysis of Kant’s most developed account of teleology in order to see how this affects the discussion carried from the first *Critique* to the “Idea” essay.
CHAPTER THREE

TELEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES IN THE

CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT

I have shown that Kant started to develop a notion of regulative teleology already in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and this method was put to use in his first historical treatise, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent.” Therefore, one cannot dismiss this historico-political essay as pre-critical, for it employs a critical-regulative principle of purposiveness in order to sketch out a theory of universal history. Kant’s teleological philosophy of history and its underlying regulative principle are further developed later in the *Critique of Judgment*, especially in §§82-84, where history and culture are explicitly judged to be teleological using the external principle of purposiveness: a principle that is the extended version of the principle of absolute or inner purposiveness that we must employ in judging organisms. Thus, in this chapter, I turn to the *Critique of Judgment* to analyze Kant’s more systematic writings on teleology and to investigate §§82-84 of the third *Critique*. Doing so will allow me to articulate the full significance of teleological principles and the critical-regulative method for politics and history. I have shown that in the first *Critique*, the hypothetical use of reason allows for the use of the regulative principle of purposiveness. In the third *Critique*, Kant further situates regulative principles in his critical-regulative method, and calls the type of judgments made by the hypothetical use of reason “reflective judgments.” In §§82-84 of the *Critique of Judgment*, he analyzes history and politics as fields of inquiry where a type of reflective judgment and its regulative principle of external purposiveness prove
useful. In addition, there is a striking similarity between the methodology and the language of the “Idea” essay and §§ 82-84 of the Critique of the Teleological Judgment where Kant explicitly deals with history and culture, and this similarity also confirms that the historico-political essays are not dogmatic, since these themes come up in an explicitly critical writing. Therefore, Kant’s historico-political thought and its teleological claims must be understood in light of the claims of both the first Critique, as I have done in the previous chapter, and the third Critique, as I propose to do in this chapter. Such theoretical framing will also then help me to re-read Kant’s “Towards Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” (1795) in systematic terms, which I will do in the next chapter.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the principle of purposiveness has already been addressed in the first Critique, albeit not in as much detail as it has been in the third Critique. In the first section of this chapter I will address the continuity between the first and the third Critiques, both the points of convergence and differences. In addition to the similarities I have mentioned above in terms of the significance of the regulative principles in the hypothetical use of reason and in reflective judgments, I will show that in the third Critique Kant develops a richer vocabulary to talk about different kinds of purposiveness, like that of beauty without a purpose (subjective or formal purposiveness), of organisms (internal purposiveness), of the systematicity and entirety of nature and the

188 Yirmiyahu Yovel points out the connection between the fourth thesis of the “Idea” and Kant’s remarks on culture in the third Critique in his Kant and the Philosophy of History. However, he claims that Kant’s turn to culture here signifies the dependent nature of the relationship between his concept of history (now subsumed under the narrower concept of culture, the external facet of history) and morality; he writes, “it is clear that the discussion is now subject to the concept of the practical reason and thus to the criteria of the critical outlook” (Ibid., 179) Therefore, he does not connect the dots between the two pieces, so to speak, in a way to address the theoretical justification of the teleological understanding of history and culture. I will address this point in detail in the final section of this chapter, when we turn to a closer analysis of §§ 82-84 of the Critique of Judgment.
unity of historical processes (external purposiveness). The second section of this chapter
thematizes the distinction between internal and external purposiveness and explains the
different ways in which we are justified to use each teleological principle. It turns out
that in making teleological judgments we cannot help but infer the existence of a creator
of all purposiveness in nature. This natural leap has quite problematic implications for the
critical endeavor as a whole, and for history and politics as well. While a cursory reading
of his historico-political essays makes it seem like these texts operate under the
assumption of Providence or a wise nature, I will show that Kant goes to great lengths to
explain that while such assumptions are theoretically untenable, they may nevertheless
serve a pragmatic purpose. Having distinguished between the internal purposiveness of
organisms and the external purposiveness of history as a whole, in the third and final
section of this chapter, I turn to §§ 82-84 of the Appendix entitled the Methodology in the
Critique of Judgment to assess the status of Kant’s critical philosophy of history and its
employment of the principle of external purposiveness found in these sections.\(^{189}\) By
doing so I will offer an interpretation of these sections that keeps in line with teleological

\(^{189}\) These sections of the third Critique have often been regarded as puzzling. Indeed, in her recent book
which claims to be the first one that gives a unifying interpretation of the Critique of Judgment, Rachel
Zuckert completely overlooks these sections of the third Critique. See Rachel Zuckert. Kant on Beauty and
My interpretation will attempt to remedy this oversight. Among other recent works on these sections, we
can count Rudolf Makkreel’s Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the
Critique of Judgment. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990), esp. 130f. He does not find any
methodological continuity between these sections and the “Idea” essay, nor does he accept that the third
Critique’s teleological judgment is a further systematization of the regulative use of ideas (thus
hypothetical use of reason) as explained in the first Critique. Henry Allison’s “Teleology and History in
Kant: the critical foundations of Kant’s philosophy of history” argues for such a connection, although does
not make a strong case for the necessarily regulative use of teleology in the first Critique. Pauline
Kleingeld’s recent essay “Kant on Historiography and the use of regulative ideas on historiography”
emphasizes the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic and its analysis of regulative use of ideas of
reason; however, she then forgoes the regulative status of purposiveness in history and politics, for she
defends a certain version of cosmopolitanism as inevitable and necessary on Kantian grounds. See Chapter
One for more details on these authors’ claims and other recent interpretations of Kantian historico-political
writings as within or outside of Kant’s critical œuvre.
principles and their uses as described in the Critique of Teleological Judgment, while also exposing the points of convergences between these sections and Kant’s earlier writings on history and politics. In short, my interpretation of the Critique of Judgment, focusing on the use and the status of the principle of external purposiveness and the continuity between the first and the third Critiques in terms of the critical-regulative method, will reveal why Kant thinks that philosophy of history and politics require this principle, and why they must therefore be seen as critical and thus regulative pursuits.

I

Special Status of the Principle of Purposiveness: Reflective Judgment and Its

Limited Ontological Claims

Reflective Judgments Coming out of the Hypothetical Use of Reason

The Critique of Judgment is solely concerned with a critique of reflective judgments as opposed to determinative ones; indeed, this is why we have a critique of two seemingly distinct kinds of judgments thematized in this work. Aesthetic and teleological judgments are both reflective in kind, meaning that they do not determine the object of experience by subsuming it under a given category by means of principles [Grundsätze] but in both kinds of reflective judgment, we merely reflect “on a given representation, in accordance with a certain principle [Prinzip].”190 The special principle of the power of judgment is a necessary presupposition of a “general but at the same time indeterminate principle of a purposive

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190 KU, AA 20: 211. On the distinction between Grundsätze and Prinzipien, see Chapter Two.
[zweckmässige] arrangement of nature in a system,”¹⁹¹ and this purposiveness of nature must be assumed in the subject – i.e., in the subject’s capacity for reflecting in general, not in the object– for the benefit of our power of judgment.¹⁹² In this section, I will explain why this principle can only be a principle of reflective judgment following the regulative idea of reason, and what its ontological status is within the critical system. I will show that Kant further develops his concept of the hypothetical use of reason here, and calls the kinds of judgments that can be made by means of such a use of reason “reflective judgments.” Further, he is now able to indicate more succinctly the cases to which hypothetical use of reason or reflective judgments, both employing regulative principles, can and should be applied.

A clear distinction between the determinative power of judgment and the reflective power of judgment is made in § V of the First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment. Kant talks about the two acts of judging differentiated by means of the outcomes of these judgments:

The power of judgment can be regarded either as a mere faculty for reflecting on a given representation, in accordance with a certain principle [Prinzip], for the sake of a concept that is thereby made possible, or as a faculty for determining an underlying concept through a given empirical representation. In the first case it is the reflective, in the second case the determinative power of judgment.¹⁹³

Now, if the faculty of judgment is reflecting on a given empirical representation by means of an underlying concept, then this is called determinative judgment. The empirical representation as a result is determined and presented as an object of cognition, because the concept is ready at hand. The outcome of such judgment, so to speak, is

¹⁹¹ KU, AA 20: 214.
¹⁹³ KU, AA 20: 211; Translation slightly altered.
cognition. On the other hand, if there is no category available for the particular representation that is being judged, then the power of judgment produces an empirical concept. In this latter case, no schematization takes place, because the empirical concept is not readily applicable but produced as a result of the judging, and in order for this concept not to be an arbitrary one, the power of judgment requires a special principle that acts as a rule. As Kant writes,

Thus if there is to be a concept or a rule which arises originally from the power of judgment, it would have to be a concept of things in nature insofar as nature conforms to our power of judgment […] in other words, it would have to be the concept of a purposiveness of nature in behalf of our faculty for cognizing it.  

We can see that determinative judgment parallels the apodictic use of reason insofar as both start with a given universal concept and attempt to subsume a particular under it. In a similar fashion, the reflective judgment is akin to the hypothetical use of reason; in both cases, we have to ascend from the particular to the universal and because we do not have a universal concept given at hand for some particulars, we problematically assume it thanks to a regulative principle.

Thus the reflective judgment requires a principle just as much as the determinative judgment. The principle utilized in determinative judgment comes from the concept of the object, which “plays the role of the principle.” Since the “concepts of

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195 KU, AA 20: 211. In the case of the determinative power of judgment, the rules of subsumption come from the schematization of the object and thereby from the application of these schemata to every empirical synthesis, without which no judgment of experience would be possible at all. No judgment of experience would be possible without this empirical synthesis, because categories would remain as pure forms of cognition without their application being demonstrated. That is, the objective reality of the categories or the concepts of the understanding comes from their application. We know that they are the a priori conditions for the possibility of experience and cognition, and that they must relate to the sensible intuitions in order to fulfill these goals. If this relation or application cannot be shown, then we would be justified in saying that these concepts are empty. Since their reality and application have been shown by means of the schemata and the principles, we are justified in asserting that they constitute the form of all experience. As Kant
the understanding are thought *a priori* before experience and on behalf of it, they contain nothing beyond the unity of reflection on appearances, insofar as these appearances are supposed to belong necessarily to a possible empirical consciousness,” they have objective reality only when applied to appearances that belong to a possible empirical consciousness, and this objective reality consists in being the *form* of all possible experience. Thus, in determinative judgments, transcendental schematism, together with the principles [*Grundsätze*], provides us with *a priori* rules for subsumption and makes experience possible in general.196 On the other hand, when we try to come up with an empirical concept for a variety of experiences, as we do in reflective judgment, we do not have a schema ready that will serve as a rule. In other words, in reflective judgment, the categories and the *Grundsätze* are of no help, since no category is given. In determinative judgment, we are *descending* from a given universal (concept/category) to the particular empirical representation, while in reflective judgment, we are *ascending* from the particular, trying to find a universal for it. In the latter case, there is no guarantee that the particular in question can be compared to and subsumed under the universal or empirical concepts we already have: this is why, as Kant writes, “the power of judgment requires a special and at the same time transcendental principle for its reflection.”197 Because the particular we are trying to judge can be very different from all the particulars that are readily subsumable under universals, or because the multiplicity of the empirical laws

writes, “through them alone is cognition, and determination of an object possible…their objective reality is founded solely on the fact that because they constitute the intellectual form of all experience, it must always be possible to show their application in experience.” (KrV, A 310/B367.)

196 As we know from the first *Critique*, guided by the table of our categories, transcendental philosophy can also indicate the specific/particular cases to which these universal concepts can be applied. This is thanks to Schematism which temporalizes the categories and Principles [*Grundsätze*] that categorize the sensible. We should remember, however that these principles that categorize the sensible and thus make experience possible are *Grundsätze*, not *Prinzipien*.

197 KU, AA 20: 213.
that apply to this particular can be so great that it can never be given in a system, the power of judgment needs to presuppose a system of nature by means of a principle, a special rule that will guide our inquiry. Remember that in the case of hypothetical use of reason, we do not have a universal readily applicable, but we assume a universal concept problematically, in order to be able to proceed in our inquiry, and this procedure is allowed by the use of special principles. Similarly in reflective judgment, we proceed from the particular to the universal, which is only problematically given, in light of the special and regulative principle of purposiveness.

Kant writes,

[…] for those concepts which must first of all be found for given empirical intuitions, and which presuppose a particular law of nature, in accordance with which a particular experience is possible, the power of judgment requires a special and at the same time transcendental principle for its reflection and one cannot refer it in turn to already known empirical concepts and transform reflection into a mere comparison with empirical forms for which one already has concepts.198

It is possible that the diversity in nature is so great that one will never arrive at empirical concepts for each particular representation, in which case most comparison would be fruitless. In order for us to be able to draw some rules and concepts from such a diversity, we must have an a priori presupposition that must precede all comparison, and this is why the reflective power of judgment requires a special principle that posits a prior correspondence or fitness between empirical concepts and intuitions, without however determining exactly how this fitness will play itself out in each case. Therefore, the reflective power of judgment, since it cannot proceed schematically as in the case of determinative power of judgment, must proceed technically and

198 KU, AA 20: 213.
artistically, in accordance with the general but at the same time indeterminate principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system, as it were for the benefit of our power of judgment, in the suitability of its particular laws (about which understanding has nothing to say) for the possibility of experience as a system, without which presupposition we could not hope to find our way in a labyrinth of the multiplicity of possible empirical particular laws.\textsuperscript{199}

The special principle of the power of judgment is a necessary presupposition of a “general but at the same time indeterminate principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system,” as Kant puts it above, meaning that the purposiveness of nature must be assumed in the subject and in its capacity for reflecting in general and not in the object. Even though we cannot list the specific and concrete cases in which we have a proof of this principle of purposiveness, we must nevertheless assume that it serves as a logical principle, a guideline for our judging of particular experience because if we do not, then we would have no basis for assuming that we will ever judge nature and our particular experiences as an interconnected system, for it will all seem contingent.

Such a principle is always already presupposed by a systematic investigation of nature conceived teleologically. As Kant reminds us, all of the traditional formulations of nature’s purposiveness point out that such a teleological conception already constitutes the backbone of systematic investigation of nature and thus this conception is expressed by a transcendental principle:

\textit{All of the stock formulae: nature takes the shortest route – she does nothing in vain – she makes no leaps in the manifold of forms (continuum formarum) – she is rich in species but sparing with genera, etc. – are nothing other than this very same transcendental expression of the power of judgment in establishing a principle for experience as a system and hence for its own needs.}\textsuperscript{200}

\textsuperscript{199} KU, AA 20: 214.
\textsuperscript{200} KU, AA 20: 210.
This principle of nature cannot be grounded by the understanding or reason, as I have shown in my analysis of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The object of this principle, namely nature as a whole, cannot possibly be an object of experience, therefore anything determinative we might want to say about it is bound to get tangled up in antinomies. That is, we do not have any insight into the origin of the lawfulness of nature in its entirety; as far as we are concerned, all diversity in it can be contingent, not lawful or necessary. And yet our power of judgment, in order to investigate nature as a whole in its empirical laws, must presuppose a lawfulness of this contingency. But it can only be a subjective presupposition, meaning that when we say “nature does nothing in vain” and use this principle to explain certain objects of nature, we do not mean that there is nothing contingent in nature at all. We mean that as a special principle of reflection, *lawfulness of the contingent as such* must be presupposed, even though such lawfulness is contingent upon the peculiar constitution of our faculty of judgment.\(^{201}\) This principle does not constitute the objective *a priori* conditions for the possibility of the object to which it applies, but serves only as a *subjective* condition for its being judged and reflected upon at all. It is a subjectively necessary transcendental presupposition of the power of judgment.\(^{202}\)

It is important that without presupposing the possibility of experience as an interconnected system we could not hope to find our way in a labyrinth of the multiplicity of possible empirical particular laws. Kant claims to have shown in the *Critique of Pure Reason* ...

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\(^{201}\) For purposiveness is simply “a lawfulness of the contingent as such,” as Kant points out here and then again in §76 in the third *Critique* (KU, AA 5: 404). Following Kant’s clue here in the earlier draft of the First Introduction that reads “For purposiveness is a lawfulness which is at the same time contingent with respect to general laws of nature that are necessary for experience.” (KU, AA 20: 218), I will elucidate this point later in this chapter.

\(^{202}\) KU, AA 20: 209.
Reason that “the whole of nature as the totality of all objects of experience constitutes a system in accordance with transcendental laws, namely those that the understanding itself gives a priori.”

This means that experience must be conceived of as a system. Since the understanding provides mere forms of experience and does not deal with the specific content which contains multiple and diverse representations and the particular laws that govern them, the unity of these diverse empirical laws may be contingent. While determinate judgment offers particular laws concerning the forms of experience, the task of reflective judgment is now to ascend from these particulars to the universal and examine whether these can be unified in a system or if they can be seen as stemming from more general laws. Such a system is not given to us; that is, there seems to be no interconnected system of empirical laws that we can grasp, because it may be the case that the empirical laws are so complex and diverse that it is not possible to bring these laws under one common principle, no matter how hard we search for such a unifying principle. As Kant says, while explaining how this system should be presupposed, that just because nature in accordance with empirical laws is a system, it does not mean that it is a system that we as human beings with a limited (discursive) cognitive faculty can grasp: this has been the case, for example, in our mechanistic analysis of nature. In order to be able to use mechanistic principles securely, we have to presuppose a completed system of causality, which is not given to our experience. To us, numerous and diverse empirical laws present no completed system. However, this does not mean that nature as a whole cannot be given to our faculty of judgment as a system: even though we cannot possibly bring all these laws under one common principle, we must nevertheless presuppose, transcendentally, that such a system is both possible and necessary. Without

203 KU, AA 20: 208.
this transcendental and subjective presupposition, even the subsumption of the understanding would seem contingent. This subjectively necessary transcendental principle is that nature itself, “through the affinity of particular laws under more general ones, qualifies for an experience, as an empirical system.” As I have shown in the previous chapter with regards to the system of all cognition, this idea of a system is a *problematic* concept, one which we have to hold if we want to judge certain particulars for which no category is given. If we were not able to presuppose that we can find an empirical concept for every given representation and thus that there is a reciprocity between our concepts and representations, then we would not possibly experience nature as an object of cognition because first, the assumed unity between concepts and representations would be arbitrary thus our concept of causality, for example, would be meaningless for it would not be necessary, and second, every time we reflect on a representation we may not be able to subsume it under an empirical concept and thus cannot think nature as a system that can be investigated by us, which is what the reflective judgment provides thanks to its regulative principle.

In other words, because in the Kantian system determinative judgment, as explained but not named in the first *Critique*, does not *prescribe* its laws to nature, neither understanding nor reason restricts empirical nature in its particularity. For this, a special principle of reflection on behalf of our power of judgment is needed. As Kant writes,

> For while it may be readily understood that nature should be directed by our understanding in its merely formal laws (by means of which it is an object of experience in general), with regard to particular laws, in their multiplicity and diversity, it is free from all the restrictions of our law-giving faculty of cognition, and it is a mere presupposition of the power of 

204 KU, AA 20: 209f.
judgment, in behalf of its own use, always to ascend from empirical, particular laws to more general but at the same time still empirical ones, for the sake of the unification of empirical laws, which grounds that principle.\textsuperscript{205}

Unification of empirical laws, as Kant writes in the above, is the ground of the principle of reflective judgment that allows us to ascend from a particular law to a universal one. This is the projected and problematic unity of reason that directs understanding in its empirical use, as I have argued in the previous chapter. Thus, reflective judgment is made possible by the hypothetical use of reason thanks to its regulative principle.

The Copernican revolution, which proposes that objects of experience should conform to the subject rather than vice versa, means exactly the following: it is not that everything about the object is fully and completely determined by the categories, but that insofar as we have experience of this object, it is that which the categories are able to capture. Without the presupposition of these transcendental and \textit{a priori} structures of the understanding (the categories), we do not have a claim to the objectivity of experience. This does not mean, however, that the understanding \textit{dictates} its rules or \textit{a priori} structures to nature. These structures are only the \textit{formal} conditions for the possibility of all experience in general, but do not specify the kinds of experiences that are possible: this is why without the direction from reason and its unifying principles, we have no mark of empirical truth, as I have shown in the previous chapter. This is the accomplishment of the first \textit{Critique}: without dogmatically positing that the particular, multiple, and diverse empirical laws of nature \textit{are} prescribed by the understanding, we can proceed as if this multiplicity constitutes a system.

\textsuperscript{205} KU, AA 20: 210.
I have mentioned above that, while in the case of determinative judgments, the power of judgment subsumes the particular under a given universal concept, in reflective judgments it finds a general law for the seemingly contingent particular by proceeding from below, by ascending to the universal. If we were not able to presuppose that we will be able to find a general empirical law for the particular representation in each and every case, then we would not be granted the hope that we can legitimately subsume any particulars under universals and assume that nature as a whole can be represented as a system. Thus the reflective power of judgment is also called the faculty of judgment, and this is why, as I said above, the third Critique is a critique of the power of judgment and specifically of the reflective power of judgment. The reflective power of judgment functions just like the hypothetical use of reason, and in this way, we come to see the continuity between the first and the third Critiques. This is not to say that there is nothing new about regulative principles and their roles in the third Critique; on the contrary, Kant develops a richer vocabulary to talk about regulative principles of teleology and their various uses, as I shall show below.

Subjective and Objective Purposiveness

Reflective judgment conceives of nature technically as opposed to determinative judgment which takes nature to be a mechanism, which means that this type of judging proceeds “artistically, in accordance with the general but at the same time indeterminate principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system, as it were for the benefit of

\[\text{KU, AA 20: 211.}\]
our power of judgment.”207 The term “technique” means that an object of nature is judged on analogy with an object of art—as if its possibility was grounded in art created by an artist’s intention. Nature is called technical in this sense, when it is judged in subjective relation to our cognitive faculties, rather than in objective relations with objects. Since we do not know whether the possibility of such objects is indeed grounded in art but we judge them as such, we cannot call these judgments themselves technical, but through this judging, we come to call our power of judgment technical. As Kant further warns us, “this technique, since it contains no objectively determinative propositions, does not constitute any part of doctrinal philosophy, but only a part of the critique of our faculty of our cognition.”208 Thus, technique of nature, that is, the suitability of nature for the power of our judgment becomes an a priori principle of reflection; however, such an a priori principle, as I have explained above, is a subjectively transcendental and logical principle.209

The kind of causality presupposed by the technique of nature, namely that of the purposive arrangement of nature in a system, is not something that we experience when we conceive of nature mechanistically. Since reflective judgment deals with objects that exhibit more than that can be grasped by means of concepts (beautiful objects or natural ends), the categories and principles of a mechanistically conceived system of nature will be of limited help. Instead, the reflective power of judgment needs its own special

207 KU, AA 20: 214.
208 KU, AA 20: 200.
209 KU, AA 20: 214. The logical principle that nature constitutes an interconnected system that can be divided into species and genera is already presupposed by all scientists, for if they did not start out with such a proposition about a sort of fitness between nature and our capacity to judge nature, they would not have even hoped to outline a system of nature. Indeed, such a kinship among different individual things presupposes an artistic classification that comes out of the special principle of the power of judgment: “Nature specifies its general laws into empirical ones, in accordance with the form of a logical system, in behalf of the power of judgment.” (KU, AA 20: 216)
principle, as I explained in the previous section. This principle will assist us in judging those beautiful objects or ends of nature as purposive in form or matter, and in order to do that, it needs to refer to an artistic or technical conception of nature. Such a conception is not justified or attributed to nature in itself just because the reflecting power of judgment needs it; rather, without presupposing that nature itself classifies its forms according to some principle, we could not have judged something to be beautiful or as a natural end, so nature conceived as determining itself according to ends must already be the necessary presupposition behind such judgments. Since we always already do judge certain beings as beautiful, as systems, and as organisms, and that the principle of such judgments does not come from the categories that we have, there must be another principle that governs such reflection: the technical conception of nature provides this principle. Such a conception of nature is the special principle of the power of judgment, not of reason, and it must serve as an a priori principle for the reflecting power of judgment: it comes prior to such experiences but only entails that the end is posited in the subject, not in the object.\footnote{KU, AA 20: 216.}

The reason why there are two seemingly distinct judgments, aesthetic and teleological ones under one heading, has already been explained: both of these judgments are reflective, and they both make use of a special principle of purposiveness.\footnote{Thus, contrary to Arendt’s claim that the connection between aesthetic and teleological judgments is weak, we can see that the reason why these two types of judgments are included in one book is far from being arbitrary. (Hannah Arendt, Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy, 13).} In contrast to the guiding principle of aesthetic judgment, namely the concept of subjective purposiveness pertaining to the form of the beautiful object, teleological judgment works
with a concept of *objective* purposiveness [*objective Zweckmässigkeit*].\(^{212}\) Teleological judgments compare the concept of a product of nature as it is with one of what it ought to be.\(^{213}\) In this case, the power of judgment requires a special principle of reflection in order to be able to judge an object to be purposive, to judge how this object compares to its concept of what it ought to be, and how it connects to a system of nature. If it is found that the object can be conceived as purposive under a system of reason, then the object is a natural end and the purposiveness thereby found does not only pertain to its form. In short, while aesthetic judgments are about *formal* purposiveness, teleological judgments are about *material* purposiveness. Furthermore, the latter is a reflective cognitive judgment following the principle of reason, for it relates to the objective purposiveness of nature in relation to our power of judgment and to reason, to its suitability for a system of reason, and not to mere subjective suitability of the object for our imagination and understanding.\(^{214}\)

**The Place of Subjective and Objective Purposiveness in a Critical System**

Another important difference between aesthetic and teleological judgments is that it is the former that properly requires a critique of the faculty of judgment. It is the judgment of taste and its principle of formal purposiveness that require such a critique, while

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\(^{212}\) That is, teleological judgments are about the objective purposiveness of nature and a product judged to be objectively purposive is called a natural end. (KU, AA 20: 221).

\(^{213}\) KU, AA 20: 240.

\(^{214}\) In other words, in reflecting on an object that is not determined by means of the categories, such as a beautiful form in nature, there occurs a harmony between the understanding (which cannot find a determinate concept for this object) and imagination, a feeling of pleasure is produced due to the purposiveness of such an object for our power of judgment and this is called a judgment of taste. (KU, AA 20: 221.) Because the power of judgment is satisfied with such a harmony, no determinate concept of the object is required or produced as a result of this reflection, nor is it possible, so the end result of this reflection is pleasure based on an indeterminate concept of reason, and not any type of cognition.
teleological judgment is included here only because it too uses a principle of purposiveness regulatively, although this principle is a principle of reason. As he puts it: “the possibility of a teleological judgment about nature can easily be shown without having to ground it in a special principle of the power of judgment, for this merely follows the principle [Prinzip] of reason.” 215 This confirms my interpretation that finds a systematic continuity between the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first Critique and the Critique of Judgment. Kant here reiterates that such judgments about the purposiveness of nature merely follow the principle of reason: I have argued in my analysis of the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the previous chapter that this principle stems from the regulative use of the theological idea. Thus, the connection between reflective teleological judgments and the hypothetical use of reason is made clear in Kant’s claim that such judgments are already included in the system of reason, whereas it is the judgments of taste that required a third Critique. 216 Therefore, the principle of the principle of systematicity at stake in teleological judgment is a principle of reason stemming from the idea of God used regulatively, as I have explained in the previous chapter.

215 KU, AA 20: 243f.

216 Additionally, he writes that “the teleological judgment presupposes a concept of the object which reason brings under the principle of a connection to an end, only this concept of a natural end is used by the power of judgment merely in reflecting, not in determinative judgment. (KU, AA 20: 244) The reflective power of judgment, while making a teleological judgment about a natural end, uses a concept of reason, as we see in the above. Therefore while aesthetic judgments are judgments of taste, teleological judgments are judgments of cognition, though both still belonging to the reflective power of judgment, aesthetic judgment “unmixed with any other faculty of cognition,” and teleological judgment “through the combination of reason with empirical concepts.” (KU, AA 20: 243) On the other hand, aesthetic judgment or judgment of taste “requires a critique of the power of judgment as a faculty with its own special transcendental principles (like understanding and reason), and only in this way is it qualified to be included in the system of the pure faculties of cognition; the ground for this is that the aesthetic judgment, without presupposing a concept of its object, nevertheless ascribes purposiveness to it, and indeed does so with universal validity, the principle of which must therefore lie in the power of judgment itself[,]” (KU, AA 20: 244)
Although it is the judgments of taste that necessitate a critique of the faculty of judgment, both aesthetic judgments about subjective purposiveness and teleological judgment about objective purposiveness belong to a critical system, because the principle of purposiveness in any form must serve as an a priori logical and transcendental principle for the reflecting power of judgment.\footnote{KU, AA 20: 241.} A critical system, understood as an ongoing attempt to determine the limits of possible experience and its a priori conditions and critiques the extravagant claims one may be inclined to make if they take these a priori principles to pertain to the things themselves is quite different than a grounded full-fledged doctrine.\footnote{Zuckert thinks that this a priori principle of purposiveness is odd, because it is subjective. However, my close analysis of the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic shows that regulative principles always operate in this “odd” field, for they are “in some sense a priori” but justified on subjective and pragmatic grounds. This means that their objective validity is indirect. On this, see Chapter Two.} The concept that arises as the special principle of reflection for our power of judgment, namely nature as art or that of the technique of nature, does not lead to cognition of objects of nature in any way; it only supplies

the principle [Prinzip] for progress in accordance with laws of experience, whereby the investigation of nature becomes possible. But this does not enrich the knowledge of nature by any particular objective law, but rather only grounds a maxim for the power of judgment by which to observe nature and to hold its forms together.\footnote{KU, AA 20: 205.}

It does not mean that philosophy now has a new part where teleological laws are to be proven a priori. The transcendental deduction of this principle, which takes place in both Introductions but only explicitly named as such in the published (Second) Introduction, is a peculiar one, in the sense that a logical principle also turns out to be a transcendental one. That is, what seems at first like a merely logical principle, because it specifies how to mediate between forms of thought and nature,\footnote{KU, AA 20: 211f.n.} is a transcendental principle that
requires a transcendental deduction. This deduction starts out by explaining that the categories are the basis of universal laws which constitute what is necessary in an object of possible experience. As I have said earlier, these are determinative judgments, in which case the power of judgment subsumes the particular under a given universal, thus these universal laws are necessary for nature in general. However, these categories do not give us specifically how each object is to be understood, for, as Kant says, there is more than the formal time determination that contributes to the nature of objects. In addition to being understood in terms of the category of causality, for example, there can still be infinitely many formal causes in play, which we might never be able to discern. This would lead us to assume infinitely many ways of explaining an object of nature, all of which remain contingent for us, and also our experience would not be interconnected. But this is contrary to reason’s vocation, as I have shown in the previous chapter, because reason seeks to arrive at a unity. Kant writes,

But since such a unity must still necessarily be presupposed and assumed, for otherwise no thoroughgoing interconnection of empirical cognitions into a whole of experience would take place, because the universal laws of nature yield such an interconnection among things with respect to their genera, as things of nature in general, but not specifically, as such and such particular beings in nature, the power of judgment must thus assume it as an a priori principle for its own use that what is contingent for human insight in the particular (empirical) laws of nature nevertheless contains a lawful unity not fathomable by us but still thinkable, in the combination of its manifold into one experience possible in itself.

This is how an a priori principle of reflective judgment is transcendentally deduced.

As I have said above, representation of nature as art is merely a principle for the subject

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221 KU, AA 5: 183.
222 KU, AA 5: 183.
223 KU, AA 5: 183f.
224 Thus, contrary to Rolf-Peter Horstmann’s claim that there must be a transcendental deduction in the third Critique, we can see that there is one. Horstmann of course thinks that a transcendental deduction
and her investigation of nature, which projects to nature our need to compile the aggregate empirical laws together as in a system. This heuristic principle for our judging of nature belongs to the critique of our faculty of cognition. Thus, a transcendental philosopher needs to indicate under which occasions we can represent nature as an art to ourselves, where this idea comes from, in what sense it is a priori, and perhaps most importantly, “what the scope and boundary of its use are.” In short, judgments about subjective and objective purposiveness properly belong to critique, not to a doctrine.

_A Closer Look at the Principle of Objective Purposiveness_

As I have said above, in contrast to the guiding principle of aesthetic judgment, namely the concept of _subjective_ purposiveness pertaining to the form of the beautiful object, teleological judgment works with a concept of _objective_ purposiveness [objective _Zweckmässigkeit_]. That is, in the case of teleological judgment, the causality of nature is thought of as a causality of ends, thus corresponding with reason. In § IX of the First Introduction entitled “On Teleological Judging,” Kant explains what is granted by

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225 KU, AA 20: 205.
226 KU, AA 20: 205.
227 This claim that teleology does not belong to any doctrine but only to critique will be confirmed again in the Appendix entitled Methodology of the Teleological Judgment, to which I turn in the last section of this chapter.
228 Aesthetic judgments show us that nature is not only in harmony with our understanding but also with the power of judgment. This is evident in the pleasure of reflection we take in the judgment of beautiful forms. (KU, AA 20: 233.)
teleological judgments with regards to natural ends. Because the power of judgment does not have *a priori* concepts regarding the *generation* of things, it cannot judge these ends as real ends pertaining to the *constitution* of things.\textsuperscript{229} Kant writes,

> [t]he concept of a real end of nature therefore lies entirely outside the field of the power of judgment if that is considered by itself and since this…considers only two faculties, imagination and understanding,…in the teleological purposiveness of things, as ends of nature, which can only be represented through concepts, it must set the understanding into relation with reason (which is not necessary for experience in general) in order to make things representable as ends of nature.\textsuperscript{230}

Teleological judgment judges the object to be possible in accordance with the concept of an end.\textsuperscript{231} Therefore it does not merely judge the *form of the object* to be purposive for our power of judgment but judges the *object* to be a real end. For this, it requires the presupposition of the concept of final causes in nature and this is a concept belonging merely to the reflecting power of judgment.\textsuperscript{232}

What should be remembered here is that although teleological judgment makes use of a principle of *objective* purposiveness and judges its object to be a real end, this principle of judgment arises out of a need of the subject and its capacity for reflection, so the underlying presupposition is still a *subjectively necessary* one. Although teleological judgment is cognitive in that it helps cognition to become systematic, it does not extend our knowledge of nature by introducing new laws, for it does not belong to the

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\item \textsuperscript{229} KU, AA 20: 233.
\item \textsuperscript{230} KU, AA 20: 233.
\item \textsuperscript{231} On the other hand, aesthetic judgment, because it judges the object to be purposive for our power of imagination, neither requires nor produces a determinate empirical concept of the object as purposive. It has to do with the purposiveness of the *form* of the object being judged, and the purposiveness of our imagination and understanding.
\item \textsuperscript{232} KU, AA 20: 234. Kant adds that causality of reason can also be called purposive, but not with regards to purposiveness in nature since we cannot know this through any experience. The only time we ascribe to something a causality of reason and thus call it purposive is when we experience such a causality, namely in products of art. In these, we are conscious of a causality of reason and it is appropriate to call reason technical in relation to them, because the purpose therein can be explained and accounted for by us. In the case of a purposive nature, however, to ascribe such a causality to reason would mean to say that nature itself is rational, which is not something we experience.
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determinative power of judgment. Kant warns us again in this section of the First Introduction that the concept of purposiveness serves only for the sake of reflection on the object, not for the determination of the object through the concept of an end. Since teleological judgment compares the concept of a product of nature as it is with one of what it ought to be, and since we never experience what something ought to be but always what it is (though not in itself), it is impossible to compare what is (the seemingly contingent) and what ought to be the case (the necessary), unless we have a prior idea or a guideline of what it ought to be. This guideline is not given by experience but

233 KU, AA 20: 205. It bears repeating, since Kant himself does so, that this special principle of purposiveness is not a concept of the understanding; that is, it is not a category that is constitutive of experience. It is a principle of the reflective power of judgment that is merely subjective (pertaining to the judging subject) and does not determine anything with regard to the objects being judged. It is rather a presupposition that must underlie all systematic research into nature since it posits that nature (represented technically, not merely mechanistically/ nomothetically) must conform to our power of judgment. Such conformity between our concepts and nature makes it possible for us to represent all of nature as a system, thereby guiding our research, just like the idea of system afforded to us by the regulative use of the idea of God. As Kant claims, the relationship between purposiveness of nature and our power of judgment is akin to that between the category and each particular experience, except the purposiveness of nature does not determine the object but still "yields subjective principles that serve as a guideline for the investigation of nature." This maxim of purposiveness that helps us judge nature as purposive is something “which only the power of judgment introduces into its reflection of objects, in order to treat experience, following its direction in accordance with special laws, namely those of the possibility of a system.” (KU, AA 20: 235.) I have shown in the previous chapter that the ideas of reason are analogues of schemata, with the difference that the latter determines the connection between a concept and an intuition whereas the former regulates the relationship between a regulative principle and its problematic object. Kant claims here that the regulative ideas are akin to the concepts of the understanding with the difference that the former makes it possible to judge certain objects as natural ends while the latter makes it possible to have objects of possible experience.

234 KU, AA 20: 236.

235 Here, it is interesting to note the parallels between the categorical imperative that gives us a principle for how we ought to act, and the principle of teleological judgment that provides a guideline as to how a specific kind of object ought to be judged. Just as the categorical imperative gives us the unconditional 'ought' that is supposed to provide a test for all subjective principles of volition (maxims), the principle of purposiveness gives us an idea of how the object should be judged, if we want to understand it not merely in light of a mechanistic view but of a teleological one. The categorical imperative tells us “Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law” (GMS, AA 04: 421) while the concept of purposiveness provides us with a criterion for judging certain objects, telling us, “Judge those objects that show more than a mere mechanism purposively, without however claiming to have determined their origin.” In both cases, there is a need for a third term to mediate the two realms (“is” and “ought”): an imperative in the case of morality and regulative a principle in the case of teleology. We need these, because there is a difference for us human beings between what is the case and what ought to be the case. In other words, only because of the inability of our faculties to know the ‘ought’ do we need a categorical imperative and a special guideline for judging organisms, for
necessitated for the furthering of our research into natural objects, due to the limitation of our subjective capacities to perceive what ought to be the case.

The concept of purposiveness therefore does not determine the object to be an end but helps us to explain it better. We lack the categories to explain certain objects mechanistically, i.e., these objects exhibit a sort of unity that is not accounted for by means of the categories only, so we use the principle of purposiveness in order to reflect on it further, without trying to determine it as a natural end. The fact that we need special (teleological) principles to judge these kinds of objects does not mean, however, that mechanistic explanations need to be discarded in our investigation of nature. Kant explains further in the First Introduction that the true physical grounds of explanation lie in merely mechanical laws: he says, “[w]e can and should be concerned to investigate nature, so far as lies within our capacity, in experience, in its causal connection in accordance with merely mechanical laws.”

I have shown in the first Critique too that we should seek for mechanistic explanations as much as possible before we turn to teleological ones. However, both in the first Critique and here, Kant argues that there are some things in nature which cannot be explained merely by mechanism because our experience indicates something more than captured by the categories. This is why the concept of a natural end is an “empirically conditioned concept,” which means that a natural end is not something we directly experience but has nevertheless arisen out of a certain kind of experience. Such experience is possible only under certain conditions, which force us to judge such objects as natural ends, but for this judgment, a special

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otherwise (that is, if our faculties were not limited), we would know or intuit the ‘ought’ (pertaining to the moral or to purposiveness)—there would be no need for a command or a special principle.

236 KU, AA 20: 235.
237 KU, AA 5: 396.
principle is necessary. Here in the third Critique, Kant develops a language to talk about such natural objects, specifying which cases permit reflective judgment, therefore justify the application of a regulative principle of purposiveness. I will specify these cases that occasion such judgments in the following.

The most important of these cases is our experience of organisms: there are products of nature whose unity seems to constitute the possibility of their parts, and such things cannot be explained only by means of mechanistic principles. That is, in mechanistic explanations of causal relations in nature, the idea of the effect (the whole) cannot be taken as the ground of the possibility of its cause (the parts). Kant writes, “it is entirely contrary to the nature of physical-mechanical causes that the whole should be the cause of the possibility of the causality of the parts.” If we experience an object that exhibits a causality that must be grounded in the concept of an end, mechanistic explanations will not help us, since these do not give us the concept of an end as a combination of efficient causes. Mechanistic explanations will explain why a certain part interacts with the whole in a certain way, but they will not explain the necessity of the relationship between the parts and the whole or whether the whole is the cause of the possibility of the parts. Physical-mechanical causes will help us with the analysis of the parts, but not with explaining how these parts together cause the whole to act in a certain way. This is because parts temporally come before the whole and the particular representation of the whole as preceding the possibility of the parts is a mere idea. In order to explain such objects, the idea of the particular representation of the whole should precede the possibility of the parts – but this is not the temporal order of things as we

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238 KU, AA 20: 236.
239 KU, AA 20: 236.
240 KU, AA 20: 236.
experience them or as they are given to experience. Nevertheless, this must be regarded as the ground of its causality, therefore the object in question must be judged as a natural end. Even though experience does not give us the whole first and the parts second, in order to be able to explain such a thing, we need to conceive of the whole as coming prior to the parts, which is only possible by means of teleological principles.

In addition to organisms, the principle of purposiveness is employed in making sense of other kinds of experiences as well, although the use of this principle is justified in a very different way. This difference is thematized in the distinction that Kant draws between internal (absolute) and external (relative) purposiveness, the latter of which is the principle of critical philosophy of history and politics. In the following, I will elaborate on this distinction further in preparation for a close analysis of §§ 82 – 84 of the *Critique of Judgment*.

II

*Internal (Absolute) and External (Relative) Purposiveness: Organisms versus Nature as a Whole*

241 KU, AA 20: 236. One last reminder Kant gives us in the First Introduction regarding teleological judgment is that the cause we attribute to nature when we judge it to be purposive cannot be thought as *intentionally acting*. To say, for example, that the crystalline lens in the eye has such and such an end, does not mean that it is the purpose of this lens; it only signifies how we understand it with respect to a concept of purposes. The ultimate intention or the purpose of the lens remains unknown to us. To attribute to an object of nature such a determinate intention, thus an intelligence, would be a determinative teleological judgment and thus transcendent, suggesting “a causality that lies beyond the bounds of nature (KU, AA 20: 236)

242 In the First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* Kant tells us that he is planning to have two books on teleological judgment, distinguishing between internal and relative purposiveness, each with its own analytic and dialectic, though both of them are cases of objective purposiveness. (KU, AA 20: 251) Unfortunately this is not how the book was organized in the end, although I take this distinction to be essential to my forthcoming discussion of history and its teleological representation in §§ 82 – 84. On the genesis and organization of the Critique of Teleological Judgment, see John Zammito. *The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), esp. 155 - 266.
Two Types of Objective Purposiveness of Nature

I have said above that it is our experience of certain kinds of objects that allows our power of judgment to make use of the concept of an objective and material purposiveness, thus to make a reflective teleological judgment. In the first and introductory section of the second book of the *Critique of Judgment*, in §61 entitled “On the objective purposiveness of nature,” Kant reminds us that nature and all the arrangements in nature as we know them are quite contingent. As he puts it,

[N]ature, considered as a mere mechanism, could have formed itself in a thousand different ways without hitting precisely upon the unity in accordance with such a rule, and that it is therefore only outside the concept of nature, not within it, that one could have even the least ground *a priori* for hoping to find such a principle.\(^{243}\)

As can be seen in the example of the structure of a bird, the hollowness of its bones, the placement of its wings for movements, and of its tail for steering, etc., such arrangements remain quite contingent for our intellect unless we resort to a special kind of causality outside of nature, that of final ends. That is, nature itself does not contain such a principle, but we need to invoke it in order to observe and research how and why birds might have a specific structure. Such a principle is required for our research, “at least problematically,” as Kant is quick to add, without trying to explain the order of final ends determinatively. We invoke such a ground for explaining the inner structure of a bird, for example, because this is the only way we can represent this structure to ourselves, in analogy with a causality that we ourselves have. In this way, we are representing nature

\(^{243}\) KU, AA 5: 360.
technically as opposed to a mere blind mechanism, without however introducing a brand new law of causality into natural science.\textsuperscript{244}

In §63 Kant says that we can use teleological judgments in one of two ways: either we regard the object immediately as a product or art, or we regard it as material for the art of other possible natural beings.\textsuperscript{245} Thus, the effect is judged either as an end or a means; in the first case, it is an \textit{internal purposiveness} of the natural being, and in the latter, it is called \textit{usefulness} (for human beings) or \textit{advantageousness} (for every other creature, relationally speaking) or its \textit{external purposiveness}.\textsuperscript{246} It is important that the very first example that Kant gives of those beings that require teleological judgments is a bird, an organism, for organisms are the most important of those objects that require teleological judgments, although teleological judgments can have an additional hypothetical use in judging nature as a whole. In the following, I will explain the case of internal purposiveness, organisms, for this is what teleology in essence aims at, and then turn to external (or relative) purposiveness, where Kant raises the question of history and politics and posits these as realms of inquiry that must be conceived teleologically in relation to our goals.

\textbf{Organisms and the Principle of Internal Purposiveness}

\textsuperscript{244} KU, AA 5: 361. Kant reiterates once again the fact that teleological judgment belongs to the reflective and not to the determinative power of judgment. Thus the principle of purposiveness finds its application in reflection on \textit{nature conceived technically} as opposed to as a blind mechanism (as nature conceived to be possible only through mechanistic causality), and only as a \textit{regulative} not a constitutive principle.

\textsuperscript{245} KU, AA 5: 367.

\textsuperscript{246} KU, AA 5: 367.
A technical conception of nature is especially necessary in the case of judging of beings that seem to manifest more than a mere mechanical causality: these beings are also called organisms. Only natural ends, those beings which exhibit not a mere relative purposiveness but an internal one, require and justify absolute teleological judgments, while other beings can be judged as relatively purposive, in relation to other organisms. Natural ends require and justify absolute teleological judgments for various reasons. A natural end is that which is the cause and effect of itself. Kant illustrates this concept provisionally here, by means of the example of a tree. A tree generates another tree of the same species; therefore it generates 1) the species; 2) itself as the individual tree; and 3) one part of this creature generates itself “in such a way that the preservation of the one is reciprocally dependent on the preservation of the other.”

Further criteria for something to be judged as a natural end are the following:

1) Its parts are possible only through their relation to the whole;
2) Its parts are combined into a whole by being reciprocally the cause and effect of their form.

That is, for somebody who judges such a being, this organized and self-organizing being is called a natural end if it fulfills these two conditions. These kinds of beings cannot be explained merely by means of mechanical causes but necessitate the presupposition of a different kind of causality.

The strange thing about organisms is that in these natural beings one part exists for the sake of another and because of it. As seen in Kant’s famous example of the machine as opposed to an organism, the parts of a watch surely interact with one another and one can even say that each part is present for the sake of another, but we cannot say

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247 KU, AA 5: 371.
248 KU, AA 5: 373.
249 KU, AA 5: 373f.
that one part exists because of another.\textsuperscript{250} What produces and organizes the watch and its parts are not contained in the watch itself; thus, the parts of the watch are not its efficient cause. On the other hand, in organisms, the parts exist for the sake of the whole \textit{and} because of it. These beings show not merely a motive power, but more than that: the movements of organisms cannot be explained through mechanism alone, since they show a formative, self-propagating power [\textit{sich fortpflanzende bildende Kraft}], and they require that we judge them as natural ends – not because we know that an organism is a natural end independent of our judging it so, but because it remains contingent with respect to the already-known mechanical laws why it is organized exactly the way it is.\textsuperscript{251}

Now that I have explained the beings that justify absolute teleological judgments, namely organisms, we can see how exactly this principle of purposiveness works. In §66, Kant gives us the specific \textit{maxim} by means of which we judge organisms as natural ends. As we know from the First Introduction, such a maxim comes from the regulative principle of reason. I have shown in the previous chapter that the hypothetical use of reason, which allows us to ascend from a particular to a universal yet problematic concept, gives us such maxims, which are subjective principles of research. We know that the hypothetical use of reason is now reformulated as reflective judgment. Thus, the maxim that Kant clarifies here is a different way of stating the objective principle of purposiveness and the criteria put forth earlier in the book, and it states “An organized product is that in which everything is an end

\textsuperscript{250} KU, AA 5: 374.
\textsuperscript{251} KU, AA 5: 374f. Kant concludes by remarking that, “The concept of a thing as in itself a natural end is therefore not a constitutive concept of the understanding or of reason, but it can still be a regulative concept for the reflective power of judgment, \textit{for guiding research into objects of this kind} and thinking over their highest ground in accordance with a remote analogy with our own causality in accordance with ends. (KU, AA 5: 375)
and reciprocally a means as well. Nothing in it is in vain, purposeless, or to be ascribed to a blind mechanism of nature.”

The maxim above is offered by the regulative principle of purposiveness in the case of judging the inner purposiveness of organisms. A maxim such as this cannot be grounded as a law of nature by the understanding or reason. It is occasioned by experience, but “must also have its ground in some sort of a priori principle, even if it is merely regulative and even if that end lies only in the idea of the one who judges and never in any efficient cause.” Such a maxim, then, is the maxim of the hypothetical use of reason in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, for its ground lies in the person making this judgment (in the subject) and thus its function is regulative. It is in some sense a priori, for it is not divorced from experience completely but nevertheless required and used (regulatively) for making sense of a certain kind of experience. Although merely regulative, it is nevertheless a necessary maxim of the reflecting power of judgment for judging natural ends. As I have said before, we must judge an organism as purposive (as a natural end) because mechanical laws cannot provide an adequate explanation of how organisms came about or why they should exist at all; in other words, these beings are seen as contingent with respect to physico-mechanical laws, and this does not allow for the possibility of researching them further.

Finally, an organism is already necessarily presupposed as teleological by natural scientists (or as Kant specifies, by anatomists, who study plants and animals) because they must assume, from the start, that nothing in such creatures is in vain and nothing happens by chance.” Without this maxim, they can have no guidelines at all to direct their observations and they cannot hope to classify organisms or further their research on them. Thus, it is not

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252 KU, AA 5: 376.
253 KU, AA 5: 376.
254 KU, AA 5: 376.
only the case that we must make use of the regulative principle of purposiveness, but we in
fact already do so, as scientists who try to understand the particular experiences under a
general rule, in this example, in the case of study of organisms.\footnote{255} In judging these kinds of
objects, Kant says, a mere mechanism of nature will no longer satisfy us because we know
that mechanistic explanations will never tell us why they ought to be organized the way they
are; even though it may be possible to conceive parts of organisms as consequences of
merely mechanical laws, the reason why they came to be organized as a whole in one
particular way rather than another will have to be judged teleologically, as possible in
accordance with a different order of causality. As Kant writes,

\begin{quote}
it might always be possible that in, e.g., an animal body, many parts could
be conceived as consequences of merely mechanical laws (such as skin, 
hair, and bones). Yet the cause that provides the appropriate material,
modifies it, forms it, and deposits it in its appropriate place must always
be judged teleologically.\footnote{256}
\end{quote}

This final claim is important, since here Kant is not saying organisms can never be explained
in accordance with the mechanism of nature; rather, his claim is that our understanding does
not have access to what really constitutes the possibility of organisms, and mechanistic
explanations account for such objects of nature help us only up to a certain point. Our
experience never tells us why they ought to be this way rather than another, but only that they
are organized this way. Without consideration of a teleological order of things, we cannot
expect to glean an insight into organisms by means of physical consideration alone, because
while organisms are seen as contingent with respect to the laws of nature, if we want to study
them they must be conceived as purposive in accordance with a concept of final ends.\footnote{257}

\footnotetext{255}{KU, AA 5: 376.}
\footnotetext{256}{KU, AA 5: 377.}
\footnotetext{257}{It is clear, then, that here we have an explicit account of why mechanistic explanation and teleological
judgment of the one and the same object do not contradict one another and why the use of teleological
judgment is important.}
The Principle of External Purposiveness and Its Justification

Remember that in §63 Kant made a distinction between two types of objective purposiveness: an internal purposiveness, which we now know only applies to our judgments of organisms, and a relative or external purposiveness that is justified on pragmatic grounds, in terms of the usefulness of something for another natural end. Examples Kant gives of relative purposiveness include rivers carrying nutrients for plants thus increasing the usefulness of land for human beings; advantageousness of sandy soil for pine trees; that of grass for cattle, sheep, and horses, of saltwort for camels, and of these and other herbivorous animals for wolves, tigers, and lions.\textsuperscript{258} Such relative rather than internal purposiveness, “although it gives hypothetical indications of natural ends, nevertheless justifies no absolute teleological judgments.”\textsuperscript{259}

Such advantageousness entails that these judgments indicate a merely relational purpose, an external natural end “only under the condition that the existence of that for which it is advantageous, whether in a proximate or a distant way, is in itself an end of nature.”\textsuperscript{260} Thus, we can make teleological judgments concerning the relationship between natural ends and other natural beings, but we need to remember that this is a judgment about the advantageousness or the relative usefulness of one thing for a natural end. According to Kant, based on such a relative principle of purposiveness, we can say

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{258}] KU, AA 5: 368.
\item[\textsuperscript{259}] KU, AA 5: 368f. I will have the opportunity to say more about relative or external purposiveness in the last section, in my analysis of §§ 82-84 that explicitly apply such purposiveness to history.
\item[\textsuperscript{260}] KU, AA 5: 368f.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
that in cold regions of the earth, snow exists to protect the soil and the seeds from frost, that the reindeer found in these places are purposive because they are one of the few animals that can be used for transportation and communication in cold regions and other animals are useful for food, clothing, and fuel. However, we should remember that none of these judgments are absolutely justified: to say that snow, reindeers and other animals exist for the sake of the people who live there would indeed be a “very bold and arbitrary judgment.”

As has been described above, although such beings may indicate hypothetically that these things can be natural ends, Kant is insistent on the fact that such objects or experiences do not justify any absolute teleological judgments. For instance, just because snow protects soil and seeds, which then lead to nutrition for the people who live in such regions, we cannot say that for that reason snow itself is a natural end. As Kant writes,

Thus because rivers promote communication among peoples in inland countries, and mountains contain the sources of rivers and stores of snow for their maintenance in times of drought, while the slope of the land carries these waters down and allows the land to drain, one cannot immediately take these to be natural ends: for even though this configuration of the surface of the earth was quite necessary for the origination and preservation of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, yet there is nothing in it the possibility of which would require the assumption of a causality in accordance with ends…In things that one has no cause to regard as ends for themselves, an external relationship be judged to be purposive only hypothetically.

That is, the principle of external purposiveness is useful for making sense of a certain configuration of the earth as purposive for the vegetable and animal kingdoms, but it by no means implies that this relationship between this organization of the earth and the vegetable and animal kingdoms is in itself absolutely and necessarily purposive. In this

261 KU, AA 5: 369.
262 KU, AA 5: 377f.
way, we can make sense of certain geographical elements by means of a principle of
purposiveness, but it does not mean that these elements are themselves natural ends,
beings whose possibility cannot be thought of otherwise than purposive. While a blade of
grass permits the use of the principle of internal purposiveness when it is considered by
itself, that is, as a natural end or an organism, we must judge the same being in
accordance with the principle of external purposiveness when we consider it in relation
to other beings, such as livestock. We cannot say that grass necessarily exists for the
livestock unless our goal is to make sense of the relationship between grass and
livestock. We can then ask why the livestock exists and answer that it exists for human
beings: again, such judgments are not absolutely justified, because the question indicates
a condition: what is it good for? To claim that the livestock exists for the sake of human
beings does not mean that the livestock is a categorical end: it is a conditional end,
insofar as we attempt to tease out the relationship between it and human beings. The
answer to the question of why something exists, unless considered from this conditional,
relational, and pragmatic perspective, is not answerable by means of physico-teleological
way of considering the world.263

This point bears repeating: teleological judgments about external purposiveness,
then, always have an indirect, relational and pragmatic justification. They do not indicate
a relationship that cannot be comprehended in any other way, so the use of the principle
of external purposiveness is not indispensible.264 In his historico-political writings where

263 KU, AA 5: 378.
264 As Kant says s approximately twenty years earlier in “The Only Possible Argument in support of a
demonstration of the existence of God” (1763), “it is a mistake to infer immediately from the fact that
certain natural conditions seem advantageous to human beings that they have been purposively designed to
be so.” (“Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes, AA 2: 97f). In the
third Critique, he reiterates this positing, saying that “Hence the objective purposiveness which is grounded
on advantageousness is not an objective purposiveness of the things in themselves, as if the sand in itself,
Kant employs teleological judgments, I will show that he makes claims about the *relationship* between human beings and other natural beings. He claims, for example, that the geometrical shape of the earth entitles everyone to a piece of it, that living in inhospitable regions gives rise to a specific configuration of accommodations and transportation devices, that the need to have economic relationships causes people to be friendly and peaceful with one another, and so on. We can now begin to see, however, that these claims must be read as examples of the principle of external purposiveness, because they refer to a relationship between human beings and other natural beings. In addition, this principle of external purposiveness can be extended to our judgment of nature as a whole, in so far as we try to theorize the relationship between our faculties and goals and nature itself. Organisms, because they make possible for us to use the term “end” in a context that is not merely practical but also theoretical, further provide natural science with the *basis for a critical teleology*.

*The Basis for a Critical Teleology of Nature as a Whole*

I have shown earlier that organisms are the only beings in nature that must be judged as natural ends, even when we think of them without relation to other things: that is, our teleological judgments about such beings are absolutely justified and pertain to the inner purposiveness of these beings, not to any relative purpose that they might have for other natural ends. This can provide us with a hypothetical indication of the purposiveness of nature as a whole, according to Kant. That is, because we are absolutely justified in

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as an effect of its cause, the sea, could not be comprehended without ascribing a purposive to the latter and without considering the effect, namely the sand, as a work of art. it is a merely relative purposiveness, contingent in the thing itself to which is ascribed. (KU, AA 5: 368)
making reflective teleological judgments about such objects, we can take this as a clue into inquiring whether there are other things in nature that can be in some sense called natural ends or whether nature as a whole is organized in a purposive manner.

Kant writes, “this concept [of purposiveness] necessarily leads to the idea of the whole of nature as a system in accordance with the rule of ends, to which idea all of the mechanism of nature in accordance with principles of reasons must now be subordinated (at least in order to test natural appearance by this idea).”265 While this declaration might seem like a hasty and dogmatic one at first, it is clear that it does not come without proper cautiousness on Kant’s part. This extension of teleology to our investigation of nature as a whole is still justified on merely subjective and regulative grounds, and what is more, it provides a test at best.266 This is promising, for thanks to our analysis of organisms and our way of judging them, we come to discover that such teleological principles can also be useful for other purposes in natural science, and in this way “we may go further and also judge to belong to a system of ends even those things (or their relation, however purposive) which do not make it necessary to seek another principle of their possibility beyond the mechanism of blindly acting causes,” and such principles should be valid not only for certain species of natural beings but for the whole of nature as a system.267

However careful we are about teleological judgments, there is always a great risk inherent in them, for by taking them too far, we equate the very possibility or the origin of beings we judge to be purposive with a necessarily purposive design, and make a leap

265 KU, AA 5: 379.
266 I have argued that in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first Critique, Kant already accepted the possibility that teleology can be applied to nature as a whole, on regulative grounds due to its theoretical and practical usefulness, and as a supplement to mechanistic investigation. (KrV, A 619f./B 647f.) Here in the Critique of Judgment, Kant reiterates that this regulative principle can be used without harm to the mechanism of nature, for it makes possible to regard nature as a purposive whole for our investigation.
267 KU, AA 5: 380f.
to the concept of an intelligent designer. This danger is diminished by making sure that we know our teleological judgments must remain reflective, not determinative; however, the demand of reason in this case is bound up with the existence of a supreme being, its ideal, so even after we delimit the claims of teleology to reflective judgments, reason still runs the risk of overstepping its boundaries. Both internal and external teleology promise to give us more than a regulative understanding of purposiveness: they point toward an intelligent creator of all purposiveness in nature, collapsing necessity and contingency. This is the antinomy of teleological judgment. I will briefly look at this antinomy in what follows in order to demarcate the need for a critical response to the question of teleology in general and for a regulative concept of universal history in particular.

**Conflation of Necessity and Contingency in the Antinomy of Teleological Judgment**

The very possibility of making a teleological judgment, that is, judging something as it ought to be, depends on a distinction between what it is and what it ought to be, between *contingency* and *necessity*. This is why teleological judgments must remain reflective, for in critical philosophy, we cannot collapse necessity and contingency. The peculiar antinomy in the Dialectic of Teleological Judgments addresses this threat posed by

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268 When we judge certain beings that exhibit a formative power as organized beings or natural ends, this judgment is occasioned by two things: our experience of such objects as exhibiting a behavior not comprehensible by physico-mechanistic principles, and the demand of reason that we somehow make sense of them intellectually. In addition, when we judge certain other beings to be purposive in relation to natural ends, that is, when we utilize the principle of external purposiveness, we must remember that such judgments are justified indirectly, merely on pragmatic grounds.
teleology to the critical perspective at large. In the following, I will not go into the details of this antinomy but focus on the risks it poses to theoretical and practical reason and its relevance for a critical conception of teleological history and politics.

I have already shown in the previous chapter that there can be no contradiction between mechanism and teleology, but they complement one another. In the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first Critique, we are already given two maxims by the regulative use of the theological idea, and here in the Critique of Judgment it seems that Kant is further articulating the grounds for the need to use such an idea regulatively. Two kinds of regulative principles stemming out of the theological idea can each be useful and they do not contradict each other: teleological principles merely supplement mechanistic ones with what we cannot hope to understand by the latter, thereby making another kind of research possible, when we get stuck in our investigation. It is clear then there cannot be a contradiction between these two sets of principles (mechanistic and teleological ones) because neither makes a claim to explain the possibility or the origin of organisms or the reality of a system of nature. What we should keep in mind here is that while mechanistic explanations are constitutive of appearances, they are merely regulative with respect to things-in-themselves. If all we use is mechanistic principles, then we attempt to explain everything, including organisms, in accordance with determinism, which does not conform to how these objects of nature appear to us, because these beings exhibit a formative power and a different relationship of whole-parts. If all we use is teleological principles, then we cannot explain what we experience, because our primary way of experiencing certain things is in terms of the relationship

\[\text{Thesis and the antithesis of the antinomy of teleological judgment propose in seeming contradiction that nature as a whole must be understood merely by mechanistic principles and that it must be judged also in accordance with teleological principles. (KU, AA 5:387f)}\]
between sensibility and categories, which then supplies the material for teleological explanations.

It is hard to remember that teleological judgments are merely regulative, for their claim seems to be a stronger one about final causes, leading us to unjustifiable claims and to a supremely intelligent being, an author of all this purposive arrangement of nature. Such an easy leap by our reason thus threatens the whole of the critical endeavor, for the critical stance depends on such a distinction between necessity and contingency in both theoretical and practical terms. This distinction also has to be maintained in the philosophy of history, as hard as it may be, for this field employs a regulative principle of teleology in order to stay clear of a conflation of real ends with a theory of ends. We need to remember that on Kantian and critical grounds, statements about the purposiveness of nature as a whole and the advantageousness of the relationships between certain natural beings are justified on the basis of external purposiveness. In terms of Kant’s philosophy of history, by converting the regulative conception of nature to a necessary one that provides its inevitable course, we start making metaphysical speculations that we are not granted by a critiqued reason, like Johann Gottfried Herder does. When they are taken

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270 Because what is embedded in teleological judgment and its extravagant claims is theological knowledge, which has been denounced in the Critique of Pure Reason, a closer analysis of the antinomy of teleological judgment also reveals the link between the rational concept of God (the theological idea) and the principle of purposiveness, suggesting a further continuity between the first and the third Critiques.

271 Allison claims in his above mentioned essay “Teleology and History in Kant: the critical foundations of Kant’s philosophy of history” the antinomy of teleological judgment is located in the conflation between the methodological claims of the maxims of the power of judgment and its ontological commitments and I agree with him. From the beginning of Kant’s analysis of teleological judgment, it has been made clear that the epistemological claim of this type of judgment is limited due to the fact that they belong to the reflective power of judgment: teleological principles do not extend our knowledge but only extend the use of empirical principles by contributing to their systematic unity, or they provide us with a guideline for our empirical research regarding organisms. They are not making an ontological claim, since teleological principles do not pertain to the possibility of things being judged: to say that an object should be judged as an end of nature does not mean that it is one. It is in this context, as I have shown, that in §67 Kant writes that, “to judge a thing to be purposive on account of its internal form is entirely different from holding the existence of such a thing to be an end of nature” (KU, AA 5: 378). Because the concept of a natural end
too far, teleological judgments become dogmatic and even absurd. This absurdity is seen in Herder’s philosophy of history. Kant’s main criticism of Herder’s philosophy of history is that Herder seems to have taken external purposiveness too far to suggest that nature and history as a whole is a giant organism where determinative theoretical and moral ends can easily be discerned. In what follows, I will briefly look at Kant’s criticism of Herder in order to mark out the space for a critical conception of teleology in history and politics.

*A Dogmatic Philosophy of History: The Case of Herder*

Kant’s remarks regarding Herder’s philosophy of history are instructive for us to bear in mind, for they reveal what is at stake in attributing purposiveness to natural and historical processes themselves. Kant was highly critical of Herder’s writings on history, especially his “Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Humanity,” because these writings lacked the philosophical rigor proper to this subject matter, instead using conjectures and poetic analogies as substitutes for rational arguments. Kant evaluates Herder’s philosophy of history as dogmatic, because it oversteps the boundaries of reason by not being careful about what is given to experience and what is not.

immediately brings to mind designedness or intention of a wise author, it is hard to keep in mind that the former concept is intended merely for reflection as a methodological aid. This point should be reiterated time and again by transcendental critique; otherwise it is natural and unavoidable to think that mechanistic and teleological principles do conflict one another (Allison, ibid., 31f.). While I agree with Allison that there is a slip here from methodology to ontology, he does not go far enough to investigate what is at stake in this slip of reason, that is, why such a slip might put the whole of the critical project in jeopardy.


273 By proceeding as if the biblical stories contained the truth about the early stages of humanity, Herder ignores the question of the legitimacy of using such a record for scientific purposes. He derives all human characteristics from the upright position of human beings and describes human spirituality in terms of
The difference between Herder’s philosophy of history and Kant’s is that at each step Kant is careful to make clear the regulative and pragmatic status of his presupposition of a teleological theory of nature. Kant does not propose that his historical account is an empirical reiteration of how actual events have unfolded in history. I want to dwell on this point, because Kant’s insistence on the difference between what such an empirical account claims and what his own philosophical account affords is important for us to see the pragmatic status of regulative teleological principles in his philosophy of history. This methodological humility on Kant’s part is the most crucial difference between Herder’s and Kant’s philosophies of history.

Kant’s philosophical history, furthermore, does not contradict an empirical account, because it does not claim to have determined the origin of these historical events themselves; on the contrary, it is always clear that his universal history is written from a certain theoretical and moral standpoint, and that it aims to give a philosophical account of the relationship between certain empirical events and trends in history and the systematizing tendency and pragmatic hopes of both theoretical and practical reason. Hence, Kant’s teleological philosophy of history employs the external principle of purposiveness. Rather than claiming that nations are like organisms or historical events are like branches of a tree, as Herder does by recourse to analogies with nature, Kant starts out with the pragmatic assumption that it is theoretically useful and practically advantageous for human beings to conceptualize history in a certain way as a whole, and

analogies with nature. It is today widely accepted that Kant’s “Conjectural Beginnings of Human History” that seems to legitimize the biblical story for similar purposes is a satire on Book 10 of Herder’s Ideas (see, for example, the commentary by Günter Zöller and Robert B Louden in the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History, and Education, esp. 122f.). I would add that it is not merely a satire but also a cautionary tale that emphasizes the importance of teleology only as a regulative principle.
constructs a historical narrative along these lines. It is impermissible in the Kantian system to make wild guesses based on ideas of reason taken as determinative factors of human history like Herder, for such a move would mean a return to a dogmatic position conflating necessity and contingency, the very distinction on which the possibility of making teleological judgments, and thus discerning purposes in nature, depends.

The Urgency of Continued Critique

Purposiveness, Kant writes, is the lawfulness of the contingent.274 This lawfulness, because it is in itself contingent for our reason, is assumed by us (subjectively) in order to further our understanding of nature. It should not be forgotten that there is no difference between contingency and necessity for an intuitive intellect and this type of understanding would not need a concept of purposiveness. If we claim that contingency and necessity are the same for us, we then relapse to a dogmatic position. Teleology always carries with itself the risk that we will collapse contingency to necessity by taking our regulative teleological claims too far to infer that God exists.275 Reason continues to run this risk even within the language of the critique. Teleological judgments invite us to make extravagant inferences, and therefore we need to be reminded once again of the risks to which reason is always susceptible. The risk of converting the regulative principle of teleology into a constitutive one is very dangerous for reason in its critical

274 KU, AA 20: 204. On this, see also KU, AA 20: 243.
275 As I have shown, our reason, if we took teleology together with a creator of purposiveness to be constitutive principles of nature, would become incapable of gaining knowledge in that it would be inconsistent with itself and we could not make progress in our inquiries because all research would either be given up or made arbitrary. However, to seek for the greatest systematic and purposive unity is the most important task of reason; Kant claims that this unity is “the school and even the ground of the possibility of the greatest use of human reason. Hence the idea of it is inseparably bound up with the essence of our reason.” (KrV, A 694f./B 722f.)
path, for this conversion leads us to a necessarily existing supreme being, and this in turn
could erase all contingency on which our lawgiving depends. That is, because we would
see God’s purposes everywhere, and so we would not need to invoke purposiveness as an
aid to our interpretation of ends.276

This is how the antinomy of teleological judgment should be understood to be an
antinomy: the risk is that of inviting reason to infer that God exists and throwing
metaphysics back into its pre-critical state, where we are left in a state of mere “groping,
and what is the worst, a groping among mere concepts.”277 In other words, it is not the
case that once we understand the basic premises of critical philosophy, we are no longer
deceived by the illusions: we need to be reminded by the critique time and again that our
intellect is of a peculiar sort, and therefore that what seems necessary for our discursive
understanding (concepts of the soul, the world-whole, or God) cannot be extended to
things in themselves but must be deployed as regulative principles. Even after the
critique, we are still not immune to being deceived, for these illusions are both natural
and unavoidable for our reason. We only have a pragmatic solution to this problem which
comes from the use of regulative principles. It is not the case that once we have shown
how this antinomy is resolved we are no longer deceived by these illusions: we need to
continue the work of critique by being mindful of the fact that we make progress by
means of regulative principles.

276This would make a concept of purposiveness unnecessary, thereby threatening the very possibility of
teleological judgment and the most important task of reason, the search for systematics.
277KrV, Preface B xv. This is the real danger of teleological judgment: if it is not constantly critiqued,
reason becomes lazy or tautological, forfeiting any hope of making progress and endangering the quest for
systematic knowledge in general. In this way, the risk involved here seems to envelop all other antinomies
of reason, so it reaches back into the first Critique in the sense that even after the critique, the illusions
created by the antinomies continue to deceive us.
Therefore while proposing a critical philosophy of history that is teleological, we need to be aware of these caveats. I will now turn to §§ 82 – 84 where Kant offers just such a careful and critical account of universal history treading the previously charted territory of cosmopolitan world-whole and human beings conceived as moral agents. In these sections, Kant further demonstrates the usefulness of the principle of external purposiveness in history and politics. Still maintaining that teleological judgments are reflective and that there is a difference between objects we must judge as natural ends (organisms) and those we must judge teleologically so that we can make sense of them in relative terms (the relationship between natural ends, and by extension, nature as a whole), Kant finds an experimental but important use of teleological principles, especially that of external purposiveness, in politics and history.

III

A Critical Philosophy of History in the Appendix to the Critique of the Teleological Judgment

Sections 82 through 84 in the Critique of Judgment
In this final section, I turn to Kant’s critical philosophy of history as found in the *Critique of Judgment* particularly in §§ 82-84 in the Appendix to the Critique of Teleological Judgment in order to provide an interpretation in terms of the use of reflective teleological judgment and the principle of external purposiveness in history and politics. The Appendix to the Critique of Teleological Judgment, as I will show, is a consideration of a useful application of the principle of teleology, and this can only be done after one has explained and determined the use and boundaries of the principle of purposiveness. In this way, the Appendix can be understood to be essential to the Critique of Teleological Judgment, for it illustrates in detail how the principle of purposiveness can be put to empirical use with a certain cautiousness proper to the critical endeavor. In the three *Critiques*, the section on the Doctrine of Method aims to show the application of the a priori principles of reason with a view to scientific cognition of them: in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, this method is configured in terms of a plan that can be made with the materials that one gained in the Analytic and the Dialectic.\(^{278}\) In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant says that the pure practical principles of reason does not lead to a science with a method, but instead here the doctrine of method is understood “as the way in which one can provide the laws of pure practical reason with access to the human mind and influence on its maxims, that is, the way in which one can make objectively practical reason subjectively practical as well.”\(^{279}\) In the *Critique of Judgment*, there is no doctrine of method for taste, for its principles do not lead to any form of cognition or give us laws. The Methodology of Teleological Judgment is unique in the sense that teleology does not belong to any science, either, but it offers a propaedeutic to metaphysics for it supplies

\(^{278}\) KrV, A 707/735.
\(^{279}\) KrPV, 5: 151.
(albeit regulative) principles of final causes. In order to be complete, a critique of teleological judgment must show the manner in which (hence the method by which) nature can be judged in accordance with such principles, and this will prove to have a negative utility, insofar as teleology does not extend our cognition of our nature.\(^{280}\) I will say more about the application of teleological principles to history and politics in the remainder of this chapter.

**Remembering the Utility of the Regulative Principle of External Purposiveness**

In order to make sense of the claims in the Appendix, then, we need to take a step back to remember in what sense regulative principle of external purposiveness is useful. In §75, Kant reminded us of the fact that the concept of an objective purposiveness of nature is a critical principle of reason for the reflecting power of judgment, and “critical” here means a regulative one arising out of the peculiar constitution of our cognitive faculties. There, Kant distinguished between an objective (internal) purposiveness of organisms, which absolutely require teleological judgments, and a relative (external) purposiveness that require a teleological conception of nature as a whole. In his discussion of what exactly necessitates a teleological judgment in organisms, Kant argued that we cannot but judge and understand those beings as natural ends, and that the principle of purposiveness can also be extended to our judgments about “nature as a whole.” However, just because organisms are teleologically understood, it does not mean that nature as a whole is also a giant organism: in §75, Kant further explains that while objective purposiveness is already an absolutely necessary maxim for the study of organisms, as a guideline for the

\(^{280}\) KU, 5: 418.
study of nature as a whole it remains a useful principle but *not an absolutely necessary or indispensible one*. He writes,

> It is in fact indispensible [unentbehrlich nötig] for us to subject nature to the concept of an intention if we would even merely conduct research among its organized products by means of continued observation; and this concept is thus already an absolutely necessary [schlechterdings notwendige] maxim for the use of our reason in experience. It is obvious that once we have adopted such a guideline for studying nature and found it reliable we must also at least attempt to apply [wenigstens versuchen müssen] this maxim of the power of judgment to the whole of nature, since by means of it we have been able to discover many laws of nature which, given the limitation of our insights into the inner mechanisms of nature, would otherwise remain hidden from us.\(^{281}\)

That is to say, because in studying organisms we have gained so much from the principle of teleology, it makes sense to apply it to the whole of nature, *at least as an experiment* to see if we can discover more than is possible by means of merely mechanistic principles.

We know that the idea of a unified system in our investigation of nature is a *guideline for us*, because it allows us to identify certain relationships (of interconnectedness) that are not explicable by means of categorial explanations. Here, Kant clarifies the distinction between the status of teleological claims with regards to organisms and the entirety of nature: even though we must be able to at least try and see if teleological principles can help our investigation of nature as a whole, it is not the case that we have thus proven that nature as a whole is teleological or purposive. He says, “But with regard to the latter use [for nature as a whole] this maxim of the power of judgment is certainly useful, but not indispensible [zwar nützlich, aber nicht unentbehrlich], because nature as a whole is not given to us as organized.”\(^{282}\) Thus, organisms, because even the mere thought of them demands that we make use of a concept of intention and final ends, justify the use of

\(^{281}\) KU, AA 5: 398.

\(^{282}\) KU, AA 5: 398.
principle of purposiveness, whereas nature as a whole does not justify such a judgment because it is not our experience: nature is not a giant organism, although it is useful to employ the principle of purposiveness for theoretical reasons. Teleology, in the case of studying organisms, gives us so much more than a mere mechanism, and if we take this as a clue, it promises to give us more in our research into nature as well. This is what the Appendix to the Teleological Judgment investigates: by critically positioning teleology outside of the proper principles of theology and natural science, Kant seeks after an experimental application of this principle as a regulative maxim of research and shows that philosophy of history benefits from such analysis.

**The Use of the Principle of External Purposiveness in History and Politics**

The distinction between the principle of purposiveness employed in judging organisms and nature as a whole, corresponding to the earlier discussion of the absolute (internal) and relative (external) purposiveness in §63, becomes operative again in §§ 82-84 on philosophy of history and politics. This is the distinction that frames the rest of the exposition here on history and politics, because according to Kant, these fields of inquiry do not deal with organisms, but with a conception of nature as a whole and the external relationships among organisms (human beings in particular). Thus, teleological language employed here will be useful, but not indispensible. What human beings as end-setting organisms make out of their innate skills and capacities, namely culture and its progression in history, can be judged to be teleological, thanks to the use of the principle
of external purposiveness, for culture and history are forms of external relations among human beings.

In §82, Kant begins by distinguishing again between external and internal purposiveness. The former signifies a relationship where one thing serves another as a means to an end, and as I have shown earlier, this is the relative purposiveness that by itself justifies no absolute teleological judgment. For such relationships, it is useful but not indispensible to employ a concept of purposiveness. Examples of external purposiveness that Kant gives here include soils, air, and water only when they are taken in relation to organisms. When we consider them in relation to mountains, for example, we cannot say that they are externally purposive for the mountains to pile up, because mountains, by themselves, do not require teleological explanations.

On the other hand, in relation to internal purposiveness Kant writes,

Now if one asks why a thing exists, the answer is either that its existence and its generation have no relation at all to a cause acting according to intentions, and in that case one always understands its origin to be in the mechanism of nature; or there is some intentional ground of its existence (as a contingent natural being), and this thought is difficult to separate from the concept of an organism: for once we have had to base its internal possibility in a causality of final causes and an idea that underlies it, we also cannot conceive of the existence of this product otherwise than as an end. For the represented effect, the representation of which is at the same time the determinative ground of its production in an intelligently acting cause, is called an end.

So if the answer to the question of why something exists comes from referring to some intentional ground of its existence, it is difficult to conceive of this thing other than as an

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283 KU, AA 5: 425.
284 On the other hand, internal purposiveness refers to “the possibility of an object regardless of whether its reality is itself an end or not.” (KU, AA 5: 425) Such purposiveness then refers to the very possibility of understanding an object of nature, in which case we have to use the principle of purposiveness and a concept of intention.
285 KU, AA 5: 426.
organism or a natural end, a product of nature that is internally purposive. In other words, if we can only explain why something exists in terms of final causes, we must conceive it as an end, thus internally purposive. Furthermore, if the purpose of this being is to be found in itself, such an organism is called a final end [Endzweck]. I will show that there is only one organism that can be judged as a final end of nature. Kant then goes on to contrast the concept of the final end of nature with that of the ultimate end [letzter Zweck], which refers to a being for whom all other beings can be seen as a means. These concepts are crucial to Kant’s critical philosophy of history as he works it out in the Critique of Judgment, for human being is an internally purposive organism whose ultimate end is the development of culture, at least in so far as the external relations between people are concerned. In the following, I will look at these concepts of the ultimate and final end of nature.

What is an ultimate or a final end of nature? How can we judge any being in nature to be that final end? First of all, it should be clear that a natural thing as a natural thing can never be a final end, for all natural things, by definition, are conditioned, whereas a final end must be unconditional. What is more, even if we were to find an ultimate end of nature, it can be proven a priori that this natural thing does not have to be the final end of creation. However, it is possible to conceive of human being, as a natural being, as the ultimate end of creation, for whom everything else is a means. Kant says that the human being “is the ultimate end of the creation here on earth, because he is the

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286 It is interesting to note here that according to Kant, external purposiveness of the relationships between human beings is not connected to any internal purposiveness of such things, except in the case of the organization of the sexes. Here Kant thinks that the purpose of reproduction refers to an internal purposiveness of the organization of the sexes. Only when we ask why human beings exist as a pair (male and female) and the answer reveals that the purpose of this organization of the sexes is internal, for it is the continuation of their own species. (KU, AA 5: 425)

287 KU, AA 5: 426. I will come back to this at the end of this section.
only being who forms a concept of ends for himself and who by means of his reason can make a system of ends out of an aggregate of purposively formed things.”

We should keep in mind that such judgments about what is good for what end are about external purposiveness, and thus need to be evaluated on the basis of whether or not it is useful to conceive of nature and the relationships among natural beings in this way. Therefore, there is no objective criterion by which we can judge the order of organisms, so to speak, and decide what the ultimate end of creation is. Kant arrives at the provisional conclusion that human beings must be the ultimate end of nature by asking the question for whom the mineral kingdom is good. It turns out that it is good for the animal kingdom to sustain itself, and this leads him to those for whom the animal kingdom is good, namely to human beings.

Even though positing an ultimate end of nature is necessary for the sake of a system of all organisms in accordance with ends, Kant says that experience shows that there is no reason why human beings should be the ultimate end of nature. It is equally possible and logical to start with the mineral kingdom and end with human beings, as well as start with human beings and end with the mineral kingdom. That is, we have no experience of nature’s special care of human beings or of a sign that human being is a special one: as he writes, “nature has not made the least exception to its generative as well as destructive powers, but has rather subjected him to its mechanism without any end.” Indeed, Kant continues to point out that the first thing that needs to be shown to be purposive, the habitat of human beings, is subject to the mechanism of nature to such a

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288 KU, AA 5: 426f.
289 Kant in this context mentions Linnaeus’ classification that takes the opposite path, arguing that human beings exist for the sake of controlling the animal population, which exists in turn in order to moderate the excessive growth of the plant kingdom and so on. (KU, AA 5: 427)
290 KU, AA 5: 427.
destructive extent that we find no reason why human beings should not be subordinated to the mere mechanism of nature that acts quite unintentionally.\textsuperscript{291} It is suspicious that the human being – even though her understanding saves her from nature’s destructive forces from time to time – is above or beyond the reign of the mechanism of nature.\textsuperscript{292}

What does this mean? While experience does not show us that human beings are the ultimate ends of nature, the requirement of a teleological system of nature grants us the reflective judgment that human beings be conceived as such. The human being is not the ultimate end of nature, because we can conceive of nature in various ways hierarchically, but if we want to explain the external relationship between such organisms and a teleologically conceived nature, we must make such a judgment. We cannot conceive of a necessary hierarchy in the teleological consideration of things by means of experience; however, this does not mean that nature only exhibits mechanistic tendencies and human beings should be subsumed under the mechanism of nature. If we were not able to imagine a different kind of causality that is not mechanical, we could not have explained organisms. Thus, because we have no insight into the determination or origin of these beings, we cannot say that such and such a being is the ultimate end of nature, but that does not mean that we can never have sufficient grounds to reflectively judge a certain kind of being to be the ultimate end. For theoretical purposes, the maxims of reason suggest that such an ultimate end is necessary, and it grants us the regulative claim that human being is this ultimate end of nature.\textsuperscript{293}

\textsuperscript{291} KU, AA 5: 427.
\textsuperscript{292} KU, AA 5: 428.
\textsuperscript{293} Otherwise we go too far in thinking that everything in the world happened by mere mechanism or we fall into an infinite regress where we cannot explain the purpose of certain things without referring to another thing, the purpose of that in some other thing, and so on.
Therefore, we have sufficient cause to judge human being as the ultimate end of nature here on earth and not only as a natural end. This point is crucial, because we must keep in mind while reading the rest of the Appendix that even though we cannot say that human beings are the ultimate end of nature (because that is not our experience and we can never experience it as such), they ought to be judged as such, due to the requirement of a teleological system of nature, a methodological requirement of reflective judgment. The fact that human beings are end-setters themselves provides us with a clue. This fact by itself does not prove that human beings are the ultimate ends of nature, but it makes it more probable and useful for us to consider the relationship between the existence of human beings and nature as a whole, which Kant comes to call culture or history in an externally purposive manner. It is useful to judge human beings as the ultimate ends of nature, because such a conception is theoretically makes possible to conceive of history as a teleological whole and practically helps us identify how we can pursue our moral goals.

**Human Being as the Ultimate End of Nature: Culture and Happiness**

On the basis of the principle of external purposiveness, we have sufficient cause to make the judgment that human beings must be thought of as the ultimate ends of nature, because from a theoretical perspective, the fact that human beings are themselves end-setting organisms, gives us a clue to pursue an entirely teleological consideration of their place in the hierarchy of other organisms in nature as a whole. There is no ontological justification for thinking that we are the ultimate ends of nature, but such a judgment is
nevertheless useful, for based on the idea that we are ourselves end-setters, we can provisionally say that we should be thought of as the ultimate end of nature. While such external purposiveness is not absolutely justified and thus not indispensable, it is nevertheless useful to make this judgment within the critical system, for in this way external purposiveness provides us with a guideline to sort out the relationship between human beings and nature as a whole.

In §83, we find out about what it really means for human beings to be judged as the ultimate end of nature here on earth. To reiterate, an ultimate end of nature is an organism “in relation to which all other natural things constitute a system of ends in accordance with fundamental principles of reason, not, to be sure, for the determinative power of judgment, yet for the reflecting power of judgment.” That is, human beings are the ultimate end of nature, because reflective teleological judgments must conceive of the system of nature in a way that subjugates it to our end-setting capacities. According to Kant, there are two ways in which this external relationship between the ultimate end of nature (human beings) and other organisms can be figured: the ultimate end of nature can either be fulfilled by nature itself, in the form of happiness, or by human beings using nature through their aptitudes and skills, which would constitute culture. Therefore, happiness is the end of nature which is possible through the purported beneficence of nature itself, whereas culture as an ultimate end of nature can be developed by the

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294 If we take this too far and claim that we are the masters of nature, that human being is necessarily the organism to which everything should be subordinated, we risk conflating regulative principles with constitutive ones, and get tangled up in bold empirical claims as to why certain human beings must or must not exist at all, etc. Such empirical claims cannot be justified from a theoretical point of view but only from a pragmatic point of view, one that marks out the purpose of such claims in the first place.
295 KU, AA 5: 429.
capacities and talents that human beings have. I will first briefly explain Kant’s analysis of happiness and then elaborate on the role of culture in what follows.

Kant defines happiness here as “a mere idea of a state to which he would make his instinct adequate under merely empirical conditions (which is impossible).” Human beings are incapable of knowing what it is that they really want and even if they did, their nature is such that they can never stop enjoying other things and be satisfied with what they desire. Most importantly, there is no empirical indication whatsoever that nature did anything especially beneficent for human beings so that they can be happy:

[I]t has rather spared him just as little as any other animal from its destructive effects, whether of pestilence, hunger, danger of flood, cold, attacks by other animals great and small, etc.; even more the conflict in the natural predispositions [Naturanlagen] of the human being, reduces himself and others of his own species, by means of plagues that he invents for himself, such as the oppression of domination, the barbarism of war, etc., to such need, and he works so hard for the destruction of his own species, that even if the most beneficent nature outside of us had made the happiness of our species its end, that end would not be attained in a system of nature upon earth, because the nature inside of us is not receptive to that.

In other words, nature did not do us a special favor to protect us from the dangers to which we might be exposed. In addition, even if it did favor us among all other beings, we always seem to find a way to destroy ourselves and our own species by means of oppression, domination, and war. That is, even if we were nature’s favorites, we would be incapable of appreciating such favoritism, because the nature within us, our natural

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296 KU, AA 5: 429f.
297 KU, AA 5: 430. Compare the similar definition he gives in Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: “…the concept of happiness is such an indeterminate one that even though everyone wished to attain happiness, yet he can never say definitely and consistently what it is that he really wishes and wills. The reason for this is that all the elements belonging to the concept of happiness are unexceptionally empirical…while for the idea of happiness there is required an absolute whole, a maximum of well being in my present and every future condition…The problem of determining certainly and universally what action will promote the happiness of a rational being is completely insoluble.” (GMS, AA 4: 418-419).
298 KU, AA 5: 430.
299 KU, AA 5: 430.
predispositions [Naturanlagen], are such that we seek conflict and destruction: remember that we are beings who are, on Kant’s account, “unsociably sociable.”

If this is the case, can happiness be thought as the ultimate end of nature? Kant’s answer is a definite no. Due to the fact that we have reason, thus an end-setting capacity, we are “the titular lords of nature,” thus we can be thought as the ultimate ends of nature only insofar as we bring about our own goals by using these capacities, thus subjecting nature to our will and rationality. Happiness, then, cannot be the ultimate end of nature, because it does not require the development of the innate rational capacities that we have and it does not cohere with the idea that we are the ends of our own existence: happiness is a state of fulfilling certain ends that change rapidly from one moment to another and better attained by instincts and inclinations. Thus, human being can be the ultimate end of nature only on the condition that she herself can bring about her own ends independently of nature, thus employing her rational capacities in order to prepare her to be a final end of nature, a moral end. It is clear from the above analysis that happiness cannot be a moral end. The other possibility, “that which nature is capable of doing in

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300 The idea that human beings are so far from being nature’s favorite is strikingly similar to what is explained in further detail in the third proposition of Kant’s “Idea” essay. There, Kant says that nature seems to have taken pleasure in exercising the strictest economy and that there are a lot of hardships awaiting the human being, “yet nature does not seem to have been concerned with seeing that man should live agreeably, but with seeing that he should work his way onwards to make himself by his own conduct worthy of life and well-being.” (“IaG,” AA 8: 20, 44). Paul Guyer points this out in a footnote in his translation of the third Critique but does not attempt to re-construct the systematic continuities between the two texts in terms of the development of Kant’s historico-political philosophy. More will be said about the similarities between the “Idea” essay and §§ 82-84 of the Appendix to the Teleological Judgment in the third Critique in the conclusion of this chapter.

301 KU, AA 5: 431.

302 KU, AA 5: 430. Again, compare this to the similar passage on reason, will, and happiness in the Grounding: “If [a] being’s preservation, welfare, or in a word its happiness were the real end of nature in the case of a being having reason and will, then nature would have hit upon a very poor arrangement in having the reason of the creature carry out this purpose. for all the actions which such a creature has to perform with this purpose in view, and the whole rule of his conduct would have been prescribed much more exactly by instinct; and the purpose in question could have been attained much more certainly by instinct than it ever can be by reason.” (GMS, AA 4: 395).
order to prepare him for what he must himself do in order to be a final end,” seems to be “the formal, subjective condition, namely the aptitude for setting himself ends at all and using nature as a means to appropriate to the maxims of his free ends in general.”\textsuperscript{303} This is called \textit{culture}. Kant writes,

\begin{quote}
The production of the aptitude of a rational being for any ends in general (thus those of his freedom) is culture. Thus only culture can be the ultimate end that one has cause to ascribe to nature in regard to the human species (not its own earthly happiness or even merely being the foremost instrument for establishing order and consensus in irrational nature outside him).\textsuperscript{304}
\end{quote}

That is, \textit{culture} must be the ultimate end of nature for human beings, because it is something to which they themselves can contribute by means of their skills and abilities. Judging the relationship between human beings and nature by means of the principle of external purposiveness, we have come to assume that human beings are the ultimate ends of nature due to their capacity to freely set ends and purposes for themselves. They can use nature as a means for any ends in general in order to make something out of it. In other words, in order to develop their innate predispositions, skills, and capacities further, human beings make contributions to culture, guided by the ends that they themselves posit.

\textit{Culture and History}

\textsuperscript{303} KU, AA 5: 431.
\textsuperscript{304} KU, AA 5: 431.
What exactly does Kant mean by culture and how is this concept related to history? Here, we need a better understanding of the relationship between culture and history in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* and his “Idea” essay. By “culture,” Kant does not only mean what we would today understand by it, such as things that pertain to the arts, letters or manners; rather, it should be taken in a more general sense as the process by means of which human beings leave their mark in the world. For example, agriculture or civil institutions would be parts of culture. As the ultimate end of nature, culture refers to the end-setting capacity of human beings in so far as their innate predispositions are formed and developed through skill and discipline toward certain goals that they themselves posit. History, in this sense, is a recording of these developments in culture, though not just an empirical recording of them – this would be empirical history – but a unified account of these developments with respect to an end, as in the case of philosophical history.

The end of history should be conceived in such a way as to enable us to trace the development of the innate predispositions of human beings. This is the way in which Kant’s philosophy of history takes the form of moral history. And yet, we can separate his commitments to a moral history from his theoretical commitments to such historiography. In terms of Kant’s historiography, we would be investigating the methodology by which we interpret and understand past events and whether or not they reveal a unity or a meaning that coheres with our goals. For Kant, this unity or meaning has to do with a teleological interpretation of nature and the development of our inborn capacities, as I have already shown in the “Idea” essay. However, the reasons why we are justified in terms of attributing to history any unity at all and why we should presuppose a
progress of culture or development of our capacities reveal the theoretical commitment, namely the usefulness of the principle of external purposiveness. His view of culture as the motor of history still assumes this critical-regulative teleological principle, and it is this theoretical commitment that requires further investigation.

For Kant, not every kind of culture helps to develop the innate predispositions of human beings.\textsuperscript{305} A \textit{Culture of discipline}, which is the negative condition whereby inner desires are remolded and trained, is supposed to prepare our inner nature for morality, thus it is in some ways a precondition for the further development of culture.\textsuperscript{306} On the other hand, a \textit{culture of skill}, which is the reforming of one’s outer environment, is “the foremost subjective condition of aptitude for the promotion of ends in general.” Here it seems that Kant attaches more importance to the latter form of culture, namely to the culture of skill, than to the former, for the culture of discipline is merely a negative condition that relates to the morality of the individual, not to history. Thus history conceived as a teleological whole is the domain of the culture of skill, the ultimate end of nature.

The distinction between history conceived as a teleological whole and Kant’s moral goals is explicit in the example of war that is central to the conception of culture at stake here. In § 83 of the third \textit{Critique}, Kant attributes important roles to war and social conflict, both of which are unmoral means, in the development of culture. This reference to the war-like tendencies of human beings and social antagonisms in nature parallel the fourth proposition of the “Idea” essay in terms of the language of “unsociable sociability”

\textsuperscript{305} KU, AA 5: 431.
\textsuperscript{306} KU, AA 5: 431. Here, we can think back to Kant’s claims in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment where we see that appreciation of natural and artistic beauty shows that we have a capacity to appreciate moral ideas as well. For a few examples of where this is developed in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, see KU, AA 5: 232f. (On the Ideal of Beauty) and KU, AA 5: 342f. (§57 Remark I).
of human nature. In the fourth proposition of the “Idea” essay, Kant had singled out the
“unsociable sociability” of human beings as the means by which the development of
human capacities can be realized in history, and here in § 83 of the third Critique he
posits, similarly, that inequality among people and the misery of hardships, oppression,
and war are the means by which skills can be developed in the human race. 307 According
to this conception, a certain type of bifurcation of people leads to cultural advancement in
a society. People in the majority produce the necessary elements of culture, science, and
art and oppress the minority; though after a while, problems start to develop on both sides
and such an existence becomes unsustainable. Such social antagonisms and bifurcations
originate from our unsociable sociability, and this type of social conflict, while it may not
lead to an all out war, causes a friction between the two classes in terms of their goals.
Those in the majority grow dissatisfied with themselves, and those who are maintained in
a state of oppression, bitter work, and little enjoyment, start to get tired of the violence
imposed on them by the majority. 308 This miserable condition is seen by Kant as the
facilitator by means of which this conflict or war is eventually overcome. As unpleasant
and miserable as this condition might be, it is

bound up with the development of the natural predispositions
[Naturanlagen] in the human race, and the end of nature itself, even if it is
not our end, is hereby attained. The formal condition under which alone
nature can attain this its final aim is that constitution in the relations of
human beings with one another in which the abuse of reciprocally
conflicting freedom is opposed by lawful power in a whole [gesetzmäßige
Gewalt in einem Ganzen], which is called civil society [bürgerliche
Gesellschaft]; for only in this can the greatest development of the natural
predispositions [Naturanlagen] occur. 309

308 KU, AA 5: 432.
309 KU, AA 5: 432.
Out of this miserable condition, which in Kant’s terms describe the empirical conditions human beings find themselves in due to their unsociable sociability, a lawful order should arise, and this order should be constituted such that the freedoms of each person and the state are guaranteed. Kant here goes on to say that war “is a deeply hidden but perhaps intentional effort of supreme wisdom if not to establish then at least to prepare the way for the lawfulness together with the freedom of the states.”310 Thus, if we look at the present conditions of social conflicts and antagonisms in which we find ourselves, we can conclude that it is not to our interest to continue these wars, but to put an end to it and unite around a civil order. We are granted the claim that a lawful order should arise out of these hostile conditions only when we conceptualize history and politics teleologically, that is, as areas whose purpose is to give rise to the full development of our rational innate capacities. Thanks to this teleological view, we can posit that a suitable civil condition is the one where we give up fighting and come together as a lawful society.

It should be clear from the above analysis that the requirement of a lawful constitution of states does not arise out of moral considerations; rather, such a civil society can be conceived as the end of history only when we judge nature as a whole and the relationships between human beings in teleological terms. The social conflicts that preceded this condition of lawful togetherness are not moral, strictly speaking, and those should be thought of as the first steps towards the development of our capacities. These capacities can be best developed in a civil society, which we can conceptualize thanks to our critical-regulative teleology. In the fourth proposition of the “Idea” essay, social antagonism within a society is also defined as the way in which the development of all innate capacities will come about, “in so far as this antagonism becomes in the long run

310 KU, AA 5: 433.
the cause of a law-governed social order [einer gesetzmaßigen Ordnung].” 311 This antagonism and the human qualities that give rise to it are “far from admirable in themselves;” however, without discord and inequality, human capacities “would remain hidden for ever in a dormant state” and for this reason, nature should perhaps be thanked. 312 Discord and inequality are the means by which we can achieve concord: if nature did not give us any concrete opportunities whereby we can test and improve our natural capacities, we would live a “pastoral existence of perfect concord, self-sufficiency, and mutual love” but such an existence would be as valuable as that of an animal, because we would not be legislators of our own goals. 313

Therefore, both in both the “Idea” essay and § 83 of the third Critique, war and social conflict take center stage in conceptualizing culture and history, and this is made possible by a teleological consideration of nature as a whole. This teleological conception makes possible for us to take into account the possible and actual consequences of war, something that cannot enter into moral considerations. Kant in the “Idea” essay admits that the consequences of war are uncertain and destructive, therefore undesirable. He writes,

finally war itself will gradually become not only an enterprise so artificial and its outcome on both sides so uncertain, but also…the influence of every shake-up in a state in our part of the world on all other states, all of those trades are so very much chained together, will be so noticeable, that these states will be urged merely through danger to themselves to offer themselves…as arbiters, and thus remotely prepare the way for a future large state body, of which the past world has no example to show. 314

311 “IaG,” AA 8: 20, 44.
312 “IaG,” AA 8: 21, 45.
313 “IaG,” AA 8: 21, 45.
Human beings will be forced to enter into a large state body and resolve the social conflicts in a lawfully free society, not because they immediately understand that killing or attacking other human beings is immoral but because they cannot afford the threats and aftereffects of war. Thus, a lawful and peaceful civil state is not at first a moral goal, but one that needs to be seen as the purpose of history and politics in order to prevent the harmful consequences of war. The lawful togetherness of the states in freedom is the hope that can be maintained if we assume that nature can be conceived as a teleological whole, with the ultimate end of bringing about the development of the innate capacities of human beings through culture of skill. Under such considerations, war helps to bring about this end out of the selfish inclinations of human beings not to be harmed. In the “Idea” essay, Kant similarly makes a distinction between a moral community and a pathological one. He points out that by means of antagonism among people and states, all man’s talents are now gradually developed, his taste cultivated, and by a continued process of enlightenment, a beginning is made towards establishing a way of thinking which can with time transform the primitive natural capacity for moral discrimination into definite practical principles; and thus a pathologically enforced social union is transformed into a moral whole.\textsuperscript{315}

Thus, first a civil society is established for mostly pathological reasons, to end antagonism and war because of its harmful and undesirable consequences, but then hopefully this order will give rise to a moral one. We can see that even though Kant in the “Idea” essay does not use the language of final and ultimate ends of nature, there is still a distinction at work between a natural development of our capacities in a pathologically constituted civil society and a moral community. Culture, by itself, does not make us moral beings: it prepares us to be moral agents by means of providing

\textsuperscript{315} “IaG,” AA 8: 21, 45.
opportunities to develop all our rational capacities. Thus, the culture that Kant favors, both in the “Idea” essay and § 83 of the third Critique, a lawful civil society in a cosmopolitan world order, should be conceived as the idea for a universal history insofar as nature provides the medium in which rational beings can develop their capacities, and such a cultural requirement also aids us to eventually fulfill our moral goals, the highest of these goals in politics being perpetual peace on earth. Such a culture of cosmopolitanism should provide the basis for a moral community insofar we are trying to represent nature and history to ourselves as a whole in order to arrive at a historical narrative, and to mark out the necessary political institutions, though by itself such a cosmopolitan condition has nothing to do with moral considerations: it will not guarantee that we will act morally, it is first required by a teleological understanding of nature, in order for us to have a historico-political narrative that accord with our goals.

Yovel too points out the connection between the fourth thesis of the “Idea” and Kant’s remarks on culture here in the third Critique in his book Kant and the Philosophy of History and works through it. However, he claims that Kant’s turn to culture here signifies the dependent nature of the relationship between his conceptions of history and morality, the former of which is now subsumed under the narrower concept of culture, the external facet of history, according to Yovel. He writes, “it is clear that the discussion is now subject to the concept of the practical reason and thus to the criteria of the critical outlook.”316 Therefore, Yovel fails to connect the dots between the two pieces in a way to address the theoretical justification of the teleological understanding of history and culture. Earlier in his book, Yovel defines Kant’s concept of culture, in which the basic historical activity lies, as “what we would today call civilization, which is the shaping of

316 Yirmiyahu Yovel, Kant and the Philosophy of History, 179.
nature in view of human goals and interests.” While this definition is appropriate, it seems too quick to conflate morality with culture. For Kant, even in the “Idea” essay, as in the third *Critique*, there is a difference between civilization or culture and moral maturity, as I have shown; he writes, “[for] while the idea of morality is indeed present in culture, an application of this idea which only extends to the veneer of morality, as in love of honor and outward propriety, amounts merely to civilization.” The idea of morality that exists in culture is only a veneer because civilization runs on the selfish inclinations of the antagonistic groups at first – it is not because of our noble feelings for others do we seek peace. Thus, Yovel’s claim that Kant in the third *Critique* turns to a narrower definition of history and subsumes it under moral considerations proves to mistaken, as I have shown: Kant’s notion of history is already differentiated from morality in the “Idea” essay and this distinction is also maintained in the third *Critique*.

Kant posits that the social antagonism among the members of a society should eventually give rise to a lawful condition, a civil society, both in the “Idea” essay and in §83 of the *Critique of Judgment*. In the “Idea” essay, this perfect political constitution is posited “as the only possible condition within which all natural capacities of human beings can be developed completely,” as he puts in the eighth proposition, and in the third *Critique*, civil society is seen as the formal condition under which alone nature can attain this its final aim, “for only in this can the greatest development of the natural dispositions occur.” In §83 of the Appendix to the Critique of Teleological Judgment, Kant continues:

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317 Ibid., 138.
319 “IaG,” AA 8 27, 50 and KU, AA 5: 432.
For [the development of civil society], however, even if humans were clever enough to discover it and wise enough to subject themselves willingly to its coercion, a cosmopolitan whole [ein weltbürgerliches Ganze], i.e., a system of all states that are at risk of detrimentally affecting each other, is required.\footnote{KU, AA 5: 432f.}

Thus, the requirement of a cosmopolitan whole comes along with the critical-regulative teleological presupposition that the ultimate end of nature is the complete development of all innate capacities of human beings. This teleological presupposition, we should remember, is based on the principle of external purposiveness. It seems that then the idea of a cosmopolitan world order becomes another presupposition, one that is based on the general premise or the regulative commitment that nature does nothing in vain, a teleological conception. A civil state and its corollary, cosmopolitanism, are then not moral requirements in the Kantian system. While morality requires that unsociable social traits and antagonism in the society are overcome because this is the only way we can be end-setting autonomous agents, the moral law does not explicitly give us a formula to achieve this – the Categorical Imperative only tells us to be consistent in our law giving, but it does not explain how and why we should act only according to the maxim that we will at the same time to become a universal law or why we should treat others as always at the same time as ends but never merely as a means. It does not define the preconditions of achieving a civil state; this is given to us by the teleological considerations of nature and the human beings. Cosmopolitanism is a requirement based on the external purposiveness that says human beings are the ultimate end of nature through culture.

When we conceive of history as a whole teleologically, we come to conclude that wars are destructive and undesirable and such an unlawful state should give rise to a civil society. Such a practical requirement for civil society and cosmopolitanism first and
foremost acts as a form of a cease-fire, in order for the social antagonisms to be resolved so that we can cultural development, which then hopefully results in moral development.

The Final End of Nature

The question of a moral history that considers human beings to be the ultimate end of nature appears again in §84 of the *Critique of Judgment*, where Kant returns to the idea of the final end of nature. A final end is defined by Kant as “that end which needs no other as the condition for its possibility.” As should be clear, such an end cannot be found in nature, because it is unconditional: as Kant puts it, “there is nothing in nature (as a sensible being) the determinative ground of which, itself found in nature, is not always in turn conditioned.” However, Kant says, if we assume a final cause to all these relations, a cause that is intentionally acting, then we can ask why a thing exists, what the inner purpose of it is. Remember again that we are here making reflective judgments about the final end of nature using the principle of external purposiveness. Kant finds the final end of nature in the human being considered as a noumenon or as a moral being. Human beings are the only ones for whom the whole of nature is a means, insofar as they can set ends for themselves, i.e., they are the only kind of beings “whose causality is teleological” when we consider them as freely acting beings. Only in the human being do we find a capacity to act autonomously and by means of an unconditional legislation

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321 KU, AA 5: 434
322 KU, AA 5: 435
323 KU, AA 5: 435f.
324 KU, AA 5: 435.
with regards to ends.\textsuperscript{325} This feature “makes him alone capable of being the final end, to which the whole of nature is teleologically subordinated.”\textsuperscript{326} Such a regulative conception of human being as the final end comes from moral considerations, while the claim that culture is the ultimate end of nature is granted by teleological considerations.

At this juncture, I would like to make two points before I end this section and the chapter: \textit{first}, it should be clear that there is a difference between history conceived as the culmination of natural ends and as that of moral ends. For the former, that is, for a conception of history as the culmination of natural ends, we conceive of the human being as natural, as one who has innate capacities that should be fully developed by means of a \textit{culture of skill}. This is what it means for human beings to be judged as the ultimate ends of nature, and for this, universal history or the history of the human species as a whole, conceived as an approximation to a cosmopolitan world order, is theoretically useful. For a conception of history as the culmination of moral ends, we conceive of the human being as a \textit{moral}, able to set ends for herself and give herself the law. This is what it means for human beings to be judged as the final ends of nature. A cosmopolitan concept of universal history is afforded by the regulative teleological considerations, thus it is theoretically helpful and it can also provide further moral reasons for adopting such a view. \textit{Second}, the advancement of culture first culminates in a state of bifurcation and social conflict, which should then give rise to the idea of a civil society and a cosmopolitan world order, and \textit{hopefully} this will prepare us to become moral agents, the final end of nature. History, then, first refers to the formation of all our rational capacities through a culture of skill and does not inherently have a moral meaning. While this may

\textsuperscript{325} KU, AA 5: 435. It is clear that Kant is talking about the Categorical Imperative here.

\textsuperscript{326} KU, AA 5: 436.
mean that a motivation to be moral agents and so constitute a moral community is the underlying assumption in a teleological philosophy of history, we have to be careful not to claim that history only has a moral significance. Here, it should be clear that once again Kant is not making empirical claims as to the actual course of historical events but laying out the presuppositions of a teleological philosophy of history and supplying further (moral) motivations to adopt it.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that a careful reading of the Critique of Judgment reveals that the distinction made in this book between internal (absolute) and external (relative) purposiveness is of crucial importance to Kant’s critical philosophy of history, for it is the latter that plays the most important role in Kant’s reflections on history and politics in §§ 82 – 84 of this work. We also come to see that Kant’s critical philosophy of history is in line with the methodological commitments of the first Critique and Kant’s “Idea” essay, for the hypothetical use of reason theorized in the first Critique and utilized in the “Idea” essay is now further conceptualized as a species of a reflective teleological judgment. Thus, Kant’s philosophy of history employs a critical-regulative teleology.

It is in §§ 82-84 of the Critique of Judgment that history and politics are judged as fields of inquiry that employ the principle of external purposiveness, a regulative teleological principle that is not indispensible but merely useful for theoretical pursuits. I

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327 This is what is missing in Zuckert’s cursory analysis of §§ 82-84 of the third Critique: because she overlooks the distinction that Kant makes between human beings conceived as ultimate and final ends of nature and how this distinction corresponds to history and morality, Zuckert is too quick to claim that freedom and nature are reconciled in our conception of nature as a purposive whole in a philosophy of history. Thus, in her analysis, a teleological conception of nature has merely moral significance. See Rachel Zuckert., Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgment, 375f.
have also shown that the philosophical conception of history as a whole (universal history) as approaching a civil society and cosmopolitanism is made possible by means of the external principle of purposiveness, not by strictly or merely moral considerations. Cosmopolitanism becomes a requirement for politics and thus seen as the goal of historical developments only because a teleological conception of history is theoretically useful and generates the idea of cosmopolitanism as a means for securing peace. In the reading I have provided of the Appendix and especially §§ 82-84, there is no theoretical or practical guarantee that we will ever reach a state of cosmopolitanism. It is not even an absolute moral requirement that we do so: the idea of a cosmopolitan world order is a requirement only insofar as we are allowed to make a reflective teleological judgment about the place of human beings in the order of nature, and speculate further about how they would need to replace war with peace and come to live together in a lawful state in order to develop their innate capacities further. Therefore, it is a dogmatic position to claim that cosmopolitanism is the necessary goal of history and politics, for this idea is only afforded by means of a teleological conception of nature and history as a whole, a conception that rests on critical-regulative grounds. Putting a stop to constant wars and social conflicts is necessary to achieve a moral community, and cosmopolitanism is one way to achieve this desired outcome, peaceful relationships among states.

However, when we look at Kant’s perhaps most explicitly political text, namely his later “On Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” (1795) we see that the language of teleology and purposiveness of nature becomes even stronger, raising the concern that Kant relapsed to a pre-critical position not afforded by his own critical-regulative method. In this essay, he discusses the specific requirements for a perpetual peace
between states in the form of propositions for social and political institutions and contracts, providing us with details about how cosmopolitan right can be implemented and protected through concrete measures. How should we then make sense of the “Perpetual Peace” essay in the light of the theoretical framework I have developed so far, in terms of a critical notion of teleology in history and politics? I shall address and answer this question in the following final chapter, where I provide a detailed account of Kant’s “Perpetual Peace.”

CHAPTER FOUR

TELEOLOGY IN “PERPETUAL PEACE:” MORALITY AND POLITICS
In this chapter, I turn to a major essay of Kant’s political philosophy, “Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” (1795) in order to re-evaluate the popular claim that Kant’s cosmopolitanism is now an indispensable moral goal of politics and to see whether Kant in this text oversteps the boundaries of his critical-regulative conception of teleology that he has been developing. “Perpetual Peace” is often read as endorsing peace as the ultimate guaranteed end of nature, history, and politics, and positing, in no uncertain terms, a cosmopolitan agenda, out of moral considerations. Through a close analysis of this text, however, I will confirm the interpretation I have developed thus far that Kant’s historico-political philosophy is closely connected to his conception of teleology and the critical-regulative method and does not originate in his moral theory. While perpetual peace is proposed as the desired telos of the external relationships between states and thus is the end goal and highest good of politics, cosmopolitanism in Kant’s account becomes a practical requirement, a means for gradually achieving peace, only when we conceive history in teleological terms by means of the regulative principle of external purposiveness. In short, the requirement of cosmopolitanism does not originate from Kant’s moral considerations but from his teleological conception of history. This understanding of history then allows the political philosopher to predict and discern the undesirable consequences of constant wars, and further leads her to conclude that a civil cosmopolitan order is a means for maintaining a state of lasting peace, in which we might be able to develop as moral agents. This is because this essay too, like the “Idea” essay and §§ 82-84 of the Critique of Judgment, I shall show, works with a regulative teleological understanding of nature and history.
In this essay the goal of bringing about perpetual peace on earth is posited as a political duty as distinguished from a moral duty that is commanded and tested by the Categorial Imperative. I will be drawing on Kant’s *Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* in order to clarify the distinction between political and moral duties and show that the political duty of peace is posited by a teleological understanding of history, following on Kant’s critical-regulative method. This brings us to the question of how to conceive of political teleological duties given that they are not unconditional commands. I will show that perpetual peace is posited as a political teleological duty, while cosmopolitan rights and institutions become practical means that make it likely that we will live peacefully here on earth some day. If the grounds of teleological history and politics are regulative and hypothetical for Kant, attending to this critical-regulative method obligates us to reconsider the goals posited by him.

I will conclude by drawing out important lessons from the cautiousness of the critical-regulative method both in theoretical and practical terms, for taking the teleological language used in the “Perpetual Peace” or in any of Kant’s other historico-political essays too far has important implications for both theoretical and practical reason as they function in critical philosophy. In other words, taking Kant’s philosophy of history as determinative of the contingent empirical conditions is an attitude that threatens both theoretical and practical reason: If we collapse the distinction between the contingency of a teleological account of history and the necessity of natural mechanistic laws that govern historical events, which is the most important basis for teleological judgments, then we come close to claiming that the present historical and political circumstances are fully purposive, rational, and necessary, thereby also blocking the way
for the possibility of social critique and transformation. On the other hand, if we were to argue that nature determinately guarantees peace, this would mean that there is no possibility for autonomous action on the part of rational agents, for peace would necessarily come about regardless of what we did. By way of concluding, then, I will further discuss the threats of a determinative philosophy of history and politics.

I

“Perpetual Peace” and Its Theoretical Commitments

In this section I put the “Perpetual Peace” essay back in its critical-regulative context and show that it should be understood in light of the theoretical commitments of Kant’s philosophy of history that have been unpacked in the previous chapters, that is, as still operating within a critical-regulative framework despite its strong teleological claims that we cannot help but make. Kant in this very text brings back the notions of critical principles in terms of the distinction between what we can know and what we can posit as a regulative framework, and these methodological points should be recognized in order to have a fuller portrait of Kant’s political legacy as laid out in this essay. For Kant, peace is the highest political good, but it is not guaranteed by any mechanistic process of nature – there is no conclusive evidence that nature works according to a purposive plan. Rather, a regulative teleological understanding of nature and history gives us hope that peace can be achieved, and further makes it our task to work toward this political goal. Here I postpone a detailed discussion of the articles of “Perpetual Peace” until the next section,
because I would first like to clarify the methodological underpinnings of the essay that are laid out at the end of this essay.

With the help of an analysis of the regulative principles in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, “Idea for a Universal History for a Cosmopolitan Intent,” and §§ 82-84 of the *Critique of Judgment*, I have shown that historico-political thought is justified in employing this principle again only on hypothetical or experimental grounds, only insofar as such a conception of history is both theoretically useful and generates hope for peace. Such theoretical and methodological considerations also constitute the backbone of Kant’s “Perpetual Peace.” This text remains an influential piece in political theory to this day. Part of the contemporary interest in Kant’s cosmopolitanism in the “Perpetual Peace” text originates from the empirical accuracy and significance it demonstrates, especially given that more than two centuries have passed since its publication. Indeed, Kant, with incredible foresight, predicts that it is dangerous to world peace to tie national debt to the internal affairs of a state, to purchase or inherit a state, and to have standing armies, and conceives of these as prohibitive recommendations for or preliminary articles of perpetual peace. Furthermore, in the definitive articles that follow, he goes into detail about how best to formally institute perpetual peace by means of a republican constitution, a federation of free states, and political, international, and cosmopolitan human rights. However, these articles all have a critical-regulative ground, one that

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329 These empirical considerations about what the best form of national, international, and cosmopolitan institutions might be are still currently being discussed and revised by contemporary cosmopolitan...
Kant makes explicit in this essay after listing them. In the following, I focus on the section entitled “First Supplement on the Guarantee of a Perpetual Peace” where Kant clarifies his methodological commitments that underlie his claim that peace is a teleological goal guaranteed by nature and his policy recommendations for this goal.

**In What Sense Does Nature Guarantee Perpetual Peace?**

**The Question of Teleology and Method**

“Towards Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” to a large extent, represents a snapshot of Kant’s political thought. However, the fact that this essay, like Kant’s political thought in general, relies on a fundamental regulative teleological assumption offered to him by his philosophy of history has not been properly and fully analyzed in Kant scholarship. The regulative teleological assumption that Kant employs here is the following: history as a whole should be regulatively conceptualized as a teleological order in which human beings gradually develop their inborn capacities, and the telos of this order can be conceived as a universal state of perpetual peace, based on the

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330 Allen Wood is an exception to this, in that he attempts to show that Kant’s philosophy of history plays an important role in his political theory; however, he does not go as far as demoting cosmopolitanism based on this interpretation. I will show that once we unpack the significance of a teleological understanding of history arising out of Kant’s critical-regulative method, we cannot but question whether cosmopolitanism is the most relevant legacy of his political thought. See Allen W. Wood, “Kant’s Philosophy of History” in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*. Ed. Pauline Kleingeld. Tr. David Colclasure (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). Another commentator who acknowledged the regulative character and importance of Kant’s philosophy of history for his political thought is Karl-Otto Apel, but he in the end subsumes Kant’s historical account to his moral goals, offering a revision of what he calls “Kant’s two-world metaphysics” in order to make sense of regulative claims found in the “Perpetual Peace” essay. My interpretation demonstrates that there is a systematic continuity between Kant’s critical metaphysics and historico-political philosophy. See Karl-Otto Apel, “Kant’s ‘Toward Perpetual Peace’ as Historical Prognosis from the Point of View of Moral Duty” in *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Eds. James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997).
regulative principle that nature does nothing in vain. Towards this *telos*, then, cosmopolitanism becomes the most suitable *means* that will provide the historical and cultural climate for the complete development of the rational capacities of human beings.\(^{331}\)

It is in the “First Supplement on the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace” that Kant’s methodological and teleological considerations regarding the formal institution of perpetual peace come to the fore most visibly, for here he unwaveringly claims that nature is the *guarantor* of perpetual peace.\(^{332}\) This is a puzzling statement, for Kant seems to say that we *know* the final purpose of nature and history, and that it will come about regardless of what we do or how the historical events *actually* unfold.\(^{333}\) However, this essay can and should be read as critical, in light of the regulative methodological underpinnings of Kant’s philosophy of history that I have unpacked in the previous chapters. In other words, this piece is an experiment in critical-regulative politics, that is, an *exploration* and a further *test* of Kant’s useful problematic concept, cosmopolitanism, in addition to providing some recommendations as to how best to implement and

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\(^{331}\) I have shown that Kant begins to develop the idea of a cosmopolitan world whole as a useful concept in the “Idea” essay, where the history of the human species as a whole is interpreted as the realization of “a universal cosmopolitan existence [*ein allgemeiner weltbürgerlicher Zustand*]” for it is considered to be the most useful condition for human rational development. (“IaG,” AA 8: 21 and 28.) The concept of a cosmopolitan world whole is further justified as a useful one in §82-84 of the third *Critique*, where Kant applies the principle of external purposiveness to history and hypothetically defines the ultimate end of nature as a culture of cosmopolitanism. Now, we see that the idea of cosmopolitanism is more fully fleshed out in “Towards Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,”\(^{331}\) where it is also seen as the *means* for bringing about everlasting peace on earth, thus as being closely and explicitly tied to the highest political good.

\(^{332}\) “ZEF,” AA 8: 361f.

\(^{333}\) That is, it seems as if whatever actually happens, it will not have any effect on the course of nature approaching peace. It is clear that there is a moral dilemma here concerning a mechanism of nature bringing about perpetual peace regardless of individual or collective human actions. As important as this dilemma is, I will not be focusing on it here, for I am interested first and foremost in how this poses itself as a theoretical dilemma for political thought – if peace is guaranteed, how can we say that it is a theoretical *hypothesis*? For a comprehensive analysis of the complicated relationship between moral and historical progress, see Sharon Anderson-Gold, *Unnecessary Evil: History and Moral Development in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant* (New York: SUNY Press, 2001); and Pauline Kleingeld. “Kant, History, and the Idea of Moral Development,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (1999): 59-90.
cultivate this *pragmatic* condition of peace. If we miss the theoretical commitments
behind Kant’s regulative teleology, we are then driven to claim that peace is guaranteed
by nature and cosmopolitanism becomes an inscrutable goal of politics, as if we know
that nature *is* teleological as a whole.

In “First Supplement on the Guarantee of a Perpetual Peace” Kant refers to the
necessity of supplying *our* understanding with a concept of purpose, giving a similar
account of teleology to the ones found in the “Idea” essay and the third *Critique*, thus,
employing a regulative principle of purposiveness. He writes,

> What *guarantees* perpetual peace is nothing less than the great artist
> *nature* (*natura daedala rerum*). The mechanical course of nature visibly
> reveals a purposiveness [Zweckmässigkeit] to create harmony through
discord among people, even against their own will. Thus, if understood to
be the compelling force of a cause whose laws of operation are unknown
to us, this plan is called *Fate*. But if, upon consideration of nature’s
purposiveness [Zweckmässigkeit] in the course of the world, it is
understood as the underlying wisdom of a higher cause which is directed
ward toward the objective final end [*Endzweck*] of the human species and which
predetermines this course of events in the world, this plan is called
*Providence*. To be sure, we do not actually *cognize* it as such based on the
artifices of nature or *infer* its existence on the basis of such artifices, but
rather (as in all relations in general between the form of things and their
purposes [Zwecke]) can and need only *add it in thought*, in order to
conceive of their possibility according to the analogy of human acts of
artifice.334

This passage, together with the footnote that follows, makes clear what lies at the heart of
the theoretical justification for the claim that nature *guarantees* perpetual peace. Kant
here says that we cannot know much about the purposive operations of nature or
providence.335 In order to make sense of the workings of nature as a whole, we have to

334 “ZEF,” AA 8: 361f.
335 On the distinction for Kant between nature and providence, see Pauline Kleingeld, “Nature or
Providence? On the Theoretical and Moral Importance of Kant’s Philosophy of History,” *American
add a concept of purpose in thought, and in this way we can represent these operations to ourselves as purposive.

It bears repeating that such a purposive understanding of nature as a whole is a regulative principle for us. In the footnote explaining his concept of providence, a seemingly dogmatic concept, Kant confirms this by saying that it is a foolish presumption for human beings to want to cognize an event as a divine dispensation.336 Thus, we can never recognize anything in the world as an act of providence. Kant says that we must add the concept of purpose to our understanding in order to be able to represent nature as a whole to ourselves as purposive, further claiming that such a representation of a purposive nature is for us an idea, a regulative one for theoretical purposes. It is thus better and more in keeping with the limitations of our finite reason to use the term nature rather than providence in our analysis of the purposiveness in nature, for our analysis needs to remain within the limits of possible experience with regards to the cause-effect relations.337 If we want to claim that a regulative idea of a purposive nature is indeed a constitutive one for our experience, this “puts us on the wings of Icarus in order to approach more closely to the secret of its inscrutable purpose.”338 If we say that peace is guaranteed by nature, it is like flying too close to the sun: just as such arrogance destroyed Icarus, it annihilates our search for meaning in history and politics and undermines our efforts as well – if we know that peace will come about regardless of what we say and what we do, what is the point of trying to argue for it or to implement it through our actions, institutions, and policies?

338 “ZEF,” AA 8: 363.
If we are allowed to conceive of nature as a whole as purposive and its purpose as peace, this means that nature can cohere with our moral goals as well. A peaceful earth is the ground and the condition for a moral existence because such a notion gives us hope that nature itself is conducive to our efforts, that our actions will have some effect in/on the world. The relationship and the conformity between peace and our moral ends, Kant writes, “can only be conceived of as an idea.”\textsuperscript{339} thus, a teleological understanding of nature as approaching and eventually culminating in peace prepares the background for morality.

Thus, there is nothing in the “Perpetual Peace” essay suggesting that our knowledge of the guarantee of nature is theoretically, absolutely justified. What is more, Kant denies again and again that such theoretical justification is possible for us. As beings with limited cognitive faculties, we need to make use of regulative principles. This claim is only justified on critical-regulative grounds, and therefore we should not forget that regulative principles are not constitutive of our experience. While these principles make it possible for us to understand history and politics in a coherent framework, they nevertheless do not in any way posit an unconditional telos of politics, or predict that peace will come about. Therefore, we find that Kant’s theoretical commitments in the “Perpetual Peace” essay also operate within this framework of regulation and approximation, not a sense of necessity.

This critical-regulative sense of guarantee then should be interpreted as a legitimate hope that we have about the course of nature, given that we also have something to do and say about history. Thanks to a regulative principle of purposiveness, we can judge history to be making progress towards a more peaceful condition, because

\textsuperscript{339} “ZEF,” AA 8: 362.
we can discern certain empirical processes in nature as teleological, approximating toward this goal. This also implies that the accomplishment of peace is contingent not necessary – in the sense that it is a desired state of affairs that we hope to bring about by means of our collective actions. Even a formula such as “Act only in such a way to bring about peace” is not unconditional, because this state of affairs is willed for the purpose of not destroying life on earth as we know it, not commanded in itself without any reference to an end. This means that peace is not an unconditional command: it will always be desired for a certain purpose. And herein lies the distinction between moral and teleological conceptions of ends: moral ends are unconditional, and they are commanded universally without any consideration of purposes and consequences, whereas teleological ends answer the question of what an action is for, takes into account its consequences, and posits conditional goals in accordance with a purpose. In the following, I will clarify this distinction by means of evaluating Kant’s controversial justification of war as a means for peace. If we evaluate war from a moral perspective, it is clear that Kant would condemn it. But in “Perpetual Peace” war is seen as making peace a practical goal, because through war and conflict we come to realize that peace is in our interest. I will show that nature guarantees perpetual peace by means of the current conditions in which we find ourselves, and only a critical-regulative reading of this statement allows us to make sense of the idea that war is a means for achieving peace. This will also lead us to posit peace as a political teleological duty as opposed to a moral one.

Achieving Peace Thanks to War? The Current Empirical Conditions of Human Beings
Now that I have unpacked Kant’s use of a regulative teleology in “Perpetual Peace” and proven that his strongest teleological claim regarding nature as the guarantor of perpetual peace must be read as coming out of his critical-regulative commitments, let us turn to his other seemingly dogmatic statements that follow from his claims about the guarantee of nature. In the remainder of the “Supplement,” Kant also offers an examination of the current condition [Zustand] in which nature placed human beings to be able to discern how far we are achieving the desired result and what we can do about it. Such examination is necessary because if nature is to secure peace, it will have to start out with these current conditions; that is, if the desired outcome if peace, we need to start with shaping the present state of affairs accordingly. In this respect, even current wars and conflicts will be seen as beneficial for coming to posit peace as a necessary and desirable goal of politics.

Kant’s theoretical commitments allow him to interpret the current empirical conditions of human beings in critical-regulative teleological terms. In three statements, then, he summarizes nature’s provisional arrangement teleologically as the following:

1) Human beings are able to live in all the areas where they are settled; 2) Nature has driven them in all directions by means of war, so that they inhabit even the most inhospitable regions; 3) She has compelled them by the same means to enter into more or less legal relations.

Teleologically speaking, there is a reason why people live even in the most inhospitable regions of the earth and have to enter into relations: it is war. Nature makes sure that we are able to survive using the means available to use, that we are able to live together and come into contact with one another – these are reflective teleological judgments using the principle of external purposiveness, as I have shown in the previous chapter. We have no

341 “ZEF,” AA 8: 363f.
reason to judge nature as a whole teleologically except as an experiment presupposing the
purposiveness of nature in general in order to see if we can make sense of external
relationships among organisms in relation to our purposes. Based on these statements
about the nature’s provisional and purposive arrangement, Kant then provides examples
of the “evidence of design in nature” and of visible signs of “nature’s care:” the fact that
the shores of the Arctic ocean has furry animals as well as seals and whales to provide
food for them; and that nature carried driftwood to treeless regions for the natives to
construct boats, weapons, or dwellings. All of these teleological statements about why
seals, whales, or driftwood in treeless regions exist, then, must be read as coming out of a
regulative teleological conception of nature, using the principle of external
purposiveness. Kant is providing empirical examples as to how this regulative principle
of teleology helps us to make sense of these events in nature (external relationships
amongst organisms) with regards to our understanding and purposes. The experimental
idea that nature as a whole is purposive, justified subjectively and as an extension of the
inner purposiveness of organisms, as I have shown in the previous chapter, proves useful
for our theoretical inquiries for conceptualizing the current conditions in which we find
ourselves, because it makes possible a provisional answer to the question concerning the
purpose of things in nature insofar as the external relationships among them are
concerned. Such external teleology has admittedly pragmatic grounds and it is an
extension of the absolute teleological claims about organisms, for we do not claim to
discover an absolutely purposive relationship between these beings in question but only
try to discern how nature and natural beings can be purposive for the goals of human

342 “ZEF,” AA 8: 363.
beings, that is, *in reference to us*. This, as I have shown, is the way in which we are justified to use teleology in history and politics.

The fact that our teleological understanding of history and politics is only relatively and pragmatically justified is too often overlooked or seen as an embarrassment. Of course it is tempting to overlook the distinction between internal purposiveness of organisms and external purposiveness of culture and history, because conceptualizing history and politics in strong teleological terms, as if they were organisms, or as if peace is a guaranteed and necessary end of politics, affords us more definite claims about where history is headed and what kind of political institutions are needed. The disregard in the scholarship for regulative teleology at play in Kant’s historico-political writings is partly responsible for the idea that Kant’s only relevant political legacy is his policy advice regarding cosmopolitanism and its institutions as laid out in the “Perpetual Peace” essay, for if we do not thematize the role of regulative teleology in this essay, it is easier to dismiss why Kant talks about a purposive nature and move on with the empirical results of Kant’s politics and to read this essay as merely a list of the determinative and unquestionable conditions of peace.

Giving determinative empirical policy recommendations is, however, exactly what Kant does *not* want to do in his philosophy of history and politics, and with good reason: I have shown in the previous chapter, where Kant develops his notion of purposiveness in terms of external relations between organized beings in §§ 82-84 of the *Critique of Judgment*, that we are allowed to employ a teleological language in history and politics, with the caveat that we should keep in mind that such a language is justified on relative and pragmatic— not absolute—grounds. Thus, Kant starts out by admitting that
in those inquiries such as history and politics, we can never have absolute objective claims as to the beginnings, the end, or the direction of history, the origins of state, its policies, and so on, but we have to (and always already do) conceive of the answers to such questions in terms relative to our ends. The use of the regulative principle of external purposiveness helps us to conceptualize a philosophy of history, and based on that, a political theory in terms of reflecting judgments. This is why the principle of external purposiveness applied to history and politics is useful but not indispensible, as I have shown earlier. We are justified to say that culture can be judged as the ultimate end of nature, as long as we remember that this is a reflective judgment made possible by the principle of external purposiveness. It is not the case that we know that nature as a whole is a giant organism that prioritizes the ends of human beings. Such teleological judgments about nature and human beings as a whole are not justified in absolute terms but only in relative terms, relative to our purposes and interests, that is, from a pragmatic point of view.

From such a pragmatic point of view, then, Kant goes on to speculate that it was probably war that drove people to inhospitable places, thereby enabling them to enter into peaceful relationships with one another.\(^\text{343}\) Because human beings could live anywhere on earth, nature must have willed that they ought to live everywhere, for it would go against a purposive nature if there were places on earth that weren’t conducive to life at all. This “ought” does not come from any compliance with the moral law, but from a teleological consideration of nature and its purposes: the questions at stake here are whether we are able to articulate the end goal of nature as peace, and what the means are by which a purposive nature would contribute towards this goal. These questions orient us to the

\(^{343}\) “ZEF,” AA 8: 364.
natural tendencies and inclinations that human beings have, and to an investigation of how they can be arranged purposively so that a lawful and peaceful order can come about. Thus, Kant concludes, nature must have chosen war as its means of populating the earth and bringing about peaceful relationships among human beings.

But if nature uses war to attain this goal, in what sense can it be seen as the guarantor of peace? Isn’t war an inherently immoral act? How does nature use it to promote peace, a condition of morality? Or, as Kant puts it, “What does nature do in relation to the end that their own reason makes into a duty for human beings, i.e., how does nature help to promote their moral end?”

First, it must be clear that nature does not impose duties on us; it merely prepares us to be moral, by means of the unsociable sociability and discord, as I have also shown in the “Idea” essay and in my analysis of §§82-84 of the Critique of Judgment. The question about nature’s actions in relation to our ends must be addressed in regulative teleological terms, referring to the external relationships among human beings. When Kant says that nature’s method, war, will get the same result regardless of what we want, he means that because of the self-seeking inclinations that we have, nature will get the upper hand in the following ways: first, war or a constant threat of war will make people realize that peace is to their own advantage, so that they can continue to live. Therefore, not out of moral considerations but completely from selfish inclinations they will promote a lawful order and peace, because they will have experienced the disastrous results of war. Out of this inclination, then, human beings will be forced to become good citizens, if not exactly morally good people.

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345 “ZEF,” AA 8: 366.
that a teleological view of nature as approaching peace is the condition of morality and not in itself moral: we try to become good citizens and to achieve peace out of our selfish inclinations (to preserve our lives and properties), and then we will also develop as moral agents. Second, even though it might be the desire of every state to achieve lasting peace by dominating the entire world, nature uses linguistic and religious differences to separate nations, thus blocking the way for the rise of a single tyrannical power. While these differences are often the cause of more wars, this state of war due to cultural hostilities would still be preferable to a single totalitarian power. Third, while “nature wisely separates the nations,” it also unites them by means of their mutual self-interest, for the spirit of commerce cannot exist alongside war but requires peaceful relationships. Nations will therefore be driven to advocate the noble goal of peace, again, not because of moral motivations, but out of their own self-interests in commerce.

In these ways, Kant writes, nature guarantees perpetual peace by the actual mechanism of human inclinations, again, not through moral considerations. A state of peace on earth is first desired if we want to continue to live, and it would also make it more likely that we will develop as moral agents. This guarantee offered by nature, as I have explained, is by no means epistemologically justified – we do not know the real purpose of war or whether perpetual peace will necessarily be achieved but we make teleological statements about nature, history, and politics by using the external principle of purposiveness because it is useful to conceive of these realms in this way, relative to our purposes. The evidence Kant finds in the empirical consideration of human inclinations under the light of the regulative teleological understanding of nature makes it

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346 “ZEF,” AA 8: 367.
347 “ZEF,” AA 8: 365f.
likely that perpetual peace will come about, and the cosmopolitan world order seems to be the best matrix in which this can be realized. Therefore, the speculative reason is not granted to forecast that perpetual peace will come about; this would be to embrace dogmatism in Kantian terms, claiming to know what is unknowable within the limits of possible experience. It is, as he claims, “a far-fetched idea in theory” to claim that nature is purposive, and if it was a theoretically justified idea that peace will come about regardless of what we do, by means of nature, it would not make sense to claim it as a political goal, that is, if it will necessarily happen (because nature is purposive), we do not need to do anything at all to achieve it. Instead, only by positing peace as a regulative political goal based on a teleological understanding of nature and history can we figure out what sorts of policies or institutions should be implemented so that this goal still remains within our reach. This is what is granted by the principle of external purposiveness.

In short, Kant’s critical-regulative method of approaching history and politics affords him the following: in the language of the Critique of Pure Reason and the “Idea” essay, we are supplied with a hypothetical concept or a subjective regulative principle around which we can organize the entirety of history as a teleological order, and based on this, a test of this concept by means of empirical evidence that is to be problematically subsumed under it. In addition, in the language of the Critique of Judgment and of the external principle of purposiveness articulated therein, we are justified to extend the use of teleology to nature as a whole and to the external relationships among organisms, to see if such a teleological conception provides us with any clue as to whether the

348 “ZEF,” AA 8: 362f.
349 That is, it would not make sense to posit perpetual peace as a task to be accomplished, if it were guaranteed. This point will be addressed more fully in the next section.
operations of nature could or would cohere with our ends. In the “Perpetual Peace” essay, Kant is still using the regulative principle of nature as a purposive whole, in order to see if such ideas help us to make sense of history and politics, and how we can orient these realms towards achieving peace, our ultimate political goal. Thus, the critical-regulative method makes it possible for Kant to turn to his current conditions and human inclinations in order to further explore whether or not the idea of cosmopolitan world order can be useful for promoting peace. Furthermore, it is not his moral philosophy that requires that we institute a cosmopolitan civil state for the sake of peace but it is a teleological consideration of the state of affairs that leads us to posit certain actions and institutions as necessary (though not sufficient) for implementing perpetual peace among states.

I have shown that Kant’s notion of guarantee must be understood on critical-regulative grounds, for it is clear in the text that Kant does not claim that we now know that nature is teleological or that peace is the inevitable telos of nature, history, and politics. This is why Kant’s prohibitive and definitive articles in this essay must be read against this critical-regulative background, not as concrete, empirical, and determinative policy recommendations and even duties for achieving peace. These prohibitive and definitive articles that lay out a map for these actions and institutions as put forth by Kant in “Perpetual Peace” essay are formulated thanks to a regulative teleological conception of history and politics, as I will show below.
The Articles for Perpetual Peace Among States: What a Theoretical Politician Can and Cannot Accomplish

Kant famously starts “Perpetual Peace” by reminding us that he is merely a theoretical politician, therefore distinguishing himself from the practical politician, who is interested in exploring the empirical principles that might constitute a state and its laws. He admits that the state must be founded upon principles of experience, which the mere theorist of politics cannot provide. He does not intend to give practical advice for political organizations or meddle with actual political affairs but wants to emphasize that he is a theoretical politician. Because he is interested in political theory and not actual politics, his ideas cannot be dangerous to the state.\(^{350}\) One can of course see this as an indication of Kant’s concern for being misunderstood or subjected to censorship. However, there is more to this. More often than not, this essay has been treated as if it is offering a set of concrete (empirical) policy recommendations for statespeople in terms of how to bring about a cosmopolitan world order. At the very beginning of the essay, Kant is explaining that this is not his intention, and I think we should take him seriously when he says that he is a political theorist. The reason for this cautiousness is not merely the fear of censorship or prosecution but it has to do with Kant’s regulative commitments that deem any empirical advice contingent, because the theoretical politician cannot give us any concrete recommendations outside of their regulative or pragmatic orientations and motivations. Regulative teleology as employed in history and politics have admittedly pragmatic grounds, and if we do not want to overstep the boundaries of what is granted to us by means of the useful principle of external purposiveness, we cannot give

\(^{350}\) “ZEF,” AA 8: 343.
unconditional empirical advice: we can base our recommendations on the practical goals that we have come to develop thanks to a regulative teleological consideration of nature and history, and this is the best that we can do. A critical-regulative teleological conception of history directs us to look at the current empirical conditions in which we find ourselves in order to find out whether we can shape these conditions, by means of the skills that we have, in accordance with the goals that seem most suitable for our own purposes. This is exactly what Kant is doing as a theoretical politician when he talks about the purpose of war, as I have shown above, and his intent is the same when he lists various articles for peace in this essay: after concluding that peace is the end goal of politics, he turns to his own socio-political context to discern how we can approximate toward this telos. When we look at Kant’s set of articles for the implementation of peace in light of the methodological commitments in play in “Perpetual Peace,” as I demonstrated above in my analysis of how the guarantee of peace is justified regulatively, we can see that these articles are by no means a determinate concrete set of policies for bringing about peace. Perpetual peace is a political goal, and a cosmopolitan world order seems like the most suitable condition in which peace can be realized. Kant by means of these articles is trying to sort out the minimal conditions and the kind of institutions and rights that should be in place to accomplish these goals. In order to see what is afforded to Kant by his regulative commitments thus to map out what Kant can and cannot accomplish by means of regulative principles in history and politics, we have to pay close attention to how Kant justifies his policy recommendations in theoretical terms by a consideration of his own socio-political context, as opposed to appealing to unchanging universal moral precepts.
The Preliminary Articles for Perpetual Peace

There are two types of articles in “Perpetual Peace.” The first group consists of the prohibitive or preliminary articles of perpetual peace, those considerations that are *sine qua nons* of establishing and maintaining perpetual peace. These articles are formulated in such a way that if one violates any of those, peace becomes logically and practically impossible. That is, once we consider the practical (actual or potential) *consequences* of violating these articles, it becomes immediately clear without further demonstration that they are the minimum requirements of perpetual peace: denying them and still working for perpetual peace is logically and practically impossible.

Indeed, if one makes a peace treaty with a secret reservation of material for future war, this treaty would be a mere truce, not one for perpetual peace, as the first prohibitive article states.\(^{351}\) If we want the peace to be everlasting, we cannot have peace treaties as a temporary suspension of hostilities; rather, they must put an end to all hostilities for all times. All of the problems that caused a war in the first place must be discussed and included in the peace treaty, so that there will be no material or reason for another war later on. If all we have is a truce and we are holding some other material for a new war, a potential *consequence* of this is not peace but more wars.

In the second prohibitive article Kant points out the dangers that are brought to Europe by means of acquiring another state through inheritance, exchange, purchase, or donation, so such actions cannot be permitted if we want to maintain perpetual peace.\(^ {352}\)

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\(^{351}\) “ZEF,” AA 8: 343.

\(^{352}\) “ZEF,” AA 8: 344.
A state is not a property to be bought or sold because it consists of human beings. If we treat states as properties, we then start fighting over them to accumulate more land, resources, and power. This would constitute a potential reason for more wars. Thus, sovereignty of each state must be recognized if we want to avoid further wars.

Third article says that standing armies will be gradually useless if peace is to be sovereign on earth so it is logical that they should be abolished in time.\textsuperscript{353} If a state continues to have a standing army, it constitutes a threat for other states and will give rise to an arms’ race and even preventative attacks, which are not at all favorable for perpetual peace. A continued accumulation of arms and military power is a potential reason for war.

Consequences of a state being financially dependent on another state are also undesirable for peace, because this kind of dependency will potentially give rise to conflict and wars. So the fourth article claims that “no national debt should be contracted with regard to the external affairs of a state.”\textsuperscript{354} Again, this kind of dependency would mean that the creditor state would see itself justified in attacking the debtor to collect its debts, and this would cause more wars and take us further away from the goal of peace.

Fifth article declares that a forceful intervention in the constitution and government of another state is always unjustified and constitutes cause for war, so that is to be prohibited.\textsuperscript{355} This kind of interference would be a violation of the other peoples’ rights and would again not be conducive to maintaining peaceful relationships with them: nothing can justify this kind of a forceful intervention.

\textsuperscript{353} “ZEF,” AA 8: 345.
\textsuperscript{354} “ZEF,” AA 8: 345.
\textsuperscript{355} “ZEF,” AA 8: 346.
And finally in the sixth prohibitive article Kant writes that even during war, such acts of hostility as employing assassins, poisoners, breach of surrender, and incitement to treason are not to be permitted for these make peaceful conclusions of wars unlikely and again constitute potential cause for wars.\(^{356}\) These kinds of actions make it impossible to have peace and would even turn hostilities into wars of extermination.

In short, if states continue to make mere truces, try to acquire other states, accumulate armies and weapons, interfere in other states’ financial affairs or forcefully threaten their sovereignty, and show unforgivable acts of hostility, peace will get further and further away from our reach. The preliminary articles, then, are a set of prohibitions that are pragmatic recommendations by a political theorist such as Kant. These articles aim at establishing the minimum conditions for implementing peace among states, which to a certain extent boil down to the idea that each state should be internally and externally free in order both for us to live together in harmony and for perpetual peace to become a future possibility.

More importantly, in order to support these preliminary articles Kant appeals to empirical evidence and to a consideration of consequences of certain actions, not simply to moral grounds. That is, these articles are not unconditional moral precepts for all humanity but are grounded in a regulative teleological conception of history that posits peace as the end goal. For example, the second preliminary article of perpetual peace, namely the requirement that no independent state can be purchased or inherited is justified by means of the empirical fact that Europe at this time was exposed to the dangers of this supposed right of acquiring states this way and so states should avoid such actions in the future in order to avoid war. The third preliminary article that proposes that

\(^{356}\) “ZEF,” AA 8: 346.
standing armies should be abolished in time comes from the fact that having armies at
hand will lead to more harm, for it will lead to nations trying to accumulate as much
military power as possible, leading to potential wars. And the fourth preliminary article
of perpetual peace that requires that no national debt be connected to the external affairs
of the state is justified by looking at what would result from such financial
interdependence. Without positing perpetual peace as the telos of history, we cannot
formulate these articles and we cannot reflect on the potential consequences of these
actions to see whether they are conducive to this telos.

In other words, Kant is able to talk about what will happen if the states do not
follow these articles thanks to his teleological conception: it is not that they would be
acting immorally if they did not adhere to these articles and policies, but that the
consequences of such hostile actions would quite probably affect the entire globe in a
negative way, and take us further from the telos of peace. He is afforded this language
and the insight into the empirical consequences of these actions thanks to his regulative
teleological commitments. When he has the end goal of peace in mind, he is able to
determine the provisions that best target such a goal on a national and international level,
and thus these prohibitive articles originate out of a consideration of the ends and
purposes of the larger trends in politics and history with a view to shape them in
accordance with achieving perpetual peace on earth.

The Definitive Articles for Peace and Their Justification: Republicanism, A
Federation of Free States, and the Cosmopolitan Right to Universal Hospitality
The second group of articles, which Kant calls the definitive articles for perpetual peace among states, are more concrete in the sense that they indicate the formal conditions of actually implementing peace: they claim that a republican constitution, a federation of free states, and the cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality are needed for perpetual peace. Are these the unconditional and sufficient conditions of peace? A closer look at how these definitive articles are formulated and justified reveals that the requirements of a cosmopolitan hospitality, a republican constitution, and a federation of free states are posited with a view to achieving peace on earth, by making a reflective teleological judgment based on the current socio-political conditions in which Kant finds himself. That is, by means of his method, Kant is able to reflect on his present situation and on the actions of the European states, and this reflection leads him to conclude that if we are to achieve everlasting peace, hostilities that cause conflicts and wars should be put aside and that every human being should be granted the right to universal hospitality, a global institution of all free states should be in place, and the rule of each state should be republican. They are put forth as potential components of everlasting peace, not necessary goals in and of themselves. That is, these are not unconditional moral requirements but practical ones that he hopes will eventually lead to perpetual peace on earth. Thanks to his teleological view of history and politics, Kant does find confirmation in his own historico-political context that these articles make it more likely that perpetual peace will eventually be achieved.

The first definitive article of perpetual peace is that the civil constitution of every state must be republican. By republicanism, Kant understands a civil union where the

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357 Especially the cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality, which is seen as Kant’s major contribution to global politics to this day, seems like an unconditional unquestionable right that has moral grounds.
principles of freedom, interdependence, and equality are established as fundamental conditions. After saying that republicanism is the original basis for every kind of civil condition because it includes these principles of freedom, interdependence, and equality to their fullest extent, he goes on to investigate whether this is the sole constitution that can lead toward perpetual peace. Thus, republicanism is considered from the view of the telos of peace.

In this teleological consideration, Kant arrives at the conclusion that republicanism indeed “offers the prospect of the result wished for, namely perpetual peace.” This is because in a republican constitution the citizens will have a say in whether a state should declare war or not, and they will hesitate to go to war because of its potentially disastrous effects that they themselves will experience. In other words, a greedy monarch can decide to declare war more easily, because he will not be the one enduring all of its hardships such as actually fighting in a war, paying the costs of war, destruction of their belongings, and debt. As Kant writes,

under a constitution in which subjects are not citizens of the state, which is therefore not republican [deciding upon war] is the easiest thing in the world; because the head of state is not a member of the state but its proprietor and gives up nothing at all of his feasts, hunts, pleasure palaces, court festivals, and so forth, he can decide upon war, as upon a kind of pleasure party, for insignificant cause.

Therefore a republican constitution is to be in place if we do not want to give up the goal of peace: if we have a constitution that is not republican, wars are more likely to continue. Kant arrives at this conclusion by means of a teleological consideration of his

358 “ZEF,” AA 8: 349f.
present circumstances: it is an empirical fact that wars cause hardships, suffering, and debt, and as long as declaring war becomes a right of those who will be enduring these hardships, wars will become less likely because republican states will avoid war in order to avoid its undesirable consequences for their own citizens.

The second definitive article proposes a relationship of equality among states by claiming that the right of nations must be based on a federation of free states. This can be seen as instituting a republican union on an international level, so as to decrease the chances of states going to war to pursue their rights. Just like it is to the interest of human beings to leave a lawless condition behind and enter into a civil union, states should also enter into an international union governed by international laws that regulate and arbitrate any potential conflicts. Kant writes,

> In accordance with reason there is only one way that states in relation with one another can leave the lawless condition, which involves nothing but war; it is that, like individual human beings, they give up their savage (lawless) freedom, accommodate themselves to public coercive laws, and so for an (always growing) state of nations (civitas gentium) that would finally encompass all the nations of the earth.

If we want to remain closer to achieving the goal of peace, we need to find a way to make sure that states will not declare war against one another. One way to institute this is to ensure that the constitution of each state is republican, as I have shown above. This is not by itself sufficient since it is still probable that citizens of a republican state can decide to go to war against another. In order to avoid this, a federation of free states must be in place, so that any socio-political conflict between states can be arbitrated before they resort to war. It must be noted, however, it is not a world republic that must rule the world that Kant is proposing here – only a federation of free states conceived as a

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363 “ZEF,” AA 8: 354.
364 “ZEF,” AA 8: 357.
“negative surrogate of a league that averts war, endures, and always expands can hold back the stream of hostile inclination that shies away from right, though with constant danger of its breaking out.”\textsuperscript{365} Therefore, another intra-national condition of everlasting peace is that there is a league of nations in place that will avert war.

In the third and final definitive article of perpetual peace, we see that a republican constitution and a federation of free states must also be supplemented by a cosmopolitan policy of universal hospitality, if we want to achieve everlasting peace on earth. Since it is still possible that a republican state can be hostile to foreigners, a formal cosmopolitan policy of hospitality should be instituted. Once again, this cosmopolitan right of universal hospitality is defended and justified by means of Kant’s teleological reflection on his present socio-political conditions.\textsuperscript{366} An examination of this cosmopolitan policy recommendation reveals that it has little to do with the unconditional dignity of all human beings regardless of their nationality. Rather, this right to universal hospitality is theoretically justified by a turning towards and a reflection on the empirical realities of Kant’s own socio-historical circumstances. Kant compares this right with the inhospitable conduct of the civilized states of Europe of his time, and concludes that the latter indeed results in a whole litany of evils that can afflict the entire human race.\textsuperscript{367} Because we would not want these evils and the continued inhospitable conduct that causes them, we should aim at instituting the right of universal hospitality as a cosmopolitan right, which is not an unachievable or impractical policy, but a necessary supplement to the other

\textsuperscript{365} “ZEF,” AA 8: 357.
\textsuperscript{366} Seyla Benhabib takes Kant’s proposition that the right to hospitality is a human right, and extends it further to long-term stays for immigrants and refuges as well. See Seyla Benhabib, \textit{The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Her cosmopolitanism is a primary example of how contemporary theorists of cosmopolitanism turn to Kant mostly to look for certain empirical recommendations for today’s politics, without necessarily paying attention to the larger systematic concerns and commitments that led Kant to formulate such recommendations.
\textsuperscript{367} “ZEF,” AA 8: 358.
political and international rights. This right of hospitality is “the authorization of a
foreign newcomer” and it is needed so that people from the distant parts of the world can
enter into peaceable relations with one another.\footnote{\textsuperscript{368} “ZEF,” AA 8: 357.} This makes it a universal right of
humanity, such that only under this condition of universal hospitality “can we flatter
ourselves that we are continually advancing towards a perpetual peace.”\footnote{\textsuperscript{369} “ZEF,” AA 8: 360.} I am of course not denying that the right of universal hospitality or any other
specific article in “Perpetual Peace” still has relevance for the current socio-political conditions. These
rights can also be justified in terms of the notion of human dignity. However, Kant’s political legacy offers
us much more than a set of rights and institutions, and we can only appreciate it by means of a picture of
the whole of Kant’s political thought, not through bits and pieces of his policy recommendations that suit
our current interests.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{370} GMS, AA 4: 429f.}

The strong language of the necessity of implementing this human right of
universal hospitality on a cosmopolitan scale is justified by means of a regulative
teleological consideration of the consequences of the current state of inhospitality in
Europe and its future ramifications, not by the Categorical Imperative or its End-in-itself
formula that states that we should treat human beings never as mere means by always as
ends in themselves.\footnote{\textsuperscript{370} GMS, AA 4: 429f.} As well known, we do not need a reason to follow The Categorical
Imperative and do not need to consider the consequences or purposes of complying with
it. Here in the case of thinking about universal hospitality, however, we do think about
what happens if we treat foreigners in a hostile way, see that it will result in more wars
between states, and therefore conclude that we must be universally hospitable and further
grant this as a universal human right in order to come closer to achieving perpetual peace
on earth. If we do not posit this right on an international scale, then we are further away
from the goal of achieving global peace. Thus, the right to universal hospitality is
necessary for us to accomplish our goal of promoting peace, a consideration that is made
possible by means of Kant’s regulative teleological commitment to history that orients his
empirical observations about the *consequences* of both the present and the prior inhospitable conduct of European states.

As we know, in Kant’s moral philosophy, the consequences of an action are not taken into consideration while determining whether or not an action is morally right. For this reason, he cannot be looking for a *moral* justification of these articles, and so in peace as their consequence. This is why, when he explains why these articles are necessary for implementing peace, he does not use the universalizability test offered by the supreme principle of his moral system, the Categorical Imperative; rather, thanks to his regulative orientation that posits peace as the end goal of history and politics, Kant is able to reflect on his present socio-political circumstances, recognize both the actual and the potential consequences of certain policies and tendencies, and conclude with sufficient certainty (though not theoretically prove) that he as a theoretical politician can recommend cosmopolitan rights and institutions that may result in peace. Thus the teleological duty of peace and not the Categorical Imperative is the regulative principle of his historico-political philosophy: these cosmopolitan policies and institutions are formulated *with a view to* bringing about peace within a teleological conception of history, and so for their possible consequences, and not because of their inherently moral character.

To claim that cosmopolitanism is a moral, normative idea on Kantian grounds is simply incorrect – as I have shown, a commitment to cosmopolitanism follows not from the Categorical Imperative, but from his critical-regulative conception of history as approaching peace. Furthermore, we cannot then simply subsume Kant’s historico-political philosophy under his moral theory, for the external principle of purposiveness, a
regulative principle, is the supreme principle of his politics, not the Categorical Imperative. Kant takes into account the consequences of not instituting a cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality and concludes that it is more conducive to peace if we do have this right in place.

I have now shown that it is a mistake to think that Kantian political philosophy is only regulated by this supreme principle of morality. In other words, we cannot read Kant’s historicopolitical philosophy in unambiguously moral terms. Peace sets the conditions for a moral existence and is by itself not a moral duty. In the next section, I will take Kant’s consideration of consequences as a clue to explain further that his political philosophy cannot be reduced to his moral philosophy. This will further clarify the distinction between moral goals and duties and political ones. I have so far shown that there is no theoretical guarantee, in the strong sense of the word, that peace will come about, but our regulative commitments allow us to say that it is the likely end of history and politics, thanks to the selfish inclinations of human beings and the spirit of commerce, both of which motivate us to avoid the consequences and expenses of war. However, the mere fact that out of a teleologically conceived nature and history we can envision a future in which wars will become undesirable and unnecessary is enough, according to Kant, to propose that perpetual peace is a legitimate and achievable goal of politics. Furthermore, it is in this sense that “while the likelihood of its being attained is not sufficient to foretell the future theoretically, it is enough from a practical perspective and makes it a duty [Pflicht] to work toward this goal [of perpetual peace], which is more than an empty chimera.”371 Perpetual peace is more than an empty chimera, because thanks to a teleological conception of nature used regulatively, we are able to articulate

371 “ZEF,” AA 8: 368.
what at first seems like the arbitrary conditions of the world in a purposive manner, in
terms of a gradual approximation of peace, and what is more, we can now posit that
working towards perpetual peace is our duty. I will in the following investigate just what
kind of a duty this is.

III

Morality and Politics

The Highest Good on Earth: What Kind of a Duty is Perpetual Peace?

While in the Kantian analysis perpetual peace is indeed the most suitable condition in
which human culture will eventually develop into a moral one, it is not yet clear just in
what sense working towards perpetual peace is our duty or how it relates to our other
moral duties. What is clear, however, is that the way in which the duty of working toward
peace is justified radically differs from the way in which our other duties are articulated
in the Kantian system, for this goal of peace does not make reference to the Categorical
Imperative, the supreme law of Kantian morality, but instead is worked out in relation to
a teleological conception of history and nature by reference to its desirable consequences.
In this section I will focus on the differences between political and moral duties, and
identify the complementary yet distinct nature of moral and teleological consideration of
goals and ends.

Kant claims that perpetual peace is the highest political good,\textsuperscript{372} for the sake of
which all of our actions in the political realm must be undertaken. Whether or not it will
be realized does not affect the fact that it is the highest political good. He writes in the
\textsuperscript{372} MS, AA 6: 355.
conclusion of *The Metaphysics of Morals* that we must act as if this highest good is something real, even if we are not theoretically justified in assuming that it is going to be realized:

If someone cannot prove that a thing is, he can try to prove that it is not. If (as often happens) he cannot succeed in either, he can still ask whether he has any *interest* in assuming one or the other (as an *hypothesis*), either from a theoretical or from a practical point of view. An assumption is adopted from a theoretical point of view in order merely to explain a certain phenomenon (such as, for astronomers, the retrograde motion and stationary state of the planets). An assumption is adopted from a practical point of view in order to achieve a certain end [Zweck], which may be either a *pragmatic* (merely technical end) or a *moral* end, that is, an end such that the maxim of adopting it is itself a duty [Pflicht].

I have shown that we are granted to assume, from a theoretical point of view and as a regulative hypothetical principle, that nature is purposive. In order to explain certain phenomena in nature as purposive in relation to organized beings, we resort to teleological principles. This is allowed by means of reflective teleological judgments. We are also granted to make assumptions from a practical point of view, if they are seen as necessary for achieving either a pragmatic or a moral end. Now, as I have said above, peace is distinguished from a moral end, in the sense that it is not derived from the Categorical Imperative but is given by a teleological consideration of nature and history. For this reason, it is a pragmatic and technical end because it is useful and conducive to our development as first rational and then moral agents. We can then conclude that the definitive articles of “Perpetual Peace” such as a federation of free states, cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality, and republicanism are all practical assumptions we are granted to make for the sake of this technical pragmatic end, namely peace. In other words, we are allowed to posit these definitive articles only insofar as they are useful for

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373 MS, AA 6: 354.
achieving peace on earth. Kant here writes that practical reason only gives us the *irresistible veto that there is to be no war*, because war is not the way in which everyone should seek their rights. For this reason, it does not matter whether peace is something theoretically real but only the fact that we must work toward establishing it and “the kind of constitution that seems to us most conducive to it (say a republicanism of all states, together and separately) in order to bring about perpetual peace and put an end to the heinous waging of war.”

Peace becomes our duty not because we can theoretically demonstrate that it will be realized; as Kant writes, “What is incumbent upon us as a duty is rather to act in conformity with the idea of that end, even if there is not the slightest theoretical likelihood that it can be realized, as long as its impossibility cannot be demonstrated either.” This pragmatic or technical end, Kant writes, can be assumed as a practical possibility, as long as its impossibility cannot be demonstrated either. That is, it is not a theoretical hypothesis that makes working towards peace our duty, but a practical political (not moral) postulate, “even if there is not the slightest theoretical likelihood that it can be realized.” The question at stake here is not whether it is theoretically justified to claim that perpetual peace is real, for “even if the complete realization of this objective always remains a pious wish, still we are certainly not deceiving ourselves in adopting the maxim of working incessantly toward it.” As I have shown, a teleological conception of history allows us to posit peace as a pragmatic or technical end, as a political obligation and the end goal of politics. It is in this way that perpetual peace

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374 MS, AA 6: 354f.
375 MS, AA 6: 354.
376 MS, AA 6: 354.
377 MS, AA 6: 354.
378 MS, AA 6: 354f.
acquires the status of the highest good of Kant’s political philosophy. That is, the ultimate end of history poses an obligation, a task, for politics: given that history can be viewed as a teleological whole without determinatively guaranteeing that its ends will come about, we can posit this as an obligation, a duty.

Just what kind of a duty [Pflicht] is perpetual peace? In the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant offers us a table of all duties according to whether the will grounding them is subjective or objective. In this table, he places duties pertaining to civil constitution under subjective, external, and empirical duties, thus already suggesting the possibility that political duties are not strictly speaking derived from or follow the test offered by the Categorical Imperative.379 In § IV of the Introduction to The Metaphysics of Morals entitled On the Division of a Metaphysics of Morals, Kant offers the entire system of human duties, and he further distinguishes between the two types of (subjective and objective) lawgiving based on the incentives behind each of them. Let us recall that in Kant’s moral philosophy, actions are moral only when they are done for the sake of duty, without any reference to an incentive or desired result except to obey the moral law, i.e., the Categorical Imperative.380 Thus, inclinations, feelings, expectation of reward or avoidance of punishment cannot enter into moral law-giving, for such incentives do not originate from a truly good will determined and necessitated by pure practical reason. In The Metaphysics of Morals, Kant repeats this definition of dutiful actions, and calls the prescription behind such actions ethical [ethisch] lawgiving: “That lawgiving which makes an action a duty and also makes this duty the incentive is ethical.”381 Such actions commanded by ethical lawgiving are the subject-matter of the second part of this book.

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379 KpV, AA 5: 39f.
380 GMS, AA 4: 397f. This is the First Proposition of Morality.
381 MS, AA 6: 219.
namely The Doctrine of Virtue [*Tugendlehre*]. On the other hand, *juridical* [*rechtlich*] lawgiving is defined as that “which admits an incentive other than the idea of duty itself,” and actions commanded by juridical lawgiving constitute the topic of The Doctrine of Right [*Rechtslehre*], the first book of *The Metaphysics of Morals*. In this latter case, then, duties offered by such lawgiving will have to do with inclinations and aversions of people. Thus, duties given by juridical lawgiving, that is, political duties, are also *external*, because the determining ground of them is not reason itself, but *external* to it; such duties are determined by *pathological* and *subjective* incentives.

I briefly recite here the distinction between juridical and ethical lawgiving found in *The Metaphysics of Morals* because it confirms the interpretation that I have developed of peace as a goal distinguished from a moral duty. It is clear that perpetual peace is a type of duty prescribed by the *juridical* as opposed to *ethical* lawgiving, for human beings come to avoid war and support peace out of the undesirable *consequences* that they experience and due to their selfish *inclinations*. These external, empirical, or pathological incentives make it necessary to wish for and work towards peace, leading practical reason to *veto* war and commend peace as a pious wish. In addition and more importantly, we are able to designate these incentives, namely the actual and potential consequences of war and all other positive incentives for instituting peace, thanks to a teleological understanding of nature and history that allows us to discern the ongoing trends in relation to our purposes.

Therefore, working toward perpetual peace is not a moral but a *political duty*. As Kant claims, it would be impious to deny that perpetual peace is a legitimate goal towards

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382 MS, AA 6: 219.
383 MS, AA 6: 354f.
which we should all work; however, this goal does not come from Kant’s moral philosophy, that is, it is not justified by means of the supreme principle of morality, the Categorical Imperative. The reason why peace is a desirable political goal has to do with the consideration of the actual and potential consequences of a constant threat of wars – a consideration made possible by a regulative teleological commitment, not by Kant’s moral philosophy. While peace is a technical or a pragmatic end, cosmopolitanism is useful for bringing about peace, and we come to these conclusions by applying the principle of external purposiveness to nature and history as a whole. This application proves fruitful, because it seems to specify the kinds of rights and institutions needed for the realization of the political duty of peace through a teleological consideration of the current empirical conditions in which we find ourselves.

**Conclusion: History and Politics as Fields Where Theoretical and Practical Concerns Intersect**

A regulative teleological consideration of history makes it possible for us to understand and organize our actions in the political realm in a way that coheres with the goal of achieving the highest good on earth, perpetual peace. As Kant writes,

reason is not enlightened enough to survey the entire series of predetermining causes that foretell with certainty the happy or unhappy consequences of humankind’s activities in accordance with the mechanism of nature (although it does let us hope that these will be in accord with our
wishes). But reason does provide us with sufficient enlightenment to know what one has to do in order to stay on the path of duty and thus on the path toward our final end.\textsuperscript{384}

While by observing the mechanical course of nature we might see no indications whatsoever whether or not we will achieve the highest good on earth, a regulative teleological consideration makes it possible to discern certain actions and elements as facilitating this goal and thereby helps us to stay on the path of duty. A mere mechanistic consideration of the course of nature does not allow us to regard human beings as the final end of nature thus to discern the end of nature and history relative to our goals. Only when we make a reflective judgment using the principle of external purposiveness can we conclude that humanity is the final end of nature and posit a socio-political goal in terms of our practical hopes. That is, thanks to such a regulative conception, we are able to articulate how nature and history should be conceived so that the current condition of human beings can be oriented toward achieving their practical goals.

Teleology, then, is necessary for us to evaluate whether we are acting in such a way as to bring about perpetual peace. Thus, while peace is a political duty, it is not the Categorical Imperative that commands it as a duty but a teleological consideration of the means and ends as well as human inclinations in history on a larger scale. The teleological structure of the Kantian philosophy of history, namely an account of history regulated by the principle of external purposiveness, offers us an integration of a theoretical concern about how to make sense of history with a practical concern about where history is going and whether its direction coincides with moral and political ends. This intersection between theoretical and practical considerations relates to Kant’s ambitious attempt to reconcile nature and freedom in that we are free to act inasmuch as

\textsuperscript{384} “ZEF,” AA 8: 370.
nature is regarded as purposive: in order for our freedom to have effects on nature, nature cannot be conceived merely as a blind mechanism, but must be judged reflectively as a teleological whole. The reflective teleological judgment that allows us to make use of the regulative principle of purposiveness leads to this consideration. It is this teleological conception that gives us a way to conceive of history, conceived regulatively, as coinciding with our practical goals, more specifically, the highest good of politics.

Therefore, we should remember that morality and politics offer us complementary yet distinct ways of conceiving of our practical goals. It is tempting to think that Kant always uses the word duty \([Pflicht]\) in an exclusively moral sense, but as I have shown there are different kinds of duties in Kant’s practical philosophy. Perpetual peace is not strictly speaking a moral duty, for it is not given by purely ethical considerations stemming from a command of pure practical reason, the Categorical Imperative. Instead, peace is a duty thanks to a teleological consideration of nature and human beings as a whole, which helps us to reflect on the possible and actual consequences of human inclinations. It is not purely ethical, for it sets the conditions of any kind of ethical behavior. When we think about our unsociable sociability and the destructive results of war that threaten our resources and abilities, we come to prefer, for teleological reasons, peace as a universal condition. It is thanks to teleology we can discern the empirical and pathological elements in our nature and nature as a whole, and posit peace as a political teleological duty.

In conclusion, ignoring the connections between Kant’s critical-regulative method and his stated political goals in “Perpetual Peace” first blurs the distinction between the highest political good (perpetual peace) and cosmopolitanism (a conditional requirement
and means to achieve peace). If we attend to Kant’s critical-regulative method, we can see that peace is a political duty, but cosmopolitanism is not. From what I have explained thus far, it should be clear that peace, itself, differs from the goal of cosmopolitanism in that peace is the end goal of history and politics while cosmopolitanism, similar to republicanism and a league of nations, is a means to achieve this goal. While these definitive articles of peace might be seen as the necessary conditions given Kant’s regulative commitment to the telos of peace, they are not the sufficient conditions for achieving this highest good of politics itself, even if they provide hope. That is, because these rights and institutions are based on this pragmatic and technical end provided by a regulative teleological commitment to history as a whole, they are not themselves the duties themselves toward which we should aspire but the means that will make the condition of morality, peace, possible. If these rights and institutions were the sufficient conditions, in and of themselves, perpetual peace would not be a task we gradually accomplish or a state towards which we work, but instead it would be presented by Kant as a theoretical fact resulting from the realization of the cosmopolitan condition. These cosmopolitan institutions and rights do not by themselves make peace possible – in other words, they do not offer a theoretical or a practical guarantee that if we adopt cosmopolitanism peace will necessarily follow.  

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385 A careful interpreter of Kant’s cosmopolitanism and a Frankfurt School philosopher, Jürgen Habermas maintains that cosmopolitanism is still relevant and important for contemporary politics. As a critical theorist, Habermas is not shy about historicizing the main claims of Kant’s “Perpetual Peace,” arguing that Kant did indeed use the concepts that are drawn from the debates and the specific historical experience of his own times. According to Habermas, with the empirical knowledge of the past two hundred years at hand, we can safely say that some of Kant’s presuppositions seem no longer applicable in the way that they were first formulated. In his “Kant’s Idea of Perpetual Peace, with the Benefit of Two Hundred Years’ Hindsight,” Habermas demonstrates how each article of the “Perpetual Peace” can be revised and taken into consideration in the world of contemporary politics, and how in this way, we can have a Kantian cosmopolitan theory that has not lost touch with a world situation that has completely changed. It is easy to see why it has to be revised, he adds, because the idea of cosmopolitanism has already undergone so many
Another implication of ignoring Kant’s methodological commitments in “Perpetual Peace” is that such a reading then limits the scope of relevance of Kant’s political thought to a theory of cosmopolitanism, leading some to discuss his legacy merely in terms of concrete policy recommendations as to how to achieve this ideal today. If we identify the telos of peace with the means of cosmopolitanism and further think that peace is an unconditional moral duty, we are then led to argue that all Kant’s political theory needs is a few minor empirical revisions or adjustments – for how can one argue against a moral kingdom of ends, if it is indeed the promise or the necessary corollary of peace? I have shown that while Kant presents the idea of the cosmopolitan world order as a means for achieving perpetual peace, the implementation of cosmopolitan institutions and rights is not by itself a moral normative ideal or a duty. Rather, these institutions and rights are grounded in Kant’s regulative teleological historical reflections on the conditions of the Enlightenment with a view to achieve the goal of peace. Thanks to a regulative teleological understanding of history as a whole, we can posit perpetual peace as a political duty, the ultimate end of history and politics, and revisions after the two world wars and the incomparable catastrophes of the twentieth century. All these changes also gave new impetus to the idea of peace. Jürgen Habermas, “Kant’s Idea of Perpetual Peace, with the Benefit of Two Hundred Years’ Hindsight,” 126. Also see Jürgen Habermas, The Divided West. Trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006). In the last chapter of this recent book entitled “The Kantian Project and the Divided West,” Habermas identifies the Kantian project as one of achieving peace by means of a new cosmopolitan global order. Regardless of how he later on modified his own views regarding cosmopolitanism, Habermas remains, by his own admission, inspired by Kant’s global vision. While I agree with Habermas’ assertion that peace is a goal that is almost universally desired, I have shown that cosmopolitanism, at least according to Kant, a political structure that will hopefully carry us toward perpetual peace on earth, but it is by itself a determinative goal of Kant’s political philosophy. Kant’s political philosophy gives us the highest good on earth, perpetual peace, but it does not offer us any unconditional means as to “how” we can achieve this goal, but only claims that it is a political duty toward which we all should work. Akin to the requirements of a republican constitution and a league of free states, cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality is but a means for achieving the highest good on earth, namely peace. Perpetual peace is the highest good of Kant’s historico-political philosophy, and yet, the means for achieving this goal comes from his critical-regulative commitments that orient his conception of history and the political sphere of rights and institutions.

386 The strongest representative of this view is Pauline Kleingeld, as we have seen in Chapter One.
given Kant’s own socio-historical circumstances cosmopolitanism, republicanism, and a federation of free states seem like the best way to approximate toward this political duty.

CONCLUSION

I have shown that, in order to fully unpack the meaning and significance of Kant’s contemporary political legacy, we are required to attend to his methodological commitments. This legacy must be re-interpreted along the lines of his critical-regulative method, for this method preserves both a distinction and a critical relationship between our concepts and empirical socio-political conditions, thereby avoiding both metaphysical
speculation and dogmatic political theory. Kant’s critical-regulative method provides us with a useful interpretation of history that informs his political theory. Such a method becomes explicit only when we situate his historico-political writings in the context of his three *Critiques*.

I

The Critical-Regulative Basis of Kant’s Political Philosophy

Kant acknowledges both in his short historico-political essays and in the first and third *Critiques* that our use of teleology can only be regulative. The hypothetical use of reason that he develops in the *Critique of Pure Reason* allows us to employ the ideas of reason regulatively, and the principle of purposiveness therefore acquires the status of a regulative subjective maxim coming out of the hypothetical use of the ideal of reason. I have shown that this regulative maxim is applied to a conception of history in his “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent.” The hypothetical use of reason is further developed and re-conceptualized along the lines of reflective judgments in the *Critique of Judgment*. In the first *Critique*, I have shown that reason presupposes an idea that serves as a rule for the understanding: this is the definition of a regulative maxim, permitted by the hypothetical use of reason. This principle of reason is used by judgment in the *Critique of Judgment*, and the maxim of teleology becomes the regulative principle of reflective teleological judgments. I have shown that history and politics employ an objective regulative principle of external purposiveness and that, as such, Kant’s statements on history and politics are always reflective judgments, justified in terms of the external relationship between nature as a whole and our theoretical and practical
goals. This has profound consequences for interpreting Kant’s “Perpetual Peace” essay. Following Kant’s critical-regulative method to its fullest conclusion, I have analyzed this essay in terms of its teleological presuppositions and shown that peace, not cosmopolitanism, republicanism, or a league of nations, is a political duty and the highest good on earth. This requires a demotion, so to speak, in the status of the empirical components of Kant’s political philosophy that recommends a republican constitution, a federation of free states, and a cosmopolitan right to universal hospitality. These concrete policy suggestions are not the crowning achievement of Kant’s political thought. Attending to critical-regulative method provides us with a valuable Kantian insight, which is to be mindful of the hypothetical and pragmatic nature of our assumptions about history and politics. By focusing on the critical-regulative method of his historico-political philosophy and situating Kant’s writings on history and politics in the critical system, we are in a better position to see why it is dogmatic to claim that the only relevant legacy of Kant’s political thought today is the set of institutions and policies that come up in his historico-political essays, such as republicanism or a theory of cosmopolitanism.

When we analyze how a regulative principle of teleology is applied to history and politics, we see that our approach to history and politics is always already relative to our purposes, and that we need to remain at the level of regulative claims when it comes to both the philosophy of history and political theory: this is Kant’s most important legacy for us today. Maintaining that Kant’s policy recommendations regarding peace are unconditional moral and political requirement of Kant’s politics without taking into considerations its critical-regulative grounds is an un-Kantian position that causes a
tunnel vision of sorts in politics. With this sort of tunnel vision, the political theorist is spellbound by the concepts of republicanism, global institutions, or cosmopolitanism, using these concepts as the only centers around which to organize the current socio-historical circumstances, and even making policy recommendations on the basis of this limited approach. While these empirical claims about Kant’s republicanism or cosmopolitanism are surely parts of Kant’s legacy, the emphasis on these policies risks becoming un-Kantian when we are unwilling to question and critique these concepts themselves. Instead of providing us with a concrete goal for history and politics, Kant’s critical-regulative method reminds us to be aware of the hypothetical nature of our regulative assumptions in both the philosophy of history and politics, and of our socio-historical conditions, for our political philosophy is not wholly independent of these contingent (empirical) circumstances and a certain articulation of them relative to our goals teleologically conceived.

II

*Theoretical and Practical Significance of Regulative Principles for Politics*

We can now see that Kant’s philosophy of history had a theoretical and political significance and the use of regulative principles are justified on both grounds. I have shown that in the “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent,” Kant attempts to discover a guiding principle of history. Having concluded that by means of
the hypothetical use of reason we can perceive history as a whole as purposive, he locates the intent of universal history in cosmopolitanism. Such intent then allows us to discern the development of civil constitutions, their laws and the mutual relations among states, with a view to achieve peace, our practical goal. That is, a teleological interpretation of history should also
give us some guidance in explaining the thoroughly confused interplay of human affairs and in prophesying future political changes. ..[I]f we assume a plan of nature, we have grounds for greater hopes. For such a plan opens up the comforting prospect of a future in which we are shown from afar how the human race eventually works its way upward to a situation in which all the germs implanted by nature can be developed fully, and in which man’s destiny can be fulfilled here on earth. Such a justification of nature –or rather perhaps of providence– is no mean motive for adopting a particular point of view in considering the world.387

Assuming a plan of history in terms of the teleological development of all the innate rational capacities of human beings in a cosmopolitan world order gives us an additional political motive to conceive of history in these terms. Otherwise, if history is showing no signs of such progress whatsoever, we would be forced to hope for the highest good in some other world.388 Such a conception of history is useful, because it enables Kant to reflect on his present and discern the gradual increase in freedom and enlightenment, and this encourages the hope that cosmopolitanism will at least be realized as the matrix in which all rational capacities of human beings can be further developed in a peaceful world.389 This is the additional motive in such a philosophy of universal history with a cosmopolitan intent, one that is grounded in the pragmatic hope that the highest political good, i.e., perpetual peace, is achievable here on earth.

387 “IaG,” AA 8: 30, 52f.
388 “IaG,” AA 8: 30, 53.
Similarly, in §§82-84 of the Critique of the Teleological Judgment, where Kant applies the principle of external purposiveness to history and politics, I have shown that he makes the practical aspect of such a conception clear: human beings are the final ends of nature only insofar as we can conceive of them as *noumena*, as free. The practical idea of freedom, by itself, is not enough for us to discern whether our actions can have an effect on nature; for this, we need to conceive of nature teleologically as conducive to our efforts, and this is the way in which freedom and teleology bear upon politics. The possible reciprocity between our free actions and nature as a teleological whole is encapsulated in the idea of a culture of skill, the contributions that human beings can make to their environments by means of the skills and capacities that they have. Thus in the *Critique of Judgment* as well, civil society and its corollary, a cosmopolitan world order, are required as pragmatic conditions in which such cultural (and later, moral) development can take place.

I have shown that these conditions of a moral existence are reformulated in “Perpetual Peace” as definitive articles for peace. A cosmopolitan world order, a republican constitution, and a league of nations are seen as the means to achieve perpetual peace on earth. Peace is the formal condition under which human beings can make progress as end-setting agents, but this condition by itself does not necessarily make us moral or guarantee peace on earth. Therefore, the regulative idea of teleology bridges the gap between theoretical and practical reason, both of which come to bear on our interest in history and politics. We have a theoretical interest in understanding history as a unified whole and we come to generate this concept of the whole by means of the hypothetical use of reason, as I have shown in my analysis of the first *Critique* and the
“Idea” essay, and later the regulative principle of external purposiveness, that of reflective judgment, as developed in the third *Critique*. We have a practical interest in figuring out whether we are making progress in history, and we come to find out that since peace is not impossible and can be conceived of as a political obligation thanks to a teleological understanding of history, we have a duty to work toward this goal, the highest political good. This is all that Kant can accomplish by means of his critical-regulative approach to history and politics.

A teleological consideration of history and nature as a whole makes it possible for us to posit a political goal, namely peace, and the critical-regulative method further directs us to ask: “What is the best way to achieve this goal?” or “How must political institutions be organized for peace to come about?” The answers given to such questions are oriented by a teleological consideration of history that is provided by the critical-regulative method, which starts out by admitting that any teleological inquiry into history and politics will be relatively—not absolutely—justified; thus all political recommendations for achieving peace will remain regulative without determining the actual historico-political conditions. Kant’s critical-regulative method leads us to reflect on the present socio-historical conditions in which we find ourselves, and it allows us to investigate whether history, conceived teleologically, shows any sign of achieving our political goals. I have shown that Kant finds such signs in the gradual progress of his time towards enlightenment. The political goal of perpetual peace will make it easier for us to discern the empirical elements in history as approaching this goal—not because there is a direct correspondence between the actions of individuals and states and our goals, but because, thanks to a regulative teleological orientation it is possible to posit such a
trajectory. Thus, a regulative teleological conception of history is *useful* for politics, because only by means of such a conception can we identify what kinds of political institutions and rights should be in place for the final end of history to be accomplished.

According to Kant, then, history and politics must remain regulative pursuits, for converting reflective teleological judgments made about these fields into absolutely necessary and determining claims about the empirical conditions is an uncritical attitude. A conflation of our (subjective) regulative guiding principles with the actual (objective) empirical historical events gives rise to strong unjustified metaphysical claims that nature *is* purposive, peace *is* guaranteed by nature, and cosmopolitanism *is* a determinative goal of history and politics. By identifying our historico-political concepts and interpretation with the empirical events and conditions themselves, we take our regulative principles to be constitutive of these conditions thereby leaving no room for the possibility of a different interpretation of history and politics. This conflation, while natural to reason, is problematic because it erases the distinction between a discursive and historically-situated intellect that needs to resort to regulative principles and an intuitive intellect that immediately grasps the whole of reality. This throws us back into a pre-critical stage. Indeed, going too far in our claims about how history and politics should be organized is dangerous to reason, for it closes off any possibility of recognizing their foundation in regulative principles and of critiquing these assumptions.

The conflation of regulative principles with the empirical conditions themselves causes a *theoretical dead end*, as I have said above. This conflation is dogmatic and uncritical in an additional sense: by collapsing the difference between contingency and necessity, *our practical reason* is also incapacitated and thrown back to a pre-critical
state. Let us recall that conceiving history as a whole is theoretically and practically useful, for such a conception helps us to identify the steps that we must take in working toward perpetual peace. It must be clear that peace is a political duty, an obligation to be fulfilled by us only because it is not the necessary direction toward which history is headed. If nature determinately guaranteed peace, then it would not make sense to posit it as a duty, for peace would follow regardless of what we do thanks to the cunning of nature. That is, if we were approaching a cosmopolitan condition, which would inevitably bring about peace, then there would be nothing left to do: peace would be a gift of providence, requiring no autonomous action on our part. On the other hand, only when we take the cunning of nature as a regulative commitment, necessitated by the peculiar (discursive) nature of our intellect, can we hope that peace will come about and posit it as a political obligation toward which we should work.

III

*Re-interpreting Kant’s Political Philosophy in Light of his Critical-Regulative Method*

This then leads us to question whether the kinds of political institutions and rights that Kant proposed for achieving peace are still important and relevant goals for a Kantian politics. That is, does a Kantian political philosophy have to retain cosmopolitanism, republicanism, and a league of nations as the best ways to achieve peace, if these recommendations were justified on regulative teleological grounds and tied to Kant’s reflection on his own socio-historical conditions? In other words, what does a methodologically-oriented Kantian politics look like?
My answer is that only a limited and unsystematic reading of his historico-political texts would suggest that republicanism, cosmopolitanism, or a league of nations are the most important components of his political philosophy. We cannot cling to these empirical policy recommendations and maintain that these are Kantian without first looking at what kind of methodological commitments brought Kant to such concepts and how his teleological account of history and nature as a whole contributed to his political philosophy. Merely looking at his empirical recommendations about the policies and institutions that he deems necessary for peace obfuscates his methodological commitments, and takes us further from the insight that Kant provides us with regard to the always already hypothetical and pragmatic orientation of teleology in politics, making it too easy to either praise or reject Kant depending on how we view the critical-regulative accomplishments that were adduced for his time. Mine is not an argument against cosmopolitanism, republicanism, or a federation of free states as such, but it is one against taking these as Kant’s most important and relevant political legacy for us today: if Kant’s concrete policy recommendations are pragmatic requirements that arise out of a reflective not a determinative teleological judgment on history that posits peace as our political duty, his methodological caveats force us to rethink just how Kantian it is to claim that developing these policies are our only options for achieving peace on earth. In short, being a Kantian or engaging in Kantian politics requires us to critique and question his empirical political recommendations and be open to their transformation, for these political recommendations are gained by means of employing the hypothetical use of reason, reflective teleological judgment, or the principle of external principle of purposiveness.
To recap, taking his empirical policy suggestions as the only relevant goals of Kant’s political thought and so missing the critical-regulative teleological commitments that produced these ideas does not do justice to the requirements of Kant’s method and his political legacy. His method insists that we continue to ask the question of the viability of republicanism, a league of nations, and cosmopolitanism for perpetual peace in light of a teleological conception of the empirical conditions in which we find ourselves by insisting on the work of continued critique. It is hard to deny that perpetual peace is a desirable goal for politics, but perhaps we need a different means than republicanism or cosmopolitanism, a different road map to achieve this goal. Thus, we can wholeheartedly embrace the ideal of Kant’s critical-regulative method as well as his project of perpetual peace without necessarily (and dogmatically) subscribing to its stated empirical details, including the cosmopolitan policies and institutions.

Concluding Remarks

Kant’s contemporary political legacy is often seen in terms of a theory of cosmopolitanism, republicanism, or global institutions. Once we limit our focus to these empirical political suggestions and take these as the necessary (determinative) goals

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of politics, we then quickly proceed with identifying how best to implement these ideas. It seems that we are so easily tempted by the overarching theories of history and politics given by teleological principles that we forget that these theories depend on critical-regulative commitments. We then fall into the trap of policy-making, discussing the details and forms of republicanism, a league of nations, or a cosmopolitan world republic that are still relevant for us. We also get so excited, perhaps, about how much of Kant’s vision came true in terms of the constitution of the United Nations, and the European Union (or, in short, about the empirical confirmations of his political theory) that we forget about his methodological commitments that afforded him these insights in the first place.

However, I have shown that without recognizing the importance of the regulative underpinnings of Kant’s historico-political philosophy, all we can accomplish are discussions of what Kant meant by republicanism and cosmopolitanism, what he thought about democracy, why the universal right to hospitality is a cosmopolitan right, how to institute global institutions that oversee various economic and political decisions of independent states, etc.: in short, all we can accomplish is “a mere groping, what is the worst, a groping among mere concepts.” If we do not want to engage in groping among mere concepts, we need to turn our attention to the mediation between our grand concepts that we employ in politics and the changing empirical historical conditions on which they bear or to which they apply: this is the point toward which Kant’s critical-regulative method directs our attention.

391 This is how Kant defines the procedure of pre-critical or dogmatic metaphysics in the Preface to the second edition of the first Critique. KrV, B XV.
Throughout this project, I have insisted on a more Kantian understanding of history and politics. Rather than merely reading Kant’s historico-political writings in isolation from his more systematic works and focusing on his empirical political recommendations, I offered a holistic interpretation that makes Kant’s philosophy of history and political thought critical-regulative endeavors in line with his *Critiques*. This requires that we take the use of regulative ideas and principles seriously, because his critical-regulative method preserves a *relationality* between our cognitive capacities and the empirical facts. That is, Kant’s critical-regulative method bridges the gap between our subjective interpretation arising out of regulative principles and the objective facts of history and politics, but it does not offer a picture that is unchanging and unchangeable: *his philosophical method necessarily transforms the empirical political doctrines*. So while an unsystematic approach would interpret Kant’s political philosophy as a set of determinative empirical claims about how the political realm should be organized, the work of the critical philosopher does not end there, for these claims are based on regulative teleological assumptions and thus we always risk relapsing to a dogmatic position if we forget this critical basis. As soon as reason settles on a determinative theory of ends, we are implicitly at risk of claiming that the critical attitude is no longer necessary. This goes against the premises of critical philosophy for it causes reason to become complicit with what it needs to explain and critique. Recovering the admittedly regulative orientation of Kantian philosophy of history and politics and emphasizing Kant’s insistence on the non-identity between regulative principles of the philosophy of history and the empirical events themselves provide an opening for social critique and transformation.
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