

THE CANON OF PURE REASON: KANT ON THE NON-DEPENDENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRACTICAL USE AND THE UNITY OF REASON

ADRIANO PERIN

(Federal University of Santa Catarina/CAPEs - Brazil)

Abstract

This paper systematically discusses Kant's argumentation in the Canon of the *Critique of pure reason* on the matter of the establishment of the practical use and its outcomes for the problem of the unity of reason. Bearing in mind that there is much disagreement in the literature, not only as to the specificity and function of the chapter of the Canon within the various moments of Kant's philosophy, but also as to its critical importance, the approach centers essentially on Kant's own argumentation. The aim of this paper is to show that the Canon anticipates an important thesis of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, i.e., the self-sufficient legitimation of the practical use of reason in relation to its theoretical use. Moreover, it is demonstrated that there are important systematic differences between Kant's argumentation in the Canon and in the second *Critique*, which lead to the uniqueness of the treatment of the problem of the unity of reason in the former text. The first part of the paper briefly presents Kant's position in the pre-critical period on the legitimation of the practical use of reason. Thereafter, it is sustained that Kant's search in the Canon for a "source of positive cognition" is particularly connected with his critical thesis of a self-sufficient establishment of the practical use. The second part of the paper considers Kant's attempt to present this establishment in the Canon. It is argued that, notwithstanding the anticipation of the referred critical thesis, the establishment of the practical use of reason in the Canon requires a theological consideration of morality. The third part of the paper deals with the problem of the unity of theoretical and practical uses of reason in the Canon. It is sustained that this treatment is essentially connected with the outcomes of Kant's position on the establishment of the practical use reason. I come to the conclusion that the Canon of Pure Reason holds the peculiar position on the problem of the unity of reason that it should be guaranteed by means of a transition from the practical to the theoretical use of reason.

Key-words: theoretical and practical domains, transition, unity of reason.

Introduction

The main thesis of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* is that a practical use of reason can only be critically justified, i.e., endowed with a legitimate domain on the condition that its validation be assured by itself without any constitutive help from elements of the theoretical domain. The immediate systematic consequence of this thesis, through the task of guaranteeing legitimation to the practical use, is the detachment of the problem of the unity of reason from this task. That is to say, since in the second *Critique* Kant sees this task as necessarily carried out only within the practical domain, the legitimation of the practical use seems to amount to an element that does not contribute to the guarantee of the unity of reason, but actually leads to its systematic establishment as a problem.

The goal of this paper is to show that before the argumentation of the *Critique of Practical*

Reason, although lacking the proper apparatus to its guarantee, Kant already had in mind the essential presupposition of this work, namely, the autonomous validation of each use of reason. It will be argued that this is not only the hypothesis of some pre-critical writings, but essentially the conception presented in the second part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, i.e., the Transcendental Doctrine of Method.

Kant's argumentation in the Canon of Pure Reason concerning a non-dependent establishment of the practical use as well as the results of this establishment for the problem of the unity of reason is considered in three sections. Initially, Kant's route in the pre-critical period is briefly presented, in an attempt to justify that Kant's proposal in the Canon cannot be characterized as pre-critical in the sense that he is presenting either an intellectual characterization of the practical use on the basis of the theoretical use or, even, an empirical characterization of it. It is argued that Kant's search for a "source of positive cognition" particularly characterizes the necessity of a self-sufficient validation of the synthetic *a priori* cognition of reason in its practical domain. Secondly, the proposal for a non-dependent establishment of the practical use is specifically presented. It is argued that in the Canon such establishment relies upon a theological consideration of morality. Finally, following the outcomes of this consideration, Kant's treatment of the problem of the unity of reason is approached. The conclusion reached is that in seeking a transition from the practical to the theoretical use Kant presents in the Canon of Pure Reason an attempt to assure the unity of reason which cannot be found in any other text within the *corpus* of his works.

1. The Search for a "Source of Positive Cognition" and the Necessity of a Canon

In his 1763 *Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* Kant presents the question of whether the practical use depends upon the theoretical use as a problem that had not yet been approached and which was in need of a solution. Therefore, in the last words of this essay Kant says:

[...] although it must be possible to attain the highest degree of philosophical certainty in the fundamental principles of morality, nonetheless the ultimate fundamental concepts of obligation need first of all to be determined more reliably. And in this respect, practical philosophy is even more defective than speculative philosophy, for it has yet to be determined whether it is merely the faculty of cognition, or whether it is feeling (the first inner ground of the faculty of desire) which decides its first principles.¹

The "irresolution" of this question seems to be grounded on the fact that, though conscious

that the first principles of philosophy could only attain a determinate degree of distinctness by means of a specific method of investigation, at the time Kant could not present the consecution of this method in such a way as to hold a systematic approach of both knowledge in the theoretical domain and morality in the practical domain. This seems to also be the main reason for Kant's search, in the two periods immediately following the publication of the referred *Inquiry*, of a resolution of the problem by means of each of the following hypotheses:

i. At the end of the decade of 1760 Kant seems to be a proponent of the justification of morality from feeling.² Nevertheless, he soon becomes conscious of both the impossibility of an empirical justification, such as was sustained by moral sense philosophy, and the necessity of facing the difficulties inherent in a theoretical grounding of practical cognition in the domain of morality.

ii. Therefore, at the beginning of the decade of 1770, after presenting in the *Dissertation* his first systematic attempt at a validation of the "faculty of knowledge", Kant holds the position of a purely intellectual justification of morality.³

This brief presentation of Kant's pre-critical route in the systematic relation between the theoretical and practical uses of reason is fundamentally important in order to appreciate two essential aspects of the same problem in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Initially, it will be worth considering that Kant's position in the second major part of the first *Critique* cannot be characterized as an establishment of the practical use of reason by means of its theoretical use. This establishment, which in the *Dissertation* rests on an intellectual characterization of morality, in the Transcendental Dialectic of the first *Critique* and the third section of the *Groundwork* would require a transition from the theoretical to the practical use of reason.⁴ Secondly, it will be necessary to justify that Kant's position in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method is not akin to the referred pre-critical hypothesis, according to which Kant already had in mind a validation of the practical use as non-dependent upon the theoretical use but that could only be empirically accomplished by means of feeling. These two aspects seem to point not to a pre-critical position in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, but precisely to a conjecture that, although not established with the apparatus at hand in 1781, would be the starting-point for the project of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Thus, along with this interpretation of the Doctrine of Method it will be argued that, notwithstanding important systematic differences, Kant's position in this text seems to anticipate a key-element of the argumentation of the second *Critique*, i.e., the self-sufficiency of the practical and theoretical domains of reason.

In the Transcendental Doctrine of Method Kant has in mind the route just walked through in the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements in what matters to the conditions that assure legitimacy to the theoretical use of reason, which once established would never be abandoned, as well as the necessity, which likewise cannot be abandoned, of considering the legitimation of a practical use. Kant presents the possibility of carrying out the latter task without giving up the former by means of a "Canon" in the practical use of reason, which would legitimize a non-dependent establishment

of this use in relation to the theoretical use.

Kant begins the second chapter of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method arguing that it is humiliating for reason in its theoretical speculative use the fact that it must always rely upon a discipline. In Kant's words:

It is humiliating for human reason that it accomplishes nothing in its pure [speculative] use, and even requires a discipline to check its extravagances and to avoid the deceptions that come from them. [...] The greatest and perhaps only utility of all philosophy of pure [speculative] reason is thus only negative, namely that it does not serve for expansion, as an organon, but rather, as a discipline, serves for the determination of boundaries, and instead of discovering truth it has the silent merit of guarding against errors.⁵

Immediately opposed to this “humiliation” in its theoretical speculative use, characterized by the incapacity to assure more than the establishment of the boundaries of the field occupied by its theoretical constitutive use, i.e., the field of every possible objective knowledge, is presented the consideration that “[...] on the other side, that reason can and must exercise this discipline itself, without allowing anything else to censor it, elevates it and gives confidence in itself”.⁶ On the ground of this self-confidence Kant argues in the following lines that “[...] there must somewhere be a source of positive cognition that belong in the domain of pure reason, and that perhaps give occasion for errors only through misunderstanding, but that in fact constitute the goal of the strenuous effort of reason”.⁷ At least in two moments of the second chapter of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, in which he is considering reason's intention to go beyond the field of possible experience, Kant asks precisely whether this intention would not be related to its practical use. Therefore, one finds the following interrogations:

[If there is no] source of positive cognition that belongs in the domain of pure reason [...] to what cause should the unquenchable desire to find a firm footing beyond all bounds of experience otherwise be ascribed? Pure reason has a presentiment of objects of great interest to it. It takes the path of mere speculation in order to come closer to these; but they flee before it. Presumably it may hope for better luck on the only path that still remains to it, namely that of its *practical* use.⁸

Reason is driven by a propensity of its nature to go beyond its use in experience, to venture to the outermost bounds of all cognition by means of mere ideas in a pure use, and to find peace only in the completion of its circle in a self-subsisting systematic whole. Now is this striving grounded merely in its speculative interest or rather uniquely and solely in its practical interest?⁹

The justification concerning the existence of such a “source of positive cognition”, which would actually legitimate reason's necessity to go beyond the constitutive field of possible experience, constitutes the search for a canon to the practical use of reason.

Kant argues that he “[...] understand[s] by a canon the sum total of the *a priori* principles

of the correct use of certain cognitive faculties in general”.¹⁰ In contrast to the faculty of pure *understanding*, which has a specific domain for its use and a canon in the Transcendental Analytic, the faculty of reason cannot count on the same fortune since “[...] all synthetic cognition of pure *reason* in its speculative use is entirely impossible. There is thus no canon for its speculative use at all (for this is through and through dialectical”.¹¹ It is precisely in considering the fact that “[...] if there is to be a legitimate use of pure reason at all, in which case there must also be a *canon* of it, this will concern not the speculative but rather the *practical use of reason*”¹² that Kant sees reason compelled “[...] to surrender its exaggerated pretensions in its speculative use, and to draw back within the boundaries of its proper territory, namely practical principles”.¹³

The last sentence seems to present, in particular, the assurance that the proposal of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, and more precisely of the second chapter, in which Kant considers the possibility of a canon of pure reason, already contains the search for a self-governing domain of reason in the practical territory as a task to be carried out and in which the theoretical speculative use could not play any decisive role. In this search, notwithstanding important systematic differences that will be pointed out in the following sections, Kant already anticipates the necessity that a self-governing practical domain be established in a non-dependent manner in relation to the theoretical domain.

In one of his *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik*, which is dated from the same period of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant summarizes the two moments that constitute his argumentation in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method on a non-dependent validation of the practical use:

[...] the principle of moral theology is: as the ground of all morality the (positive) idea of freedom is derived from the idea of the highest good, which constitutes the system of all ends, in which we think ourselves as members and [in which] we ought to act according to this standpoint, since this must be possible by us and our freedom. This system of all ends from freedom is nothing else than a world in which the (supreme) happiness [*Glückseligkeit*] and the worthiness to be happy [*Würdigkeit glücklich zu seyn*] stand in proportion. Therefore, morality holds this idea in itself as a principle. Yet, such a world is not possible just by means of our freedom, but nature must contain the agreement with this law. This [nature] can only contain the same [agreement] if there is a God.¹⁴

According to this reflection one can specify the moments which constitute the structure of the Canon of Pure Reason in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method as the following:

- i. With the apparatus at hand in 1781 the non-dependent establishment of the practical use relies on a theological consideration of morality;
- ii. As an immediate consequence of this consideration the possibility of establishing the unity

of reason departing from the practical use is presented. From this, it can be said that the “Canon of Pure Reason” has a singular place in Kant’s whole work, i.e., the attempt to present the unity of reason by means of a transition from the practical to the theoretical use.

Each of these moments will be considered in detail in the following sections of this paper.

2. The Non-Dependent Establishment of the Practical Use of Reason in the Canon

As pointed out in the reflection quoted above, Kant conceives the possibility of a non-dependent establishment of the practical use of reason by means of the guarantee of a positive concept of freedom (practical freedom) from the concept of the highest good. This intent is presented in the second chapter of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method in two steps which characterize the difference between this text and the Transcendental Dialectic:

i. Having in mind the impossibility of taking transcendental freedom as a first cause working within events in the sensible world, Kant justifies that practical freedom can only be presupposed through the consideration that a determination according to the laws of nature is not the only one which can be “ascertained” in this world;

ii. Departing from the ascertainment of practical freedom in the sensible world, Kant now moves to the intent of establishing its justification in the intelligible world. This second step has the practical presupposition of the ideas of God and immortality of the soul, which together comprehend the possibility of the highest good, as its ground.

The first thing that must be kept in mind in considering these two aspects in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method is that Kant’s argumentation in this text has an opposed route in relation to that of the Transcendental Dialectic. In the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant moved from the transcendental idea of freedom, as a possible causality of reason in an intelligible world, to the search for a justification of a positive concept of freedom as a causality acting in the sensible world. In the Canon, on the other hand, Kant considers a positive concept of freedom (practical freedom) as a causality ascertained in the sensible world and, from this ascertainment, moves to its justification. This “opposed route” holds the thesis that a practical concept of freedom, as the ground for a practical use of reason, is not constitutively derived from a concept of freedom which can only be conceived as possible by the theoretical speculative use of reason as its main motivation. The following discussion considers how Kant presents the steps referred to above in the search for a non-dependent establishment of the practical use of reason.

It is in accordance with the first step mentioned above, i.e., the ascertainment that in the sensible world a causality of nature does not determine all events, that it seems necessary to understand Kant’s controversial affirmation that “[p]ractical freedom can be evidenced [*bewiesen*]

through experience”.¹⁵ That is to say, in this sentence Kant is pointing to the fact that “[...] it is not merely that which stimulates the senses, i.e., immediately affects them, that determines human choice”.¹⁶ In the following paragraph Kant justifies this position arguing that:

We thus cognize [*erkennen*] practical freedom through experience, as one of the natural causes, namely a causality of reason in the determination of the will, whereas transcendental freedom requires an independence of this reason itself (with regard to its causality for initiating a series of appearances) from all determining causes of the sensible world.¹⁷

The justification of this “cognition” of practical freedom in the sensible world requires the move to the second step presented above in Kant’s search for a ground to the positive concept of freedom from the highest good, i.e., the practical admissibility of an intelligible world by means of the ideas of God and immortality of the soul. It is in regard to this second step, and bearing in mind the impossibility of establishing the transcendental idea of freedom as a possible causality in the sensible world, that Kant assures that “[...] in a canon of pure reason we are concerned with only two questions that pertain to the practical interest of pure reason, and with regard to which a canon of its use must be possible, namely: Is there a God? Is there a future life?”.¹⁸

As already said, and now made rather clear in the last sentence by Kant, in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method the possibility of a self-governing practical use of reason, in which practical freedom is not derived from the theoretical speculative idea of freedom, is admitted on the ground of a moral theology. Therefore, after presenting the necessity to “[...] set aside the good fortune of reason in a speculative regard, and ask only about those problems the solution of which constitutes its ultimate end”,¹⁹ Kant argues that this ultimate end, i.e., the possibility of a practical use of reason, has “[...] the ideal of the highest good as determining ground [*Bestimmungsgrund*]”.²⁰

In its familiar characterization, Kant conceives the highest good as the exact proportion of happiness, which is merely characterized through pragmatic rules, and worthiness to be happy, which holds the possibility of a pure practical or moral law. In what regards a pragmatic rule there would be no problem in admitting that reason “[...] can have none but a regulative use, and can only serve to produce the unity of empirical laws”.²¹ A moral law could not count on the same fortune for the admissibility of a practical use of reason since “[p]ure practical laws, on the contrary, whose end is given by reason completely *a priori*, and which do not command under empirical conditions but absolutely, would be products of pure reason”.²² Therefore, for the validation of a moral law, and, moreover, for the establishment of the principle of such a law, namely, practical freedom as actually “evidenced” or “known” within the sensible world, Kant assures to be worth admitting “[...] the necessary conditions under which alone [the same freedom] is in agreement with the distribution of happiness in accordance with principles, and thus [that] it at least *can* rest on mere ideas of pure

reason and be cognized *a priori*".²³ Now, how would such an agreement between a pure practical law and the empirical distribution of happiness be possible?

In order to institute a "*moral world*", which "[...] is conceived thus far merely as an intelligible world, since abstraction is made therein from all conditions (ends) and even from all hindrances to morality in it (weakness or impurity of human nature)",²⁴ Kant assures, therefore, that

Reason sees itself as compelled either to assume such a [wise author and regent], together with life in such a world, which we must regard as a future one, or else to regard the moral laws as empty figments of the brain, since without that presupposition their necessary success, which the same reason connects with them, would have to disappear.²⁵

With this consideration Kant closes the first moment of his argumentation in the Canon, i.e., the non-dependent establishment of the practical use of reason in relation to its theoretical use. As the passage just quoted assures, along with a theological consideration of morality this establishment would fundamentally rely on the practical presupposition of the ideas of God and immortality of the soul, which in a possible intelligible world are conceived as the guarantee of the positive concept of freedom (practical freedom) evidenced in the sensible world and "[t]hus [as the guarantee that] the principles of pure reason have objective reality in their practical use, that is, in the moral use".²⁶

It will be worthwhile to justify the already mentioned thesis according to which Kant presents, in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method of the first *Critique*, a singular attempt to establish the unity of reason by means of a transition from the practical to the theoretical use. In order to do so the immediate consequences of a theological consideration of morality for the problem of the unity of reason will be presented in the following section.

3. The Problem of the Unity of Reason in the Canon

Kant has no doubt that a moral world, thought to be an intelligible world and possible from the practical presupposition of the ideas of God and immortality of the soul, cannot be assumed as something more than "a simple idea". In order to assure the "efficacy" of this theological conception of morality, Kant sees the necessity to additionally show that this idea "[...] really can and should have its influence on the sensible world, in order to make it agree as far possible with [it]".²⁷

It is at this moment that one can locate in the Canon of Pure Reason an attempt to establish the unity of reason in which the practical use would be the starting-point for such establishment. Upon presenting to the reader this proposal, Kant specifies that the "architectonic interest" of reason, i.e., "[a]ll interest of my reason (the speculative as well as the practical) is united in the following three questions:

1. *What can I know?*
2. *What should I do?*
3. *What may I hope?*²⁸

Kant argues that “[t]he first question is merely [theoretical] speculative”, “[t]he second question is merely practical” and “[t]he third question, namely, ‘If I do what I should, what may I then hope?’ is simultaneously practical and theoretical”.²⁹

It is worth noting that Kant conceives the third question not as “theoretical and practical” but as “practical and theoretical”, in which case it must be considered “in such a way that the practical serves only as a guideline [*Leitfaden*] to reply to the theoretical question”.³⁰ Therefore, soon after presenting a conception of morality grounded on the ideas of God and immortality of the soul as worthiness to be happy Kant argues in favor of the necessity of taking the practical use of reason as a guideline or leading-point for the guarantee of its unity with the theoretical use. In fact, since the “idea of a moral world” could only have objective reality “[...] as an object of pure reason in its practical use pertaining to the sensible world”,³¹ Kant considers

[...] that just as the moral principles are necessary in accordance with reason in its *practical* use, it is equally necessary to assume in accordance with reason in its *theoretical* use that everyone has cause to hope for happiness in the same measure as he has made himself worthy of it in his conduct, that the system of morality is therefore inseparably combined with the system of happiness, though only in the idea of pure reason.³²

On the ground of this statement is justified the second part of *Reflexion* 6132 quoted above, according to which happiness in a possible moral world requires as well that nature be in accordance with its legislation, being this possible only if a supreme being is also conceived as the ground of nature. Here Kant is properly at the hiatus in the mediation of the sensible and intelligible worlds. Thereby, since as an intelligible world a moral world conceived as possible is still “a simple idea”, it is necessary to show its “dynamic synthesis” with the world which is already systematically conceived as constitutively occupied by the theoretical use of reason and determined by the causality of nature. In the context of his argumentation in the Canon Kant states that such a “[...] necessary connection [...] may be hoped for only if it is at the same time grounded on a *highest reason*, which commands in accordance with moral laws, as at the same time the cause of nature”.³³

So, the connection of the necessary elements for the guarantee of the objective reality of the practical use of reason, i.e., the agreement of worthiness to be happy, which is systematically admitted in an intelligible world, with happiness in the sensible world could only be reached if one equally admits a being as the ground of both these worlds and, moreover, as the ground of the theoretical and practical domains of reason.³⁴ Kant concludes stating that in a supreme being it

would be found the

[...] systematic unity of ends in this world of intelligences, which, though as mere nature it can only be called the sensible world, as a system of freedom can be called an intelligible, i.e., moral world (*regnum gratiae*), [and that] also leads inexorably to the purposive unity of all things that constitute this great whole, in accordance with universal laws of nature, just as the first does in accordance with universal and necessary moral laws, and unifies practical with [theoretical] speculative reason.³⁵

Therefore, Kant's consideration of the problem of the unity of reason in the Canon hinges upon the immediate consequence of his theological consideration of morality in the same text. As already pointed out, and now said in Kant's own words, the singularity of his attempt at establishing the unity of reason in this chapter of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method goes hand in hand with the search for a transition from the practical to the theoretical use of reason, in the sense that the former would not only be admitted as possible in an intelligible world by means of the practical presupposition of the ideas of God and immortality of the soul, but also as effective in the sensible world, which would entail supposing a supreme being as the ground of both these worlds.

Conclusion

In the period preceding the publication of the *Critique Practical Reason* in 1787 Kant's treatment of the problem of the unity of the theoretical and practical uses of reason is essentially connected with the task of the validation of the practical use. That is why in both the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals* the unity of reason is considered along with the search for a transition between the theoretical and practical domains of reason. In the Transcendental Dialectic of the first *Critique* as well as in the third section of the *Groundwork* the theoretical idea of freedom is taken as the key-element on which relies the possibility of a "dynamical move" in a transition from the theoretical to the practical domain of reason. From the theoretical idea of freedom Kant would respectively attempt at justifying in these texts a practical concept of the freedom and, moreover, a practical legislation as synthetic *a priori*. As argued in this paper, in the Canon of Pure Reason, on the other hand, one finds an argumentation which is not akin to any other in Kant's whole philosophical investigation, namely, the attempt at establishing a transition from the practical to the theoretical use of reason.

Putting side by side the referred routes of Kant's treatment of the problem of the unity of reason in the first half of the decade of 1780, and also baring in mind their systematic results for the project of the *Critique of Practical Reason* of a self-sufficient justification of both domains of reason, it is worth considering that the attempts at a transition from the theoretical to the practical use of reason seem to be more favorable to the consecution of such a project.

Therefore, in the Transcendental Dialectic Kant has justified the idea of freedom as a necessary presupposition for the practical use of reason which cannot be theoretically refuted either by its constitutive use in the field of possible experience or by its speculative use beyond it. Likewise, In the *Groundwork* Kant came to the practical admissibility of freedom as autonomy of the will, which if not yet justified as synthetic *a priori* cannot be also refuted either theoretically or practically since such feat would be outside the boundaries that assure legitimacy to reason.

In what matters to the proposal presented in the Canon of Pure reason can be said that in the second *Critique* Kant would thoroughly rethink both moments of his argumentation in that text. Hence, a “Critique” of the practical use aiming at justifying the synthetic *a priori* character of the moral law as autonomy of the will could any longer depart from the ideas of God and immortality of the soul as motives of this use. Moreover, the admissibility of a being conceived as the ground both of a moral world legislated by freedom and a world governed by the causality of nature and, therefore, as the guarantee of the mediation between them, would anymore be sustained. In a word, in the second *Critique* Kant would come to the insight that the mediation between the intelligible and sensible worlds, which is necessary for the validation of a practical use of reason as synthetic *a priori*, had to be guaranteed within the domain of the same use, without the necessity of a transition between it and the theoretical domain.

Notwithstanding these undeniable systematic differences between Kant’s argumentation in the Canon and in the second *Critique*, it is important to take into account that the presupposition of both texts is exactly the same. That is, a validation of the practical use which must be assured by means of its consideration as non-dependent in relation to the theoretical use. Thereby, it could be said that Kant’s argumentation in the second *Critique* holds precisely a return to the presupposition presented in the Canon but recalling as well the systematic results of the Transcendental Dialectic of the first *Critique* and third section of the *Groundwork*.

Therefore, Kant’s assurance in the Canon of Pure Reason of a validation of the practical use that would not be dependent upon its theoretical use and also would not be constituted as merely empirical, i.e., in which it would be “[...] necessary to avoid both dangers, keeping as close as possible to the transcendental and setting aside entirely what might here be psychological, i.e., empirical” (*KrV*, A801/ B 829), seems to be the main thesis to be considered in a “Critique” of the practical use that aims at establishing this use as synthetic *a priori* within its own domain. The important consequence of this insight is that from 1787 on Kant becomes thoroughly conscious that the unity of reason, although a presupposition of his entire philosophy, could no longer be established by means of a grounding transition, either from its theoretical or from its practical use.

Notes

¹ KANT, Immanuel. *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*. Ak. 2: 300.

² In this respect can be considered Kant's position expressed in his 1765 *Announcement of the Program of the Lectures for the Winter Semester 1765-1766*, in which Kant argues that “[m]oral philosophy has this special fate: that it takes on the semblance of being a science and enjoys some reputation for being thoroughly grounded, and it does so with even greater ease than metaphysics, and that in spite of the fact that it is neither a science nor thoroughly grounded. The reason why it presents this appearance and enjoys this reputation is as follows. The distinction between good and evil in actions, and the judgment of moral rightness [*Die moralische Weltweisheit*], can be known, easy and accurately, by the human heart through what is called sentiment [*Sentiment*], and that without the elaborate necessity of proofs. In ethics, a question is often settled in advance of any reasons which have been adduced – and that is something which does not happen in metaphysics”. KANT, Immanuel. *Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbjahre, von 1765-1766*. Ak. 2: 311.

³ In what concerns an intellectual justification of morality in the *Dissertation* it is worth considering Kant's statement that “[...] moral concepts are known not by experience but by the pure intellect itself”, as well as that “[...] moral philosophy, so far as it supplies first principles of moral judgment, is known only through the pure intellect and itself belongs to pure philosophy. Epicurus, who reduced the criteria of morals to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, is therefore quite rightly condemned, along with certain moderns who, like Shaftesbury and his school, follow him in much less thorough manner”. KANT, Immanuel. *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*. Ak. 2: 395/396.

⁴ For the defense that the validation of morality in the Transcendental Dialectic as well as in the third section of the *Groundwork* implies a transition from the theoretical to the practical use of reason see the second and third sections of the first chapter of my book: *O problema da unidade da razão em Kant: uma reconstrução sistemática a partir de três momentos do período crítico*. Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS, 2008. For the necessity of such a transition according to Kant's 1785 project of a 'Critique of Pure Practical Reason' in the third section of the *Groundwork* see my forthcoming *The Unity of Reason in the Background of a 'Critique of Pure Practical Reason'*. In: Proceedings of the 10th International Kant Congress. Berlin : Walter de Gruyter, 2008.

⁵ KANT, Immanuel. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Hereafter *KrV*. A 795/B 823. In what matters to the indispensability of a discipline in the theoretical speculative use of reason see also *Ibid.* A 710/B 738: “[...] that reason, which is properly obliged to prescribe its discipline for all other endeavors, should have need of one itself, may certainly seem strange, and in fact reason has previously escaped such a humiliation only because, given the pomp and the serious mien with which it appears, no one could easily come to suspect it of frivolously playing with fancies instead of concepts and words instead of things”.

⁶ *Ibid.* A 795/B 823

⁷ *Ibid.* A 795/B 823 - A 796/B 824.

⁸ *Ibid.* A 796/B 824.

⁹ *Ibid.* A 797/B 825.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* A 796/B 824.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.* A 797/B 825.

¹³ *Ibid.* A 794/ B 822.

¹⁴ KANT, Immanuel. *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik*. Refl. 6132 , Ak. 18: 464. Translation is my own.

¹⁵ *KrV*, A 802/B 830. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood translate “bewiesen” as “proved”.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* A 803/ B 831. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood translate “Sinnenwelt” as “world of the senses”.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* A 797/ B 825.

²⁰ *Ibid.* A 804/ B 832. The title of the second section of the Canon of Pure reason is “On the ideal of the highest good as the determining ground of the ultimate end of pure reason”. In the argumentation that follows in the same section Kant also argues that “[...] the moral use [of reason] [...] depends throughout on the idea of the highest good”. *Ibid.* A 816/ B 844.

²¹ *Ibid.* A 800/ B 828.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.* A 806/ B 835.

²⁴ *Ibid.* A 807/ B 836.

²⁵ *Ibid.* A 811/ B 839.

²⁶ *Ibid.* A 808/ B 836.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.* A 804/ B 833 – A 805/ B 834. These three questions, which according to a moral theology in the Canon of Pure Reason would guarantee the unity of the theoretical and practical uses of reason, are also presented by Kant in three subsequent moments of his philosophical investigation. However, in these moments Kant seems to understand the third question as a task to be carried out not by a moral investigation in what matters to the practical use of reason, but by the philosophy of religion, which could still be grounded on morality but not assumed as an element of the foundation of the latter. This move from a “fundamental” to a “consequent” level of the practical use of reason seems to justify Kant’s abandonment of the attempt to establish the unity of reason by means of a transition from the same use. The referred moments are from Kant’s *Lectures on Metaphysics* dated from 1790-1791 (which contains almost the same words from the Kant’s textbook on logic whose transcription and organization is by Jäsche at the year of 1800) and from a letter to Carl Friedrich Staudlin from 1793. In these three texts Kant also presents a fourth question which would be answered by anthropology:

i. “The field of philosophy in the cosmopolitan sense [*in sensu cosmopolitico*] can be brought down to the following questions:

1. What can I know? *Metaphysics* shows that.
2. What should I do? *Moral philosophy* shows that.
3. What may I hope? *Religion* teaches that.
4. What is man? *Anthropology* teaches that.”

KANT, Immanuel. *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik*. Ak. 28: 533/534 and *Vorlesungen über Logik*. Ak. 9: 25.

ii. “The plan I prescribed for myself a long time ago calls for an examination of the field of pure philosophy with a view to solving three problems: (1) What can I know? (metaphysics). (2) What ought I to do (moral philosophy). (3) What may I hope? (philosophy of religion). A fourth question ought to follow, finally: What is man? (anthropology, a subject on which I have lectured for over twenty years). What the enclosed work, *Religion within the Limits [of Reason Alone]*, I have tried to complete the third part of my plan. In this book I have proceeded conscientiously and with genuine respect for the Christian religion but also with a befitting candor, concealing nothing but rather presenting openly the way in which I believe that a possible union of Christianity with the purest practical reason is possible”.

KANT, Immanuel. *Briefwechsel*. Ak. 11: 429.

²⁹ All texts quoted in *Ibid.* A 805/ B 833. Kant argues that the first question was already answered by the preceding investigations in the *Critique* and that the second question belongs to the investigations of the same work. However, a little later he does present an answer to this question which is essentially practical. In Kant’s words “[...] the reply to the first of the two questions of pure reason that concern the practical interest: *Do that through which you will become worthy to be happy*”. *Ibid.* A 808/ B 836. The Transcendental Dialectic and the Canon of Pure Reason of the first *Critique* seem in fact to contain two attempts at establishing a practical use of reason. This interpretation could be called into question in face of Kant’s considerations that moral philosophy could not be included in the argumentation of the first *Critique* as well as in a possible system of transcendental philosophy. Nevertheless, these considerations must be essentially read in light of two important aspects of Kant’s argumentation in 1781, which contributed to his subsequent self-sufficient justification of the practical use of reason in the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

i. The lack of understanding concerning the a moving cause [*Bewegursache*] or incentive [*Triebfeder*] of morality, which must be given at the empirical level but in no manner can be originated in or justified from the same level. See: *Ibid.* A 14/14 and respective B 28/28 (worth considering here specially Kant’s change from *Bewegungsgrund* in the A edition to *Triebfeder* in the B edition); A 569/ B 597 and A 802/ B 508.

ii. The perception of the impossibility of justifying the practical use of reason in the same way of its theoretical speculative use, i.e., as naturally dialectical or merely regulative. In this respect see: *Ibid.* A 425/ B 453 and A 480/ B 508.

³⁰ *Ibid.* A 805/ B 833. Translation is my own.

³¹ *Ibid.* A 808/ B 836. Translation is my own.

³² *Ibid.* A 809/ B 837.

³³ *Ibid.* A 810/ B 838.

³⁴ Kant presents this step by considering that “[...] only in the ideal of the highest *original* good can pure reason find the ground of the practically necessary connection of both elements of the highest derived good, namely of an intelligible, i.e., *moral world*”. *Ibid.* A 810/ B 838 – A 811/ B 839.

³⁵ *Ibid.* A 815/ B 843.

References

KANT, Immanuel. Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral. In: *Akademie Textausgabe*, Bd. V. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968; Anmerkungen, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977. Translated by Ralf Meerbote e David Walford. In: *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

_____. Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbenjahre, von 1765-1766. In: *Akademie Textausgabe*, Bd. V. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968; Anmerkungen, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977. Translated by Ralf Meerbote e David Walford. In: *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

_____. De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis. In: *Akademie Textausgabe*, Bd. V. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968; Anmerkungen, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977. Translated by Ralf Meerbote e David Walford. In: *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

_____. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Hrsg. von Raymund Schmidt. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1993 (Philos. Bibliothek Bd. 37 a). Translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

_____. Briefwechsel. In: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Bde. XXI/XXII. Berlin und Reipzig: de Gruyter, 1928. Translated by Arnulf Zweig. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

_____. Reflexionen zur Metaphysik. In: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Bde. XVII/XVIII. Berlin und Reipzig: de Gruyter, 1928.

_____. Vorlesungen über Logik. In: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Bd. XXIV. Berlin und Reipzig: de Gruyter, 1928. Translated by J. Michael Young. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.