The Court
of Reason

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List of Abbreviations / Siglenverzeichnis

AA	Akademie-Ausgabe: Kant, Immanuel (1900 ff): *Gesammelte Schriften.* Eds.: Vols. 1–22 Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vol. 23 Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, ab Vol. 24 Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Berlin: De Gruyter. – References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are cited by page numbers in the original first (A) and second (B) editions.
Anth	Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (AA 7)
AP	Aufsätze, das Philanthropin betreffend (AA 2)
BBM	Bestimmung des Begriffs einer Menschenrace (AA 8)
BDG	Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes (AA 2)
Br	Briefe (AA 10–13)
DfS	Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren erwiesen (AA 2)
Di	Meditationum quarundam de igne succincta delineatio (AA 1)
EAD	Das Ende aller Dinge (AA 8)
EACG	Entwurf und Ankündigung eines Collegii der physischen Geographie (AA 2)
EEKU	Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft (AA 20)
FBZE	Fortgesetzte Betrachtung der seit einiger Zeit wahrgenommenen Erderschütterungen (AA 1)
FEV	Die Frage, ob die Erde veralte, physikalisch erwogen (AA 1)
FM	Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnitzens und Wolff's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat? (AA 20)
FM/Beylagen	FM: Beylagen (AA 20)
FM/Lose Blätter	FM: Lose Blätter (AA 20)
FRT	Fragment einer späteren Rationaltheologie (AA 28)
GAJFF	Gedanken bei dem frühzeitigen Ableben des Herrn Johann Friedrich von Funk (AA 2)
GMS	Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten (AA 4)
GNVE	Geschichte und Naturbeschreibung der merkwürdigsten Vorfälle des Erdbebens, welches an dem Ende des 1755sten Jahres einen großen Theil der Erde erschüttert hat (AA 1)
GSE	Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen (AA 2)
GSK	Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte (AA 1)
GUGR	Von dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegenden im Raume (AA 2)
HN	Handschriftlicher Nachlass (AA 14–23)
IaG	Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht (AA 8)
KpV	Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (AA 5)
KrV	Kritik der reinen Vernunft (zu zitieren nach der Originalpaginierung A/B)
KU	Kritik der Urteilskraft (AA 5)
Log	Logik (AA 9)
MAM	Muthmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte (AA 8)
MAN	Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften (AA 4)

MonPh	Metaphysicae cum geometria iunctae usus in philosophia naturali, cuius specimen I. continet monadologiam physicam (AA 1)
MpVT	Über das Mißlingen aller philosophischen Versuche in der Theodicee (AA 8)
MS	Die Metaphysik der Sitten (AA 6)
RL	Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre (AA 6)
TL	Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre (AA 6)
MSI	De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis (AA 2)
NEV	Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbenjahre von 1765–1766 (AA 2)
NG	Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen (AA 2)
NLBR	Neuer Lehrbegriff der Bewegung und Ruhe und der damit verknüpften Folgerungen in den ersten Gründen der Naturwissenschaft (AA 2)
NTH	Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels (AA 1)
OP	Opus Postumum (AA 21 u. 22)
Päd	Pädagogik (AA 9)
PG	Physische Geographie (AA 9)
PhilEnz	Philosophische Enzyklopädie (AA 29)
PND	Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio (AA 1)
Prol	Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik (AA 4)
Refl	Reflexion (AA 14–19)
RezHerder	Recensionen von J. G. Herders Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menscheit (AA 8)
RezHufeland	Recension von Gottlieb Hufeland's Versuch über den Grundsatz des Naturrechts (AA 8)
RezMoscati	Recension von Moscatis Schrift: Von dem körperlichen wesentlichen Unterschiede zwischen der Structur der Thiere und Menschen (AA 2)
RezSchulz	Recension von Schulz's Versuch einer Anleitung zur Sittenlehre für alle Menschen (AA 8)
RezUlrich	Kraus' Recension von Ulrich's Eleutheriologie (AA 8)
RGV	Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft (AA 6)
SF	Der Streit der Fakultäten (AA 7)
TG	Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch die Träume der Metaphysik (AA 2)
TP	Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis (AA 8)
TW	Neue Anmerkungen zur Erläuterung der Theorie der Winde (AA 1)
UD	Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral (AA 2)
ÜE	Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll (AA 8)
ÜGTP	Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Principien in der Philosophie (AA 8)
UFE	Untersuchung der Frage, ob die Erde in ihrer Umdrehung um die Achse, wodurch sie die Abwechselung des Tages und der Nacht hervorbringt, einige Veränderung seit den ersten Zeiten ihres Ursprungs erlitten habe (AA 1)

VAEaD	Vorarbeit zu Das Ende aller Dinge (AA 23)
VAKpV	Vorarbeit zur Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (AA 23)
VAMS	Vorarbeit zur Metaphysik der Sitten (AA 23)
VAProl	Vorarbeit zu den Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik (AA 23)
VARGV	Vorarbeit zur Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft (AA 23)
VARL	Vorarbeit zur Rechtslehre (AA 23)
VASE	Vorarbeiten zur Schrift gegen Eberhard (AA 20)
VASF	Vorarbeit zum Streit der Fakultäten (AA 23)
VASÜ	Vorarbeit zu: Aus Sömmering: Über das Organ der Seele (AA 13)
VATL	Vorarbeit zur Tugendlehre (AA 23)
VATP	Vorarbeit zu Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis (AA 23)
VAÜGTP	Vorarbeit zu Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Principien in der Philosophie (AA 23)
VAVT	Vorarbeit zu Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie (AA 23)
VAZeF	Vorarbeiten zu Zum ewigen Frieden (AA 23)
VBO	Versuch einiger Betrachtungen über den Optimismus (AA 2)
VKK	Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes (AA 2)
VNAEF	Verkündigung des nahen Abschlusses eines Tractats zum ewigen Frieden in der Philosophie (AA 8)
Vorl	Vorlesungen (AA 24 ff.)
V-Anth/Busolt	Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1788/1789 Busolt (AA 25)
V-Anth/Collins	Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1772/1773 Collins (AA 25)
V-Anth/Fried	Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1775/1776 Friedländer (AA 25)
V-Anth/Mensch	Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1781/1782 Menschenkunde, Petersburg (AA 25)
V-Anth/Mron	Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1784/1785 Mrongovius (AA 25)
V-Anth/Parow	Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1772/1773 Parow (AA 25)
V-Anth/Pillau	Vorlesungen Wintersemester 1777/1778 Pillau (AA 25)
V-Eth/Baumgarten	Baumgarten Ethica Philosophica (AA 27)
V-Lo/Blomberg	Logik Blomberg (AA 24)
V-Lo/Busolt	Logik Busolt (AA 24)
V-Lo/Dohna	Logik Dohna-Wundlacken (AA 24)
V-Lo/Herder	Logik Herder (AA 24)
V-Lo/Philippi	Logik Philippi (AA 24)
V-Lo/Pölitz	Logik Pölitz (AA 24)
V-Lo/Wiener	Wiener Logik (AA 24)
V-Mo/Collins	Moralphilosophie Collins (AA 27)
V-Mo/Kaehler(Stark)	Immanuel Kant: Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie (Hrsg. von Werner Stark. Berlin/New York 2004)
V-Mo/Mron	Moral Mrongovius (AA 27)
V-Mo/Mron II	Moral Mrongovius II (AA 29)
V-Met/Arnoldt	Metaphysik Arnoldt (K 3) (AA 29)
V-Met/Dohna	Kant Metaphysik Dohna (AA 28)
V-Met/Heinze	Kant Metaphysik L1 (Heinze) (AA 28)

V-Met/Herder	Metaphysik Herder (AA 28)
V-Met-K2/Heinze	Kant Metaphysik K2 (Heinze, Schlapp) (AA 28)
V-Met-K3/Arnoldt	Kant Metaphysik K3 (Arnoldt, Schlapp) (AA 28)
V-Met-K 3E/Arnoldt	Ergänzungen Kant Metaphysik K3 (Arnoldt) (AA 29)
V-Met-L1/Pölitz	Kant Metaphysik L 1 (Pölitz) (AA 28)
V-Met-L2/Pölitz	Kant Metaphysik L 2 (Pölitz, Original) (AA 28)
V-Met/Mron	Metaphysik Mrongovius (AA 29)
V-Met-N/Herder	Nachträge Metaphysik Herder (AA 28)
V-Met/Schön	Metaphysik von Schön, Ontologie (AA 28)
V-Met/Volckmann	Metaphysik Volckmann (AA 28)
V-MS/Vigil	Die Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius (AA 27)
V-NR/Feyerabend	Naturrecht Feyerabend (AA 27)
V-PG	Vorlesungen über Physische Geographie (AA 26)
V-Phil-Th/Pölitz	Philosophische Religionslehre nach Pölitz (AA 28)
V-PP/Herder	Praktische Philosophie Herder (AA 27)
V-PP/Powalski	Praktische Philosophie Powalski (AA 27)
V-Th/Baumbach	Danziger Rationaltheologie nach Baumbach (AA 28)
V-Th/Pölitz	Religionslehre Pölitz (AA 28)
V-Th/Volckmann	Natürliche Theologie Volckmann nach Baumbach (AA 28)
VRML	Über ein vermeintes Recht, aus Menschenliebe zu lügen (AA 8)
VT	Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie (AA 8)
VUB	Von der Unrechtmäßigkeit des Büchernachdrucks (AA 8)
VUE	Von den Ursachen der Erderschütterungen bei Gelegenheit des Unglücks, welches die westliche Länder von Europa gegen das Ende des vorigen Jahres betroffen hat (AA 1)
VvRM	Von den verschiedenen Racen der Menschen (AA 2)
WA	Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? (AA 8)
WDO	Was heißt: Sich im Denken orientiren? (AA 8)
ZeF	Zum ewigen Frieden (AA 8)

Andrew Chignell

Knowledge, Anxiety, Hope: How Kant's First and Third Questions Relate

I Epistemic Optimism, Pessimism, Anxiety

The recent outpouring of literature on Kant's theory of modality has established at least this: one of Kant's most important discoveries occurred not in the critical period of the 1780s and beyond, and not in the silent period of the 1770s, but rather in the high rationalist period of the early 1760s.[1] The discovery, which was really more like a re-discovery, was of the modal-metaphysical distinction between "logical" and "real" possibility. Versions of that distinction can be found in medieval authors and perhaps even as far back as Aristotle; certainly some versions of it are present in Descartes and Locke. But the "logicism" of the Leibnizian school – the assumption that logical consistency is the only constraint on possibility – had obscured it for people working in the 18th century German tradition. Kant could thus herald it as an important but neglected tool, and use it to great effect in the *Negative Magnitudes* and *Beweisgrund* essays of 1762 and 1763. During this pre-critical period he was what we might call a *modal-epistemological optimist*.

Modal-epistemological optimism depicts us as having tremendous philosophical powers. If our ability to think or conceive provides access to facts about which things are *really* possible (and not just logically possible), then we will also be able to generate impressive existence proofs from the armchair.[2] Consider, for example, Descartes's theistic labors in Meditations 3 and 5: both proofs start with our clear and distinct conception of the real possibility of God's existence, and both end with the claim that God necessarily exists. Likewise, the argument in Meditation 6 starts with the clear and distinct conception of the real possibility of a disembodied mind, and ends with a proof of an immaterial soul. In contemporary philosophy we still find "conceivability" arguments that go from the apparent real possibility of something (e.g. a zombie) to a sub-

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1 See Chignell 2009, 2012; Stang 2010, 2016; Kannisto 2013; Bader 2018; Abaci 2019; Oberst 2020; Krishnan 2021.

2 Note that this is importantly different from what he later calls "intellectual intuition" or "intuitive understanding" the kind of (typically divine) intuition that *guarantees* the actuality of its object. Here we are talking about a finite kind of conceiving that is at best a good guide to real possibility.

stantive metaphysical conclusion (e.g. that mind-body identity theory is false). We also find meta-philosophical debates about whether conceivability really is a good guide to modal truth.

Kant's own deployment of the logical vs. real modality distinction in the *Beweisgrund* essay starts with the assumption that we know via armchair reflection that there are a great many real possibilities – fiery bodies, Sherlock Holmes, my non-actual twin brother, a Julius Caesar who did not cross the Rubicon, and so on – and that this would have been true even if all the contingent things in the universe had failed to exist. The optimistic Kant goes on to argue that, unlike the truths about logical modality (which require simply a lack of contradiction), truths about real possibility require a ground in actuality. From there it is just a few steps to the *necessary* existence of a Most Real Being (*ens realissimum*) that unites the positive "realities" in things, thereby grounding their real possibility (for reconstructions of this argument see Chignell 2009, Stang 2010, and Abaci 2019).

Soon after the publication of this ambitious treatise ("the *only* possible basis" for a theistic proof!), Kant makes what we might call his *modal turn*. During this time he anticipates the neo-Kantians (something Kant often does), as well as many 20th and 21st century philosophers (outside of New York and New Jersey, perhaps), in becoming skeptical of the idea that conceivability is a good guide to real possibility. In the *Dreams* essay of 1766, Kant even seems to equate the armchair speculative metaphysics of the rationalists with the "dreams" of an overheated mystical seer: both metaphysicians and mystics conjure ideas of things which we can't know to be really possible. He seems, in other words, to have been afflicted with a radical kind of *modal-epistemological pessimism*.

Between *Dreams* and the *Critique* comes the *Inquiry* of 1770 – an "Inaugural Dissertation" written upon receiving the long-awaited professorship in Königsberg. There we find Kant exuding modal-epistemological optimism again, and epistemological optimism generally – perhaps because he had just received his dream job, perhaps because he was primarily focused on working out his new theory of the ideality of space and time. Kant returns in the Dissertation to his earlier confidence that rational reflection tracks various metaphysical domains effectively. He thinks, for instance, that we can know the positive features of specific things-in-themselves, both actual and possible.

At some point over the "quiet decade" that followed, the qualms about how we can claim to know what is really (as opposed to logically) possible return. The mature, critical position on the epistemology of modality is not the unremitting pessimism of *Dreams*, however. Rather, Kant continues to think that we can see *that* there is the distinction between logical and real modality, and that we do so

via some paradigmatic cases (he himself often cites the "real repugnance" between extension and thought). But he is now unsure of our armchair ability to tell, in most cases, whether what we are conceiving is really possible. So his considered position is neither optimism nor pessimism but rather something more like *modal-epistemological anxiety.*

I have argued elsewhere that this modal turn and the accompanying anxiety are fundamental to the development of the doctrine of noumenal ignorance.[3] My goal here is further to suggest that these modal issues can frame our understanding of Kant's efforts all the way through the mid-1790s, and with respect to doctrines that go far beyond transcendental idealism. In fact, as we'll see, I think a good way to portray the "Court of Reason" that we are discussing at this Congress is as the tribunal that asks about the real possibility of the things that we claim to *know* about (section II), or *hypothesize* about (section III), *hope* for (section IV), or postulate as articles of *Belief* (*Glaube*) (section V).[4] The Kantian court is peculiar, of course, in that Reason is both prosecutor and in the dock: a single faculty interrogating itself about the concepts it purports to apply in both theoretical and practical contexts. The goal of this anxious self-examination is to "prove" whether these concepts have the kind of "objective reality" that makes them fit for objective use, or whether they are problematic "thought-things" (*Gedankendinge*) whose real possibility we cannot prove or, worse, "brain chimeras" (*Hirngespinste*) that refer to logically possible but really impossible things (KrV, A 571/B 543; cf. A 91/B 123; TP, AA 8: 307; KU, AA 5: 144).

Why treat hope first, before Belief? Although commentators have tended to emphasize what Kant says about Belief, its main role for Kant (I will suggest) is to accommodate the modal condition on a certain kind of rational hope. Kant's third main question, after "What can I know?" and "What should I do?" is not "What may I Believe?" but rather "What may I *hope*? (*Was darf ich hoffen?*)" (KrV, A 805/B 833; Log, AA 9: 25). And although Kant talks a lot about Belief and the postulates of practical reason in providing an answer to the third question, his formulation in the *Critique* indicates that hope has primacy here. It is because we cannot *epistemically* establish the real possibility of certain objects

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3 See Chignell 2014 and Naranjo Sandoval/Chignell 2017. Section II of the current address is drawn from these efforts, though I've also revised, abbreviated, and adjusted what was said there.

4 Kant uses "*Glaube*" in a variety of contexts and ways, and there is no good English translation of it. In other work I use the technical (and Germanic) capitalization 'Belief,' and will adopt that practice here too. See Chignell 2007a, 2007b, 2009 for more on this notion. Also Pasternack 2011, 2014 and Chance/Pasternack 2018, as well as Wood 2020, who likewise adopts the convention of translating it 'Belief.'

of deep moral hope – objects that we hope for in connection with what we ought to do – that we must make room for Belief in their real possibility. Such Belief is key to banishing the *Hirngespinst* anxiety, but its justification is parasitic on the standing of the hope that it supports. That, I submit, is why the questions about knowledge, duty, and hope are primary. These three questions are also the domains of, respectively, the first, second, and third *Critiques* – or so I will suggest below (section VI). I conclude with a brief parergon about the role of hope in Kant's philosophy of religion (section VII).

II The Modal Condition on Knowledge

Even after the critical turn, Kant is still willing to say that some speculative arguments are "irrefutable":

> [My old proof in *Beweisgrund*] can *in no way be refuted*, because it has its ground in the very nature of human reason. My *reason makes it absolutely necessary for me to accept a being which is the ground of everything possible*, otherwise I would be unable to recognize what in general the possibility of something consists in. (V-Th/Pölitz (from 1780s), AA 28: 1034, my italics)

That said, such speculative efforts are hampered by our

> incapacity to have insight into how a synthesis of all possible realities is possible with regard to all their consequences. *For how will my reason presume to cognize how all the highest realities operate*, what consequences would arise from them, and what relationship all these realities would have to have? – But I would have to cognize this if I wanted to have insight (*Einsicht*) into *whether all realities could be united together in one object* (*Objekt*), and hence into how God is [really] possible. (V-Th/Pölitz, AA 28: 1025 – 6, my italics)

The problem Kant is describing here (echoing portions of the Dialectic and Discipline) is *not* the semantic empiricists' one about the lack of determinate content for a concept of a thing, nor is it the epistemic empiricists' problem about establishing an evidential connection to experience. Rather, the problem – and the anxiety – is about whether a given concept has "objective reality" in the first place. In other words, it is about whether "an object corresponding to it is possible" (*daß ihm gemäß ein Object möglich sei*) (KU, AA 5: 396). This is another way of articulating the *Hirngespinst* concern.

  In the optimistic days of the precritical period, armchair reflection was sufficient to provide the "insight" or proof that is needed. In the anxiety-ridden critical period, Kant thinks we must do something more than merely think:

> I can *think* whatever I like as long as I do not contradict myself, i.e., as long as my concept is a possible thought, even if I cannot give any assurance as to whether or not there is a corresponding object (*Objekt*) somewhere within the sum total of all [real] possibilities.

But, Kant says,

> to *cognize* an object, it is *required* that I be able to prove *(beweisen könne) its [real] possibility* (whether by the testimony of experience from its actuality or a priori through reason). (KrV, B xxvi, note, my italics)

The term "prove" (*beweisen*) in this context is neutral with respect to outcome. Just as we "prove the yeast" or "prove our mettle" in trying to determine whether our yeast or mettle is any good, we can also prove our concepts in an effort to see if they are of any real "objective" use. For Kant that involves proving (in some sense of "prove") that their objects are really possible.

In the passage just quoted, Kant offers two main routes to proving real possibility: via some sort of connection to experience, or "*a priori* through reason." The latter route must involve more than logical analysis, however, since even the best analysis won't pick up *non*-logical opposition or "repugnance" (*Realrepugnanz*) between predicates. And so

> [...] for that not only an analytic judgment is required, but also a synthetic one, i.e. I must be able to know (*wissen*) that the effects of the realities do not cancel one another out. (V-Th/Pölitz, AA 28:1016; see also KrV, A 254 – 6/B 309 – 12, my italics)

Thus the second route described in the B-preface passage – proving possibility "*a priori* through reason" – involves more than mere thinking; in the *Critique* Kant provides the further tools of (a) construction in "pure intuition" and (b) transcendental argument.

Let's consider some cases: if you know that there is a dog in front of you right now, then Kant's idea is that you must be able to prove that dogs are really possible (this you can clearly do via direct appeal to experience). If you know that a Most Real Being exists, then you must be able to prove that such a being is really possible (this is something that Kant thinks you cannot do, as is clear from the passage just quoted, and so you cannot know such a thing). If you know that seven-sided cubes will never exist, then you must be able to prove that too (this you can do by appeal to "construction" in pure intuition). If you know that all objects of our experience will be substances in causal relations, then you must be able to prove that such substances and cause-effect re-

lations are really possible (this you can do via transcendental argument and "schematization").[5]

I have argued in a series of papers over the past few years that the following principle captures these ideas:

> *MODAL CONDITION ON KNOWLEDGE:* S knows that *p* only if, for every item O referred to in *p*, if O is really possible then S is in a position to prove its real possibility, and if O is really impossible then S is in a position to prove its real impossibility (Chignell 2014; Naranjo Sandoval and Chignell 2017; Chignell 2017)

Again, showing that a concept is *already* accurately applied in empirical or pure intuition, *or* that its necessary application can be transcendentally deduced, are the two sure ways (as Kant indicates in the KrV B xxvi passage above) by which reason can "prove" the mettle of its own concepts. But are there others?

To answer this question, we need an account of what "prove possibility" means in the *Modal Condition on Knowledge* – one that allows us to validate the good cases (like Kant's "magnetic matter" as well as substance, cause, force, and so on) but rule out the bad cases (like ghosts and intelligent designers). A natural place to start is in the discussion of *formal possibility* in the Postulates of Empirical Thinking. To be possible in this way is simply to "agree with the formal conditions of experience" (A218/B265). Thus:

> *AGREES WITH FORMAL STRUCTURE:* S is in a position to prove the real possibility of O iff S is in a position to show that O is formally possible.

If you keep paging through the Postulates, however, you quickly find that this principle is *too relaxed* to assuage the modal anxiety we're concerned with here. For there are bad cases that this principle does not seem to rule out. Kant cites the concepts of

> [*ghosts*] a substance that is persistently present in space yet without filling it … or [*soothsaying*] a special fundamental power of our mind to *intuit* the future (not merely, say, to deduce it), or [*telepathy*] an ability of the mind to stand in a community of thoughts with other

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5 Analytic judgments are special cases. They satisfy this condition insofar as their object is the concept being analyzed, not the object *of* that concept. "For an analytic assertion takes the understanding no further, and since it is occupied only with that which is already thought in the concept (*was in dem Begriffe schon gedacht wird*), it leaves it undecided whether the concept even has any relation to objects […]; it is enough for [the subject] to know what lies in the concept; he is indifferent to what the concept might pertain to" (KrV, A 258f./B 314). There are further complications here involving conditionals and disjunctions, as well as about the difference between cognition and knowledge, that I will set aside. For more details see Chignell 2014.

men (no matter how distant they may be) – these are concepts the possibility of which is completely groundless [...] *because it cannot be grounded upon (gegründet auf) experience and its known laws*, and without this is an arbitrary combination of thoughts that, although it contains no contradiction, still can *make no claim to objective reality, thus to the [real] possibility of the sort of object that one would think here* (KrV, A 222/B 270, partly my italics).

The claim here is that the objective reality of a concept must be "grounded on experience and its known laws" if it is not to be an "arbitrary combination of thoughts" – a *Hirngespinst*. Talk of "experience" suggests that we turn to the definition of *necessity* in the Postulates: "That whose connection with the actual is determined according to (*bestimmt nach*) the universal conditions on experience is (i.e. exists) necessarily" (KrV, A 218/B 266). "Universal" (*allgemein*) here includes not just the formal conditions but also the "matter" of the more "specific" empirical laws and the antecedent conditions.

Modal concepts are interdefinable, and so it's easy to generate the counterpart to the conception of necessity in the Postulates. It would not be formal possibility as defined in the First Postulate, but rather "that whose connection with the actual" *agrees* with the "universal conditions on experience" – that is, with "experience and its known [specific empirical] laws." Call that notion *empirical possibility.* So the new proposal would be:

AGREES WITH FORMAL STRUCTURE & EMPIRICAL MATTER: S is in a position to prove the real possibility of O iff S is in a position to show that O is empirically really possible.

This is an empiricist approach: you have to prove that a quality or quality-combination "does or has existed" in *actuality* before you can use it with impunity in theories and explanations. In the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Locke defends something like this approach, saying that "our Ideas of Substances… must be *taken from something that does or has existed;* they must not consist of Ideas put together at the pleasure of our Thoughts, without any real pattern they were taken from, though we can perceive no [logical] inconsistence in such a Combination." Locke motivates this with a kind of modal anxiety that anticipates Kant's:

The reason whereof is, because we knowing not what real Constitution it is of Substances, whereon our simple Ideas depend, and which really is the cause of the strict union of some of them one with another, and the exclusion of others; *there are very few of them that we can be sure are, or are not inconsistent in Nature, any farther than Experience and sensible Observation reaches*" (*Essay* 4.4. 12, my italics).

For Kant's purposes, however, this empiricist test goes too far in the other direction: to limit ourselves to what we can or have experienced is *too restrictive.*

That's because Kant thinks there *are* some "absolute" real possibilities that are not actual, even though he agrees that anything that is possible in the *empirical* sense of the Postulates is also actual (*wirklich*) (KrV A 231/B 284). Moreover, given that our knowledge of the specific empirical laws and antecedent conditions is often inductive and conjectural, a "proof" of real possibility will often be out of reach, even with respect to concepts that clearly do have objective use.

So *Formal* is too loose, and *Formal & Empirical* is too restrictive. What we have to find is a Goldilocks principle in between. Recall that Kant speaks of "the possibility of the concept" being "grounded upon (*gegründet auf*) experience and its known laws" (KrV, A 222/B 270). That suggests something like this:

> AGREES WITH BACKGROUND UNDERSTANDING OF NATURE: S is in a position to prove the real possibility of O iff S is in a position to show that O's possible existence *agrees* with S's background understanding of nature.

This is on the right track, but it is still *too vague:* for one thing, it leaves unclear what "agrees with" means. "Consistent with" would be too weak, "entailed by" too strong, and "compossible with" is just what we're trying to analyze. Kant himself sometimes uses "cohere" (*zusammenhängen*) in such contexts: "appearances ... are...mere representations which cohere (*zusammenhängen*) according to empirical laws" (KrV A 537/B 565). So here is one more emendation:

> POSITIVELY COHERES WITH BACKGROUND UNDERSTANDING OF NATURE: S is in a position to prove the real possibility of O iff S is in a position to show that O's possible existence *positively coheres with* S's background understanding of nature.

This way of characterizing what it is to prove real possibility is, I submit, just right, even if it needs a bit more explanation. It describes the position we are in with respect to the good cases: magnetic matter and aliens, not to mention stones, suns, and ships. These are all things the real possibility of which positively coheres with our background picture of nature and the way it works.[6] But *Positively Coheres* keeps out the *Hirngespinste:* ghosts, soothsayers, and telepathic

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[6] For space reasons, I leave as homework some important questions about what "our" and "background" and "understanding of nature" and "show" refer to here. A full-fledged account would have to say whether the understanding is shared, or whether it refers to S's understanding alone. This is tricky because an expert in a domain will have much more background understanding than a novice against which to "prove" a new concept. And so in many cases it will be *harder* for the expert to meet the Modal Condition. I think this is as it should be, but will leave further discussion of this to the side. Thanks to Ted Sider for a question about expert knowledge here.

minds don't fit within our background understanding of nature and its laws, and so cannot be shown to do so. Supersensible concepts like monads and God are also ruled out, since although they are *logically consistent* with our picture of nature, there is no way to establish *positive* coherence between their possible existence and the content of specific laws and experiences.[7]

But what, then, *is* positive coherence? Contemporary epistemologists who invoke the notion tend to leave it as a primitive (often resorting to metaphors like "dovetailing") or seek to account for it in terms of special kinds of explanatory relations. I won't try to say more about positive coherence here, or about what would be involved in "showing" or exhibiting it. Note, though, that it is a close cousin of what Kant calls *systematicity.* If all goes well, S's "background understanding" will be a collection of explicit and implicit, well-grounded, and mutually-supporting assents. Most if not all of this background web of assent will itself comprise knowledge. And so "proving" the possibility of theoretical objects by picking out positive coherence relations between their existence and our background web does more than assuage our modal anxiety. It contributes to the collective goal of fashioning a systematic picture of the world – one in which all assents maximally cohere or "hang together" (*zusammenhängen*) in a full-fledged system-of-knowledge (*Wissenschaft*). Or in other (more Hegelian) words, Kant thinks that one of the conditions on the very activity of knowing gestures at that activity's completion – i.e., *comprehension*.[8]

III The Modal Condition on Rational Hypothesis

Hypotheses are a species of opinion. They tend to be better grounded than other *mere* opinions, however: they are based on truth-conducive grounds, and they are ideally on the way to counting as Knowledge (Pasternack 2014). Kant still ex-

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7 There is an important question here about how the concept of an intelligent designer would be ruled out by this principle. Without going into details, it looks like our options are either (1) to take Kant's very positive comments about physico-theology in the *Critique* to indicate that he does think we can prove the real possibility of the resulting being, even if we don't have sufficient evidence to prove its actual existence. Alternatively, we could (2) insist that "proving" a concept against our background understanding of nature requires us to make reference to the content of specific laws rather than to the overall characteristics (elegance, economy) of the system of laws. Thanks to Michael Friedman and Nick Stang for raising questions here.

8 There is a lot of important and illuminating recent work on this topic, three instances of which are Geiger 2003, Kern 2017, and Breitenbach 2018.

hibits some modal anxiety about hypotheses, however, and repeatedly says that we have to "prove" the concepts involved.

> If the imagination is not simply *to enthuse* but is, under the strict oversight of reason, *to invent*, something must always first be *fully certain and not invented or a mere opinion, and that is the possibility of the object itself.* In that case it is permissible to take refuge in opinion about the actuality of the object, which opinion, however, in order not to be groundless, must be connected as a ground of explanation with that which is actually given and consequently certain, and it is then called an *hypothesis.* (A770/B798, partly my italics)

Kant's claim here is that you cannot rationally assent to an hypothesis unless you're in position to show that the existence of the objects involve positively coheres ("is connected as a ground of explanation") with what we already understand about the world. In some places Kant suggests that even weak opinions should not be taken on board unless a connection with the laws of experience can be demonstrated:

> Opinions and probable judgments about what pertains to things can occur only as grounds of explanation of that which is actually given, or as consequences in accordance with empirical laws of that which actually grounds what is actually given; thus they can occur only in the series of objects of experience. *To form opinions outside this field is the same as to play with thoughts...* (KrV, A 775/B 803, partly my italics; compare FM, AA 20: 299 and VT, AA 8: 396n)

The concern that Kant raises here – that we are merely "enthusing," or "playing with thoughts" – is precisely the *Hirngespinst*-inspired modal anxiety that we encountered in the previous section. Note that not just chimerical concepts like *telepathy* and *soothsaying* are ruled out: ideas of reason, too, cannot meet the Modal Condition, and so they too cannot figure into rational hypotheses.

> The concepts of reason are, as we have said, mere ideas, and of course have no object (*Gegenstand*) in any sort of experience, but also do not on that account designate objects that are made-up and at the same time thereby assumed to be possible. They are merely thought problematically... mere thought-entities (*Gedankendinge*) the possibility of which is not demonstrable, and which cannot therefore be used to ground the explanation of actual appearances *through an hypothesis* (KrV, A 771/B 799, my italics).

Kant calls ideas of reason "things of thought" but not *Hirngespinste* here. The former are "problematic" from a theoretical point of view but not entirely useless; we just don't know whether their objects are really possible or not. The latter, however, are nothing but snares and delusions. Kant's modal anxiety, then,

could be articulated as the concern that thought-entities (ideas) will turn out to be mere brain-chimeras.

The discussion so far indicates that the relevant condition on rational hypothesis is just the same as the condition on knowledge:

> *MODAL CONDITION ON RATIONAL HYPOTHESIS:* S's hypothesis that p is rational only if, for every item O referred to in p, if O is really possible then S is in a position to prove its real possibility, and if O is really impossible then S is in a position to prove its real impossibility.

Proof of possibility would then be construed in the sense of *Positive Coherence* above.

IV The Modal Condition on Hope

Hope is an intriguingly different case, not only because it is *not* on the way to Knowledge in the way that hypothesis ideally is, but because there is a modal condition built into the attitude itself, rather than merely into its rationality. Thus for example it is not just irrational but positively *unintelligible* to say that I hope to be a married bachelor or hope that my parents were never born. These items may be objects of wish, but they cannot be the objects of hope. Hope is distinguished from mere wish by its modal element, the weakest formulation of which is just:

> *MODAL ELEMENT OF HUMDRUM HOPE:* S hopes that p only if S is *not certain* that p is really impossible.

Most elpistologists (theorists of '*elpis*' – hope) regard this as too anemic to characterize what is involved in the deep, substantial sorts of hopes that orient life-projects and sustain moral activity, especially when we are faced with concerns about inefficacy and futility (McGeer 2008). A principle that reflects this psychological fact is:

> *MODAL ELEMENT OF DEEP HOPE:* S deeply hopes that p only if S *has a firm assent* that p is really possible.

Kant was aware of this. In the "moral catechism" dialogue in the *Metaphysics of Morals* he has the pupil point out that unless we have some positive sense of how the object of our deepest longing can be really possible, "it will always remain a wish that cannot become a hope" (MS, AA 6: 482). In the *Gemeinspruch* essay he writes:

> It does not matter how many doubts from history may be raised against my hopes, which, if these doubts were *proved*, could move me to desist from a task so apparently futile; *as long as these doubts cannot be made quite certain* I cannot exchange the duty for the rule of prudence not to attempt the undoable. (TP, AA 8: 309, my italics)

The idea, I take it, is not merely that we are not certain, but that because the *doubts* cannot be made certain we can cling in hope to the possibility of the outcome.

Unlike the cases of hoping to get a job or overcome an addiction, and more like the cases of achieving a final science or full comprehension, most of our deep, life-structuring moral projects are such that we cannot *know* whether the august objects of our hope (paradigmatically, the Highest Good) are really possible. According to the *Modal Element of Deep Hope*, however, we still must have some sort of assent on the matter in order not to count as merely intensely wishing. And that assent must be firm if this is to be deep rather than humdrum hope. So what we have with respect to these deep moral hopes (and perhaps some of the deep epistemic hopes as well) must be a firm kind of assent based in practical considerations rather than empirical/theoretical considerations. This is what Kant calls "Belief" (*Glaube*): we take it as an article of Belief that the objects of our deep hopes are really possible.

All of this is still at the psychological level. But Kant is ultimately interested not just in what we *can* hope, psychologically speaking, but in what we *may* (*dürfen*) hope from a rational point of view (Log, AA 9: 25). So there must be normative counterparts to the two preceding conditions. Here are the obvious candidates:

> MODAL CONDITION ON RATIONAL HUMDRUM HOPE: S's hope that *p* is rational only if S is *justified in not being certain* that *p* is really impossible.

> MODAL CONDITION ON RATIONAL DEEP HOPE: S's deep hope that *p* is rational only if S is *justified in holding the firm assent* that *p* is really possible.

With these conditions in place, we have the basis for a Kantian moral argument that starts with deep hope and ends with Belief. For if my deep moral hope for something like the Highest Good is to be rational, as Kant thinks it is, then the Belief that allows me to meet the *Modal Condition on Rational Deep Hope* must be justified as well. And the only way to ground the claim that something is really possible, according to Kant, is by appeal to something in actuality (in the Knowledge and Hypothesis cases, it was "our background understanding of nature and its laws"). Finally, the only adequate explanation of the real possibility of something like the Highest Good, Kant argues, is the *actual* existence of God

and the future life. So what we *may* deeply hope for (i.e. the Highest Good) morally *justifies* the Belief that God and the future life exist.

Kant tells us that the third question connects the theoretical and the practical domains. Now we can see how: it is precisely the need to meet the *Modal Constraint on Rational Deep Hope* that forges the connection in Kant's famous moral proof. And while Belief gets all the attention in the discussion of Kant's postulates, in part because Kant says "I had to deny Knowledge in order to make room for Belief" (Bxxx), in fact Belief arrives on the scene only as helpmate to Hope.

But now the anxiety returns: given that some of the objects of such Belief are supersensible, won't there need to be a Modal Condition on this form of assent, too, if it is to be rational? The *Hirngespinst* concern rears its head again, even in a non-epistemic context where we're not hypothesizing or claiming to know.

V The Modal Condition on Belief: Practical Cognition and Symbols

Early in the critical period Kant does not seem to have much modal anxiety with respect to *Vernunftglaube*. There was plenty of anxiety concerning Knowledge and Hypothesis, as we have seen, but with Belief he just assumes that the same interests of reason that ground the postulation of the Belief *also* provide sufficient grounds for holding its objects to be really possible:

> [T]here is a ground of assent that is, in comparison with speculative reason, merely *subjective* but that is yet *objectively* valid for a reason equally pure but practical; ... objective reality is given to the ideas of God and immortality and a warrant (*Befugnis*), indeed a subjective necessity (a need of pure reason) is provided to accept (*anzunehmen*) them, although reason is not thereby extended in theoretical cognition and, instead, all that is given is that their [real] possibility, which was hitherto only a *problem*, here becomes an *assertion* and so the practical use of reason is connected with the elements of the theoretical (KpV, AA 5: 4–5).

Here Kant suggests that any modal condition on Belief would be satisfied by the same considerations that make it subjectively sufficient for us to hold. The subject can be sure that she is not merely groping among ideas that are mere "problems," because the same subjective grounds (rational "needs") that render Belief subjectively sufficient also show that these ideas (as opposed to all the "ideas" that Kant associates with Platonism) "have their reality and are by no means merely brain chimeras (*Hirngespinste*)" (KrV, A 314/B 371). So this is analogous to the case of non-probabilistic Knowledge: if we have, for instance, a demon-

strative proof that p is true, then we *a fortiori* have a proof of O's real possibility, where O is any object referred to in p. The condition is this:

> MODAL CONDITION ON RATIONAL BELIEF: S's Belief that p is rational only if S is in a position to provide "reality" for the concepts in p, which in turn provides some assurance that their objects are really possible.

Elsewhere Kant varies his terminology and says that an appeal to reason's needs and interests establishes the "*subjective* reality" of the ideas (KrV, A 339/B 397) and the "practical possibility" of their objects (KpV, AA 5: 115). But the overall picture is the same.

In section II we looked at different ways in which the requirement to "prove real possibility" might be construed in an epistemic context. Now we can do the same for the requirement that we "provide reality" to Belief. Again, on this issue there seems to be an evolution in Kant's thinking within the critical period itself.[9] In the early to mid-1780s, as we have seen, he articulates the following principle:

> SAME GROUNDS: S is in a position to provide reality for the concept of O referred to in a Belief that p if S is able to appeal to the same considerations that make the Belief that p subjectively sufficient.

But *Same Grounds* did not sit well with some of Kant's early readers, and it's hard to imagine Kant himself being entirely comfortable with it, given his ongoing modal anxiety. In a footnote to the second *Critique,* he acknowledges a criticism he received from a young philosopher named Wizenmann in a 1787 article in *Deutsches Museum:*

> He [Wizenmann] disputes the authorization to conclude from a need to the objective reality of its object and illustrates the point by the example of a *man in love*, who, having fooled himself into an idea of beauty that is merely a brain chimera (*Hirngespinst*) would like to conclude that such an object really exists somewhere. (KPV, AA 5: 144n)

In response to this question from an upstart, the senior professor blusters – peremptorily distinguishing between assent that is based on mere inclination, and assent that is based on needs of *reason* but without elaborating. But the fact that he even mentions Wizenmann's objection suggests that Kant was pressed by it (compare Chance/Pasternack 2018).

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9 For more detailed discussion of these "three solutions" to the problem about the real possibility of objects of Belief, see Chignell 2010.

Elsewhere in the second *Critique*, as well as in the B-edition of the first *Critique,* Kant offers another effort to solve the *Hirngespinst* concern – one that ties the Belief to a kind of *intuition*, and thereby mimics the way the *Modal Condition on Knowledge* is met in empirical and mathematical cases:

> *PRACTICAL COGNITION:* S is in a position to provide reality for the concept of O referred to in a Belief that *p* if S is able to practically cognize that O exists, or something that entails that O exists.

Here's one of the passages added to the B-edition of the first *Critique*:

> Now after speculative reason has been denied all advance in this field of the supersensible, what still remains for us is to attempt to see whether, in its practical cognition, givenness is to be found (*ob sich nicht in ihrer praktischen Erkenntniß Data finden*) for determining that transcendent rational concept of the unconditioned, and in such a way, in accordance with the wishes of metaphysics, to reach beyond the boundaries of all possible experience with cognitions *a priori* that are possible, but only from a practical point of view (*in praktischer Absicht*) (KrV, Bxxi).

This "practical" form of cognition provides a kind of data or givenness for "determining" our rational ideas – ideas about *virtue, obligation, freedom* (though not of *God* and *immortality*, which are beyond the scope of even practical cognition). So now Kant is going beyond mere appeal to the subjective needs and interests cited in *Same Grounds* and insisting that there is also something *given* to us in a kind of cognition, at least with respect to many rational ideas.[10]

But although the awareness of obligation may involve a feeling of respect, and may then lead us to a recognition that we are free, it is still an intellectual-*cum*-affective content with no genuine input from sensibility. So despite Kant's talk of "givenness" (literally "data", *Data*) it's not obvious that practical cognition of the so-called Fact of Reason provides *intuitional* content in a more-than-metaphorical sense. Perhaps there are other kinds of practical cognition that involve genuine cognition – in some places, for instance, Kant suggests that some of our moral and mental features "shine through" in appearances.[11] Still, any "data" or objective reality that rational ideas acquire from such practi-

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10 Note that the concept of "practical cognition" in the *Critiques* is more capacious than the one we find in the *Wiener Logik*, according to which it always takes the form of a command (see AA 24: 900 – 901).

11 For an influential account of practical cognition, see Kain 2010. For features that "shine through in appearance" see Chignell 2022.

cal cognition will be much less determinate and robust than the reality provided to mathematical and empirical concepts by genuine intuitional content.

This difference, I think, is what motivates Kant in the third *Critique* to develop yet another response to the *Hirngespinst* concern with respect to Belief involving rational ideas – a response that more adequately reflects our situation as sensible, intuiting beings. It is in the experience of the beautiful and the sublime, Kant says, that we find "indications" that the objects of ideas are really possible. These indications are not exactly *evidence*, but they do recruit our sensory and imaginative capacities in an effort to dispatch Wizenmann's concerns and assuage our modal anxiety generally.

> SENSIBLE RENDERING: S is in a position to provide reality for the concept of O referred to in a Belief that *p* if S is able to appeal to symbolic features of the natural world and of art, or to our way of experiencing them, to provide a "sensible rendering" of O.

The strategy here is analogous to the earlier proof of real possibility in an epistemic context that appealed to positive coherence. With respect to Belief, however, we appeal not *directly* to our background understanding of nature and its laws, but rather *analogically* to it. In other words, the ideas of reason are not *schematized* in the way that the categories are, or given *exemplars* in experience in the way that empirical concepts are. Rather, they are *symbolized* by way of analogical relations to objects that we *can* sense or imagine – relations that aesthetic experience of both art and nature makes particularly salient. Thus in a key reflection Kant explicitly associates symbols with intuition, but of an indirect sort: "A *symbolum* is an indirect intuition [*indirecte Anschauung*]. Words are not *symbola*, because they don't provide a picture [*Bild*]" (V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 710).

Again, such symbolization of ideas is not a *proof* of – or even evidence of – the real possibility of their objects. But the symbolic or analogical content at least puts some sensible flesh on conceptual bones in a way that reduces modal anxiety. "Taste" on this picture, becomes "basically a faculty for judging the sensible rendering [*Versinnlichung*] of … ideas by means of a certain analogy" (KU, AA 5: 356). In other words, aesthetic experience provides hints and winks (*Winken*) (KU, AA 5: 300) that at least some of our ideas are really possible: "beautiful things indicate (*anzeigen*) that the human being fits into the world" (*Refl* 1820a, AA 16: 127).

One of the ways in which we can "fit into the world" is *cognitively:* the faculties we have can be suited not just to navigate our environment but to systematically *comprehend* it. Here it is revealing that the features the scholastic-rationalist tradition (e. g. Baumgarten) took to be constitutive of beauty – unity amidst diversity, clarity, harmony – are *also* features of a perfectly systematic science of

nature. Thus objects with this sort of classical beauty can be taken to symbolize the rational idea of *natural systematicity* (see Chignell 2006).

Even more importantly: beauty provides hints and winks that we "fit into the world" from a *moral* point of view too – that there is room in, behind or underneath nature for what Kant calls a "supersensible substrate" of free moral creatures.

This purposive sense that nature is "for us" both cognitively and morally, in part because it is grounded in a supersensible substrate, also accompanies experience of the sublime:

> One can describe the sublime thus: it is an object (of nature) *the representation of which determines the mind to think of the unattainability of nature as a presentation of ideas.* Taken literally, and considered logically, ideas cannot be presented... (KU, AA 5: 268).

This is not exactly symbolization, however. The experience of the sublime is purposive insofar as it "awakens" the idea of a domain beyond nature and reminds us that our ultimate beginning and end is not merely empirical.

VI The Third Question and the Third *Critique*

Having looked at the series of modal conditions that, I have argued, animates Kant's theoretical and aesthetic works in the 1780s and 1790s, we can now turn to what is certainly the most controversial interpretive claim in this address.[12]

Why is it that Kant devotes entire books to answering the other questions, but apparently none to answering the third? We have the first *Critique* in 1781, the *Groundwork* and second *Critique* in 1785 and 1788, and then the *Anthropology* in 1798 (which answers the fourth question, added later, regarding "What is the Human Being?"). So what happened to hope? It's natural to look at the writings that were generated between the second *Critique* and the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1797) for the answer. There we have, most prominently, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793), and somewhat less prominently the *Real Progress* essay (1793), *The End of All Things* (1794) and *On Perpetual Peace* (1795).

In a letter to Carl Friedrich Stäudlin in 1793 that accompanied a copy of the published *Religion* book, Kant wrote that he has now "tried to complete the third

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12 Although Palmquist, who was in the audience for this talk at the Oslo Congress, later pointed out that there are hints of this idea in Palmquist (1993, 93–97).

part of my plan." And Benjamin Jäsche quotes Kant in the 1804 *Logic* as saying that "*Metaphysics* answers the first question, *morals* the second, *religion* the third... (Log, AA 9: 25)." Most commentators assume that this means that the book – *Religion* – is the answer to the third question. This despite the facts that there is not much mention of hope in that book (as Palmquist concedes (1993, 310)), and that the first piece (*Stück*) of *Religion* is already deeply engaged with the fourth question – the one about human nature and radical evil. When we consider that Kant initially said (in the first *Critique*) that there were *three* main questions that motivated his philosophy, it is natural to think that the third *Critique* was conceived as the place where the bulk of the answer to the third question would be provided. This could be the case even if the later *Religion* and other essays from the 1790s then filled in the details by way of applying the theory to religion and history.

Although Kant himself doesn't state this architectonic thesis as explicitly as one might like, we find further support for it by simply cataloguing the different kinds of hope found in the third *Critique,* and by noting how they structure the main arguments of the book. We have already discussed the kind of hope, let's call it *HOPE 1,* that is directed to the acquisition of new cognition and knowledge, and that is discussed in the introductions to the third *Critique*. An essential component of such acquisition is the use of what Kant calls the *determining power of judgment* – the power of the mind to bring intuitional content under concepts and categories. We approach the world in each moment hoping to understand it, and we often (Kant says) feel a certain happiness or pleasure (as of hope satisfied) when we manage to use a concept accurately.

Let's call *HOPE 2* the hope that accompanies the *reflecting power of judgment* in its effort to generate new concepts out of experience. This power, Kant tells us in the Introductions, builds and expands our picture of the world, and thus enables us to have a clearer sense of what is really possible and what isn't. Satisfying HOPE 2 is thus an indirect but crucial aid in satisfying HOPE 1. It can hardly be an accident that Kant talks about hope when introducing the reflecting power of judgment in the first Introduction to the third *Critique:*

> For it is *open to question how one could hope to arrive at empirical concepts* of that which is common to the different natural forms... [...] The reflecting power of judgment thus proceeds with given appearances... *artistically,* in accordance with the general but at the same time indeterminate principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system... without which presupposition *we could not hope* to find our way in a labyrinth of the multiplicity of possible empirical particular laws (AA 20: 213–4, partly my italics)

HOPE 3 is the kind that figures into the other characteristic activity of reflective judgment – namely, aesthetic response to beautiful and sublime objects. This is

the topic of the first half of the third *Critique*. As we have seen, the "free and harmonious play of our faculties" is Kant's way of describing our sense that certain art-objects or natural vistas have a significance that goes beyond what we can see or understand using theoretical concepts. When we confront such "a train of thought that [we] can never fully unravel," then, HOPE 1 and HOPE 2 are dashed (KU, AA 5: 300). But instead of this dashing leading to despair, something in the experience of significance in aesthetic contexts arouses HOPE 3 instead. This hope is directed towards a much more grandiose outcome than the cognition of a specific object or scene; rather, as we have seen, HOPE 3 is directed towards the idea that the world as a whole is cognitively and morally a home *for us*.

HOPE 4, finally, is involved in the project of understanding "natural ends" or "objective purposiveness." It is thus the kind of hope that motivates Kant's moral proof. We saw earlier that hope for the purposive order that is the Highest Good satisfies the *Modal Condition on Rational Deep Hope* only if we also adopt Belief in the postulates – God and the immortality of the soul. Kant spends long sections of the "Critique of Teleological Judgment" (the second part of the third *Critique*) on this sort of "ethico-theology." It is a discussion that can feel puzzlingly redundant on what he has already said about the moral argument and the postulates in previous works. Once we recognize that the third *Critique* is where Kant aims to provide the answer to the question about what we may hope, however, the puzzle dissipates. The power to judge objective purposiveness in the world is attended by the hope that the world will indeed exemplify it – particularly in the case of the Highest Good. That's why "ethico-theology" and the moral argument from hope come up again in this context.

The *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is, obviously, about the power of judgment (*Urteilskraft*). And judgment is the power of the mind whose characteristic capacities allow it to serve as a bridge between the theoretical domain of the understanding and the supersensible domain of practical reason. But the question about hope, too, is supposed to unite the theoretical and practical domains. My surmise, then, is that while "subjective purposiveness" is the characteristic principle of the power of judgment, *hope is its characteristic affect*. In other words, HOPE 1 motivates the signature activity of the determining power, while other species of hope animate the activities of the reflective power: generating new concepts (HOPE 2), making aesthetic judgments (HOPE 3), and making judgments about teleological structures in nature and supernature (HOPE 4).

If this interpretive surmise is correct, then it is only when we bring together the third *Critique*, *Religion*, and some of the political and historical essays of the mid-1790s, that Kant's third question is finally answered, and the modal character of the connection between Knowledge and Hope is fully exhibited. But (as ar-

chitectonic principles might have led us to expect) it is the third *Critique* in which the third question takes center stage.

VII Concluding Parergon: A Religion of Pure Hope?

My goal here was to describe how, after Kant had abandoned his early modal-epistemological optimism, the anxiety about *Hirngespinste* led him to generate a series of Modal Conditions that in turn motivate some of the central doctrines of the critical philosophy. I argued that there is a very demanding *Modal Condition on Knowledge* (and ipso facto on *Rational Hypothesis*), and that there are increasingly less demanding Modal Conditions on *Rational Belief, Rational Deep Hope,* and *Rational Humdrum Hope.* Finally, I suggested that the third *Critique* is where Kant presents the bulk of his answer to the third question, fittingly enough, and that we can see this when we look at how different kinds of hope relate to different characteristic activities of the power of judgment. I now want to conclude, however, by conceding that *Religion* does in a few places seem to introduce a unique and thus fifth kind of Kantian hope.

One of the main aims of *Religion* is to characterize the "moral religious" doctrines that can be based in practical rationality alone. In the "General Remark" at the end of each of the four pieces, however, Kant considers some of the most speculative doctrines in the tradition that he knew: original sin, grace, miracles, sacrament. He calls these doctrines "parerga" – supplements to the main. We could never achieve knowledge or even rational Belief of such things because it is hard to say whether their concepts have any "objective reality" – even by way of symbol and analogy. Indeed in some cases (especially that of "grace") we can't even be sure that the concept is *logically* consistent. If such doctrines are allowed into the Court of Reason at all, it should at most be to lurk about in the parergal lobby.

Kant also uses the term "*adiaphora*" ("matters of indifference") here – a term that would have been well-known in Lutheran and Pietist circles. Adiaphoral doctrines and practices (for Protestants, at least) are those that are not clearly incoherent or impermissible, but are also inessential to genuine faith, and not in any way meritorious. *Religion* (especially the fourth piece) conveys a clear anxiety about focusing on such things, given their dubious modal status. But Kant also realizes that for some people in some cultural and historical contexts, clinging in adiaphoral hope to doctrines about grace, miracles, and sacraments can provide a great deal of resolve and stability in the moral life. So this is yet

another kind of hope – *HOPE 5* **–** that is both permissible and important" for certain people in certain contexts.

This raises a final question about religious hope that takes us beyond anything Kant would have considered. For people who are more impressed by problems of evil or hiddenness than Kant was, but who still see the psychological, moral, and existential merits of some sort of religious affiliation, a religion whose *primary* attitude is hope rather than Belief (or any claim to knowledge) might have attractions. Such a view would reject Kant's own notion that full-blown Belief in God and the soul is required to rationalize deep moral hope for the Highest Good, and instead argue that we can have "hope all the way down," so to speak. In other words, we can have hope for the Highest Good, but also mere hope that the things (God, the afterlife) that make the Highest Good really possible exist, rather than full-blown Belief *that* they exist.

In one place in the lectures on philosophical theology, Kant provocatively suggests that the "minimum of theology" is not the Belief that God exists, but rather the Belief that God's existence is really possible (V-Th/Pölitz, AA 28: 998; compare RGV, AA 6: 153 – 4).[13] The present suggestion is that *all* of the commitments in the ethico-religious domain, including the postulates, might be the objects of either deep, life-structuring hope or adiaphoral hope, and in any case *not* Belief or knowledge. The only Beliefs we would have to take on, in such a hope-focused version of Kant's moral religion, are Beliefs that what is hoped for is really possible. For many of us, I think, this minimum of theology might be an attractive starting point, and perhaps a good ending point as well.[14]

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13 Allen Wood highlights these passages about the "minimum" in Wood 1991.

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