Preliminary: Teleology and Kant. Modern philosophy is for the most part antiteleological in tendency, but it is also dominated by problems of teleology from start to finish. No clearer case of this exists than Kant. He is the greatest of all philosophic defenders of antiteleological Newtonian science. Yet remarkably Kant defines philosophy as "the science of the relation of all knowledge to the essential ends of reason (teleologia rationis humanae)."¹ There are numerous passages in Kant on the highest good as the final end or completion of the human rational faculties. His reflections on this end occur in the contexts of every subject Kant discusses: metaphysics, morality, aesthetics, religion, politics, history, as well as his "regulative" treatment of natural purposes. Perhaps Kant uses the terms "end" and "purpose" more frequently than any other non-Aristotelian philosopher. One may include Christian Wolff in this judgment, as well as Leibniz, who is centrally concerned with a reconciliation of some features of ancient teleology with modern natural philosophy. But we cannot understand Kant as merely borrowing problems and terminology from other thinkers.

I begin by noting that the quotation from Kant is about ends of human reason, which is the true focus of his teleological thought: not the end of the natural whole, or even of the human being as a whole. Thus his thinking on teleology reflects a modern set of assumptions, which can be summarized as abstraction from the wholeness of things, human and natural, for the sake of

¹Critique of Pure Reason A839/B867–68. "A" and "B" refer to pagination in the first (1781) and second (1787) editions of this work. I employ the N. Kemp Smith translation with some modifications.
cognitive clarity and certainty. Because true science must be grounded in the intuitive certainties of self-reflective consciousness, science has no access to the inner being of things. Rather, it is based on methods that employ intuitive certainties in analytic reductions of phenomena to their terms, followed by synthetic reconstructions of the phenomena that claim to have explanatory power. But these analytic and synthetic procedures, which one readily sees relate to the "way of ideas" common to modern rationalists and empiricists, exclude any attribution of final causes to things as known to the human mind. Mathematical reconstructions have no internal final causality, and as Berkeley and Hume claim, perhaps no bearing on causality at all.

Yet the activity of reduction and reconstruction is guided by purposes, namely, those that emanate from human beings. Modern mathematical science has a final causality in human welfare. Indeed, the modern rejection of natural or cosmological final causes is motivated in Bacon, Hobbes and Descartes at least in part by a desire to make human final causes supreme, without competition from nature or deity. Human beings alone establish a legislative order that architectonically employs the passions and methodical science as instruments to advance human welfare. Thus modern scientific philosophy is inseparable from a project of substituting a humanly legislated order for cosmic and divine orders; it is a project of emancipation from nature and God that eventually acquires the name "Enlightenment."

Kant without question is part of this modern tradition, which he attempts to secure and complete. He is a reformer of modern foundations, and his reform especially addresses the nature and function of the human final causes that must govern the emancipatory employment of reason. Hence the stress of his teleology, which is the center of his philosophy, is on human reason as the supreme architectonic legislator. Kant's reforms presuppose his awareness of difficulties in the modern foundations; he is not satisfied that his modern predecessors have coherently described the realm of human purposes. It is my view that all of the difficulties Kant sees in modern metaphysics and epistemology, and therefore in modern analysis, relate to this basic defect. Thus nearly all of the earlier modern philosophers subordinated reason's legislative or constructive activity to the passions. Certain master passions, whether those be self-preservation or pride in various forms, are allegedly able to direct reason as instrument to the desirable forms of unified, coherent and effective cognition. But the passions are merely part of nature, and nature as known by the modern natural philosopher is devoid of purpose, and furthermore devoid of goodness, beauty, or morality. Thus one has the difficulty that a purposive activity is governed by what is
not purposive. In order to characterize the human purposes that govern science, the philosopher is compelled to abandon the language of science and to employ the language of ordinary life: the language of pleasure, pain, utility, obligation, happiness, and the like.

But for Kant the problem is not just one of language or epistemology. Kant does not just seek a more adequate scientific account of passionate purposes, such as one could say Hume sought. Nor does he wish to turn the nonpurposive scientific account of nature into a purposive one; for human emancipatory reasons that is undesirable. In no way does he wish to restore the teleological account of human powers as completed by a natural order; the suggestions in Leibniz of such a cosmological telos are central to Kant's disagreements with him. In other words, Kant wants no subordination of human legislative reason to a natural whole. However, he finds such a subordination still present when modern philosophers treat reason as an instrument of passion. Thus in the first place Kant thinks that earlier modern philosophers cannot give a coherent account of their purposes, with modern scientific terms. But even more crucially, he thinks their whole conception of purpose is wrongheaded, from a moral and practical point of view, when they subordinate reason to a modern version of nature.

The thinker most important for Kant's insight into the practical critique of modern reason is Rousseau. That will be the theme of much that follows. Rousseau is most responsible for the Kantian notion that the source of human purposes, above all emancipatory ones, must come from an autonomously self-legislative reason. In this way Kant incorporated, while transforming, Rousseau's attack on the Enlightenment into his own reform of Enlightenment. The very heart of Kant's philosophy is a new way of seeing reason as purposive or teleological, that is to say, as a source of an architectonic order of ends, and therefore Rousseau's impact is directly on the heart of critical philosophy. Among all of reason's self-legislations, there is a highest one identical with philosophy itself. The Kantian bifurcation of the rational into noumenal moral freedom and phenomenal natural mechanism, as two different legislations of reason, has its ultimate foundation in this highest of all legislations of reason. The full elaboration of the resulting structure of legislation is called by Kant the system of reason.

²See note 1 above.
On System in Kant. On the highest architectonic level of the legislation of reason, Kant intends to elaborate a system that will unite and satisfy what he takes to be the most essential interests or demands of reason. What will such a system accomplish? Kant's view of reason as legislative, and of philosophy as the highest form of legislation, surely tells us that reason for him is not *nous* or *intellectus* that apprehends the highest causes or principles of the whole. Thus his system does not correspond to the classical notion of *theoria*, while it is also not merely the methodical instrument that enables the human passions to achieve their practical objects. Reason is understood as a spontaneous power that articulates its own internal structure, which includes both an immanent goal and theoretical conditions that underlie the possibility of attaining the goal. When both the self-determined goal and the self-determined conditions are elaborated, reason emerges as a self-sufficient system that satisfies reason's internal demands. Both the demands and their satisfaction prove to be in many ways independent of a natural order, and thus a notion of reason emerges that is more independent of nature than any previous notion.  

What are the internal demands of reason to be satisfied by its self-articulation into a system? One sees three demands: (1) the justification of a moral view of the world, wherein rational moral autonomy is able to achieve its aims; (2) the satisfaction of the universal metaphysical interest of reason in knowing ultimate wholes or totalities; (3) the justification of the scientific project of employing reason for the sake of human emancipation, which one can sum up as "Enlightenment." One can merely assert at the moment that Kant regards the ideal of a moral world, that is, the highest good as postulated by moral reason, as combining and satisfying all these interests. For the sake of supporting the theoretical possibility and the practical efforts of actualizing this ideal, Kant summons up the whole apparatus of critical philosophy. One can then say that Kant sees his highest task to be to supply such a reconciliation and satisfaction of rational needs as had not been sup-

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3It is of some interest that Heidegger emphasizes just this new conception of reason as a self-sufficient teleological system when speaking of Kant's importance for German philosophy in his lectures on Schelling of 1936, and he notes how it provides an essential foundation for the metaphysics of history in Hegel and Schelling, and by implication in his own thought. See Martin Heidegger, *Schelling: Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (1809), Gesamtausgabe, vol. 42 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988), 59-73.
plied by any previous philosophy, wherein such demands remained in frustrating contradiction.

One could approach the basic concern of Kantian criticism in another way. Kant’s allegiance to a project of furthering the universal rights of man is well known. But is this concern with rights integral to the system of reason? What does the fundamental modern notion of right have to do with Kant’s theoretical critique, or his philosophy as a whole? In truth, not just the political and moral writings, but all Kantian critical writings are about “right.” Thus the fundamental issue of “The Transcendental Deduction of the Categories” in the first Critique is to determine the right use of the categories, the quid juris of their employment. What are human reason’s rights within the whole of things? That is the Kantian question. Therefore one could say that Kant’s philosophy extends the modern concern with rights, or its emancipatory concern, into the questions of metaphysics so as to disclose the implications of that project for the account of being qua being, or of the whole.

But to understand how Kant came to see the need to show those implications one has to look at Rousseau, whose philosophical importance was well appreciated by Kant and his German contemporaries. Kant’s autobiographical declaration, that Rousseau turned him around and showed him that the true end of theoretical inquiry is to establish the rights of humanity, is a familiar piece of lore; but what does it really mean? One can begin with the observation that Rousseau exposed a flaw in the development of modern rationality in its Enlightenment form. The much-hailed progress of modern reason tends to produce terrible contradictions within culture; or, put more directly, the modern pursuit of freedom tends to collide with inexorable human needs for the sacred, the noble, and the beautiful. Man needs not only freedom but also the sense that he lives in a morally governed whole or providential order, and he needs a sense of the conformity of the whole to his strivings for completeness and ultimacy in the use of his cognitive faculties. However, the modern principles formulated by Bacon, Descartes, Locke, and their successors that would support emancipation have thus far blocked or denied those moral and cognitive needs. On the other hand,

\footnote{See Critique of Pure Reason A84–87/B116–119.}

\footnote{See Bemerkungen zu den Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen (1764–65), in Kants gesammelte Schriften, vol. XX (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902–), 44. This edition will be cited as KgS followed by the volume in roman numeral.}
Kant accepts Rousseau’s assessment that one cannot return to the premodern accounts of the moral and intellectual wholes, for these are viewed as incompatible with the modern self-emancipation of reason. One could say Rousseau bequeathes to Kant an unresolved antinomy, which Kant finds unacceptable: metaphysical wholeness without freedom or freedom without metaphysical wholeness. Kant regards the resolution of this antinomy to be the philosopher’s primary duty toward humanity.

Thus reason’s rights in metaphysics must be settled before humanity’s moral and political rights can be fully secure. For the continuing conflict among rational needs is producing a crisis of the Enlightenment and is thus jeopardizing the very primary task of furthering universal rights. Hence the Kantian reconciliation, or the new telos found in the Kantian system, is crucially intended to rescue Enlightenment from self-destruction. Yet one can ask: is it not arbitrary to give the problem of rights this priority, and to make metaphysics instrumental to the securing of right?

One must dig yet deeper to disclose the true foundation of Rousseau’s import for critical philosophy. In what follows, I shall provide the outlines of how Kant’s reading of Rousseau in the 1760s suggested to him a reform of philosophy. The crisis of Enlightenment was classically expressed by Rousseau; but the Kantian solution, which rests on the new account of reason as autonomously legislative, was also indicated by him. Rousseau’s diagnosis of the illness of Enlightenment is that man’s alienation is self-inflicted, through the historical development of reason. Kant takes this point and then argues that the conflict among emancipatory, moral, and metaphysical needs of reason is self-inflicted. This is basic to Kant’s account of reason as self-sufficient system. Reason can rectify the dialectic that it itself has instituted, through autonomous self-legislation. In fact, reason becomes dialectical through overlooking its power of autonomous self-legislation, and by regarding itself as determined by a given natural order. This whole account of reason implies for Kant, as Rousseau’s related account does for him, a fundamentally historical view of reason. The notions of rational dialectic, autonomy, system, history, and teleology are already as intimately linked in Kant as they are in Schelling and Hegel.

This, in very stark terms, is a line of reflection that takes us from the definition of philosophy as legislation of a unifying telos of reason, to the description of the resulting system that satisfies the demands of reason, to the primacy of the problem of rights as determining the system in which metaphysics is merely instrumental to rights, and finally to Rousseau’s view
of the self-alienating tendency of reason as the basis for that primacy. These brief reflections undoubtedly provoke many questions, but I shall take up only the following four: (1) How does the moral telos of reason govern all uses of reason? (2) How in particular does Rousseau’s presentation of a crisis in modern Enlightenment contribute to Kant’s view of this systematic structure of reason? (3) How do such considerations play a role in the arguments of the theoretical critique? (4) How does the whole account issue in an historical approach to reason, as Heidegger suggests? In what follows I shall discuss chiefly materials from before the Critique of Pure Reason of 1781, for as I have said, the account of the end of reason is, in most essentials, prior logically and chronologically to many of the technical arguments of the critical writings. To look at these precritical materials gives one a sense of an overarching purposive context guiding Kant’s reflections in the different regions of the critical philosophy.

II.

Moral Telos and Metaphysics. By the middle of the decade of the 1760s, Kant considers his destined role as philosopher to be to spearhead a reform in the foundations of the modern revolution in philosophy, which he, like Mendelssohn and many other contemporaries, understands to be a humanitarian project employing science for the relief of man’s estate. At this time he is aware of a deep crisis in those foundations, which he claims will lead to the general dissolution of reason, to be followed by reason’s rebirth on new foundations. Kant lives at a propitious moment, when he and other working with him can take advantage of the crisis and inaugurate a new metaphysics that secures “the true and lasting welfare of the human race.” Kant’s reform of philosophy reminds one in some ways of Descartes’, for it must rest on a new first philosophy or metaphysics whose chief benefits are practical. The end of metaphysics is not to support some form of the bios theoretikos, but rather to ground a project with a universalistic, progressive, and irreversible character. These three features of the foundations are always present when Kant employs the term “revolution,” in its recent usage as a great noncyclical rupture, to describe his project.

6See Kant’s letter to Moses Mendelssohn of April 8, 1766, in Immanuel Kant, Correspondence, ed. and trans. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 90.
It is also in this period that Kant begins to think of metaphysics as having a dichotomous structure. One part is the practical part, which gives dignity to all concerns of reason, supplying them with a telos. Kant calls it "first in intention, because ends must precede means." The means to that end will be supplied by a theoretical philosophy which is "first in execution." Thus from the latter 1760s Kant regards any work in theoretical philosophy as merely the first propaedeutic stage to the elaboration of humanity's moral telos. Both the propaedeutic and the telos belong to metaphysics, understood as a dichotomous system. In its practical part, metaphysics is telos-giving, legislative, and architectonic. Thus while being the primary part of metaphysics, it is responsible for the character of the whole. It assigns to theoretical inquiry its genuine tasks; it is only from the standpoint of the practical that one can see the necessity to distinguish between practical and theoretical aspects of metaphysics. The theoretical use of reason is by itself blind to purposes. Thus the theoretician who does not participate in the rational legislation of ends is called a mere "artificer" whose work is merely instrumental to that of the true philosopher-legislator.

This account of philosophy as legislation, and of the subordination of mere theory to the legislator, is presented in detail in "The Architectonic of Pure Reason" in the first Critique. In the 1760s Kant already places the prime source of the moral telos in the "healthy but uninstructed understanding," that is, in a universal common reason which has not been spoiled by metaphysical speculation. The chief concern of theoretical philosophy is negative, that is, to protect the sound insight of common reason by discrediting dogmatism in metaphysics or by showing reason's limits in speculation. Thus the aim is "to get rid of the pseudo-insight of a spoiled head" before such pseudo-insight infects unspoiled minds. Later Kant will say that the idea of the legislation of the philosopher is found, in an inchoate but basically sound form, in the universal common reason. Metaphysics takes its original guidance from such common reason, finding its positive telos-giving part adumbrated therein. One might think that this view of metaphysics is

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7This is found in a reflection from Kant's Nachlass, dated by Erich Adickes as circa 1769. See Kgs XIX, RefleXion 6612.
8See Critique of Pure Reason A832–51/B860–79.
9See the letter to Mendelssohn cited in note 6, 91.
close to a Socratic commencing with *doxa*; but Socratic dialectic exposes radical deficiencies in all *doxa*.\(^{10}\)

The status of the common human understanding in Kant is a crucial index of how the Kantian reform of modern foundations is different from the universalistic projects of Bacon and Descartes. The earlier projects understand common reason as incurably passionate, and ignorant ultimately of its own teleology, or of its role within the whole project of science. Kant accords to common reason something like philosophical integrity; it has a coherence, unity, and implicitly a systematic tendency such as no earlier thinker would ascribe to it. Common reason’s sense of the whole is different from the philosopher’s only in terms of accuracy and thoroughness of articulation, for only the philosopher can provide “logical perfection” to common reason’s insights.

Yet it is this defense of common reason that Kant calls Socratic, and thus the wisdom Kant seeks by means of his new science of the end and the limits of reason is Socratic wisdom. By the mid-1760s, Kant argues that the account of reason’s limits in speculation is carried out not for its own sake, but to buttress the sound grasp of moral teleology found in the “pure moral precepts” of common reason against sophistical doubt. That doubt arises above all from the instrumental views of reason in modern Enlightenment. In Kant’s Socratism, the cave is the world as transformed by theoretical speculation, especially in its modern Enlightenment forms. One is liberated from this cave by an ascent to the simplicity of common virtue. Accordingly one sees that Kant’s Socratism is not truly Platonic; to understand it, one must turn to Rousseau. The central aim of critical philosophy, that of supplying modern emancipation with a *telos* that its original Enlightenment version could not supply, could not have been formulated without Rousseau.

III.

*Rousseau and the Crisis of Reason*. In order to reach the deepest layer of Rousseau’s contribution to the new dichotomous metaphysics one must

\(^{10}\)Kant’s securing of a universalistic and foundational metaphysics by an appeal to common reason is more akin to Heidegger’s uncovering of the hidden ground of metaphysics by an appeal to the ordinary understanding of Being which is present in the human world-orientation of care (*Sorge*), and transcendently presupposed by all the ontic accounts of Being in the tradition of metaphysics.
turn to the marginalia of 1764-65 from Kant’s Nachlaß, for their vivid portrayal and analysis of the crisis of Enlightenment, which is above all else a crisis in the end of reason. By this time Kant had read, or was still reading, the two Discourses, the Social Contract, and above all the Emile, which in agreement with Rousseau he considered that author’s chef d’oeuvre. Thus Kant’s criticism of modern reason on many points follows, while also transforming, the criticism of Rousseau. It is at the moment of this reception and transformation of Rousseau that one can date the true beginnings of the critical philosophy.

Kant notes the many remarkable advances made by the sciences, both theoretical and applied, in modern times, but then asserts that man is not yet the master of nature, only its corrupter (91.13). The brilliant achievements of modern culture have “removed man from his proper place” in nature (45.20–46.3); man has spread his own corruption to all of nature, while he himself has “stepped outside the circle of humanity and become nothing” (41.19–30). Thus in the “present regime ... virtue becomes ever more necessary” while also “ever more impossible” (98.9–10). The decline has reached the point where “laws are of no avail” to restore the flower of youth to a sound moral and spiritual condition (175.5–12). “Human nature has acquired such an impoverished form that its natural bases have become dubious and unrecognizable” (47.13–48.7). This last remark indicates a dual role for modern reason and science in this age of crisis; for they are at once principal causes of the crisis and the means to overcome it. Philosophy, having until now brought on decline, must now have a clear vision of its responsibility; science “must teach man to fulfill properly his appointed place in creation,” recalling him to his humanity (45.17–46.3). Therefore “the final end” of the sciences, the end they have failed to pursue, is to define the vocation of man (175.27), which means to render man a “wiser and more self-sufficient” dweller in the “world appropriate to him” (7.8–11). Not the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and not the use of knowledge to master nature for the sake of the passions, but the use of reason for properly dwelling in the world is the end of the sciences. Man must recover, or uncover for the first time, his just situation in the whole, the situation that is his by

11I will cite the page and line number from KgS XX parenthetically in the text. For a full discussion of these Bemerkungen see my Freedom and the End of Reason: On the Moral Foundation of Kant’s Critical Philosophy (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 61–88.
right. All previous accounts of the end of reason are guilty of injustice. The uncovering of the just situation of reason is not available through any previous account of nature, human or cosmic. Kant takes his instruction from Rousseau's revolutionary account of nature, that is, his disclosure of "the deeply concealed nature of man, and the hidden law whose observation justifies Providence" (58.12–59.3).

One can say that the injustice of man has been his employment of his faculties to achieve illusory ends, or ends for which those faculties are unsuited. The error infecting all past philosophy is not simply an error of ignorance but a moral failing that results in ignorance; it is the failure to examine the human faculties, before all efforts to dominate the whole, in order to determine the ends for which the faculties are naturally destined. Disregard of the moral obligation of self-knowledge results in an ignorant and willful quest for unattainable and inappropriate goods. This quest in turn is the true cause of all human misery and discontent. Nature has instituted no evils, man has brought all the evil he experiences on himself. Thus proper self-examination not only restores man's will to justice, but it justifies Providence, through showing that according to their original destinations, the human faculties generate no evils. Contrary to this primary duty of self-examination, modern Enlightenment pursues ends of vanity, mere pleasure or opinion of the good, with no regard for the true good; this is to say that it endorses merely instrumental views of reason (39.20–24, 55.1–6, 84.10–11, 172.25–26). If reason is to survive the modern era as a faculty sure of its power to rule itself, those instrumental views must be criticized. That criticism will secure reason's rightful place in the whole, as self-ruling.

All the same, Kant's Socratic turn does not return philosophy to an ancient inquiry into the good. The human faculties do not find their proper destiny in metaphysical accounts of the whole, or in knowledge of a natural order that lies beyond those faculties and completes them. Such inquiries belong to the history of human self-ignorance and injustice. Kant, following Rousseau, says we must ask how man originally embarked on the path to his present misery and corruption; the earlier forms of metaphysical science did not reverse that movement, and did not inquire into the causes of human decline. Now it may seem that Kant is as political thinker simply asking about the causes for certain kinds of human unhappiness—those he associates with luxury, inequality, servitude and war—and that this inquiry should not impinge on the evaluation of the worth of science or metaphysics. Yet for Kant the evils mentioned have utmost metaphysical significance. This is because they are symptoms of something more profound, the misuse
of reason, such that reason confounds or alienates itself. The present age has reached a critical moment in such self-confounding, and for the first time in human history, many thinkers—most notably Rousseau—are raising the question of whether it is not an injustice on the part of nature or Providence to have given man the faculty of reason. This question emerges as the metaphysical question *par excellence*, and it must be addressed before traditional theoretical inquiry can pursue the cognition of the whole.

Expressed another way, the rejection or affirmation of reason as a good is in some crucial way a nontheoretical stance, one that conditions whether or not theory will be possible at all, as a human activity. Kant is famously interested not simply in what we can know, but in the possibility of knowing. It is now evident to us from the *Nachlaß* how that question of possibility is a practical one. The affirmation of reason as a good clearly must precede the continuation of the ancient and never-ending efforts to use reason for various ends, theoretical, moral, and utilitarian. That affirmation will be equivalent to insight into the goodness of the human rational constitution, and thus, to a kind of theodicy. Such a theodicy must surely rest on certain kinds of knowledge; it is not merely a blind decision of the will, or an existential leap of faith. The knowledge that the present moment in history needs so urgently is knowledge of the conditions that guarantee a harmonious and nondialectical functioning of reason in all its activities. The present moment calls for a new kind of inquiry which is neither theoretical in a premodern sense nor analytical in a modern sense. It turns to reason itself in order to secure, for all future generations, the internal harmony of that faculty. Kant will, a few years after these remarks, call it “transcendental.”

Since modern Enlightenment endorses an instrumental view of reason it is especially culpable. Since it reduces the importance, or even denies the meaningfulness, of reflecting on the proper ends of the faculties, it promotes their misuse. The transcendental inquiry that seeks out the conditions of proper functioning is inherently a teleological investigation. It is also a new kind of metaphysics. It is not a metaphysics of the first principles of an independent knowable whole, but a ruling science of the ends of science, summoning reason and science to their proper employments, which can be determined only by means of an inquiry into the grounds of reason’s proper functioning.
Rousseau and the Transcendental. In the 1760s Nachlaß Kant uses a term with Rousseauian resonances, to characterize the conditions of a soundly functioning, and therefore just, human reason: simplicity. This term no doubt evokes suspicions of sentimentality, yet it has profound sources not only in Rousseau, but in the modern tradition, that relate to the idea of system. The moral precepts that indicate the true telos of reason are called “simple” (6.6–11). Metaphysically, this is to say that human reason, prior to theoretical inquiry, possesses within itself, autonomously, the grounds for self-consistent functioning. Prior to whatever rules or laws of the natural world reason may acquire empirically, reason possesses principles enabling all of its knowledge to take the form of a system. Rousseau shows how this is the case in the moral realm. For the human will, in order to preserve itself as an effective force for self-preservation in the social order, can uncover the logic of the general will. According to that logic, the will alienates itself wholly to the decision of the majority, in order to secure itself against the rule of a tyrannous individual or faction. This logic of the will’s self-preservation is immediately taken up by Kant as the principle for the pure moral will, which adopts the principle of universalizability in order to secure its freedom from arbitrary particular interests, including self-interest. Extreme alienation is the condition for unity and coherence with oneself. The moral will is inherently systematic and in this sense, simple.

I wish to argue that the logic of this will also supplies Kant with the idea of the transcendental logic of coherent cognition, the form of cognition that avoids the antinomies and other dialectical forms of uncritical speculation. Earlier modern philosophers had already sought coherence and uniformity in cognition, by means of formulating methods that abstract from special features of subject matters, and that provide common terms of reduction for all subject matters—terms that indeed were often called “simples.” The search for such coherence and unity is inseparable from an emancipatory movement away from dependence on a given natural order seen as deceptive, arbitrary, and divisive. All modern philosophy seeks a unifying telos for humanity that overcomes the divisiveness of nature and the divine. Now Rousseau and Kant introduce this new problematic—that the new forms of reason, as much as the old, perpetrate that divisiveness, or contradictory goals. The passions as they unfold in human history do not supply a unifying telos. Simplicity and systematic order are not the concerns solely of
methodical reason that traces out natural laws within the tightly regulated framework it imposes on the contents of consciousness. They must also be the concern of a legislative reason that supersedes passion as the giver of ends for all uses of methodical reason.

With the help of Rousseau, Kant discovers that in both practical legislation of ends and in theoretical cognition, reason has within itself the criteria for coherence and simplicity. Thus reason’s neglect of such criteria is a self-neglect for which it has nothing to blame but itself. Indeed, Kant says it is a natural tendency of reason to neglect those immanent principles and to seek “dogmatically” for authorities external to itself. Thus by a natural dialectic reason seeks for knowledge of completed or unconditioned wholes in the given material of sensibility, thereby missing the true character of all ideas of wholes—that they are spontaneous projections of reason serving to regulate its own activity. They have no existence apart from such rationally stipulated self-regulation. While this dialectical tendency, leading to the antinomic accounts of wholes, is natural, it is self-inflicted and corrigeable.

For the accounts of practical end-giving and theoretical cognition as self-regulating systems, Kant is indebted to Rousseau, who introduced these innovations in modern thought: (1) all forms of reason are forms of self-relation; (2) all success in reason’s operations is attributable to observing salutary forms of self-relation, and not to compliance with an independent natural order; (3) all unhappiness and discontent in human life is rooted in failures of self-relation, for which any natural order is blameless. It is not an overstatement to say that these proposals are important for the various logics of self-relation found in German idealist philosophy. Kant states what he believes Rousseau meant to say, when he asserts that “freedom,” that is spontaneous self-relation, is the presupposition of all uses of reason.12

The best known source for these proposals in Rousseau is his second Discourse,13 offering an account of human history in which nature is shown to be blameless for the inequality and other evils in the social condition. It is not natural inclination that makes men bad, Rousseau asserts against Hobbes; it is rather the way that reason transforms inclination into passion, whereby man comes into opposition with himself and other human beings. This is to say that reason extends, through the imagination, the desires be-

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12See Kgs XVIII, Reflexion 4904.
13See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes (1755).
yond simple needs, thus rendering the individual human being unable to satisfy his own desires, or be one with himself. In order to be himself, to preserve himself as a whole, he is forced by his passions to rely on others, and on society, and thus he is fractured, a mere fragment of a larger whole. His desires extend beyond his own powers and thus are at odds with those powers; the individual becomes at odds with himself. The development of language, institutions, arts and sciences does not restore wholeness but aggravates the desires further by giving them new objects, and thus pits the social man even more against himself—his truer, simpler, more solitary self. Progress is a self-defeating chimera that deepens human dependence while it claims to make humans free.

Thus reason can attempt to restore the evil it has created, but will never be wholly successful in doing so. The general will is a kind of ideal of self-unity that actual human institutions can only approximate. The deepest point is that reason itself is self-relating and thus self-opposing. By its essence reason suffers a diremption between the immediately given—the mere sensation of existence in the here and now, enjoyed by prerational beings—and a context of connections that are logical, temporal, and causal. Cognition with general ideas is impossible without such diremption; the diremption between the immediate and the general is implicit in any judgment that uses the simple copula "is," as in the judgment "This apple is red." Human judgment, coeval with speech, makes possible desire of what is not immediate, and thus opens up an "abyss," as Kant says, that reason itself can never close. The human power of inventing ideas creates indeterminate possibilities for desire, and thus indeterminate possibilities for self-enslavement. Human life is evermore compelled to take place in a state of unfulfillment between the real and the ideal, or the actual and the possible.

Rousseau argues that reason is this power of subordinating the immediate or singular to the nonimmediate or general, and that this power, far from being grounded in an external natural order, is the self-generated offspring of human perfectibility, that peculiar malleability of faculties that we see only in humans. Thus human perfectibility, or history, has introduced this self-diremption into the tranquil order of things. Somehow one animal species, the human, has this ability to oppose itself; thus reason is more essentially self-misrelation than the source of harmony. Yet it must try to correct the disharmony it has introduced, and such efforts are the content of

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14 See Kgs VIII, 112 ("Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte").
Rousseau's various schemes for a radical reformulation of the Enlighten­
ment. It is evident that these schemes presuppose the Enlightenment, which
they seek to overcome: for Rousseau's account of man takes further the
modern Enlightenment accounts of sociality and rationality as dubiously
natural. By radicalizing this Enlightenment, Rousseau hopes to overcome it.
He convinces Kant of the need to go beyond the instrumental view of rea­
son altogether.

V.

Critical Philosophy and the Goal of History. It is impossible here to ana­
lyze in detail the relation between such concerns of the 1760s and the ac­
count of the negative propaedeutic, the theoretical phase of metaphysics,
which Kant develops in this period. He begins to describe a new science of
the limits of reason,15 which will be a science of the human subject, a science
in which reason "judges its own procedure and has knowledge not only of
objects but knowledge of their relation to the human understanding."16 This
science again rests on the view of reason as committing injustice through
improper self-relation, which injustice is to be cured by reference to criteria
for order lying within reason. Only reason can judge its own case. The self­
examination of reason takes as its starting-point the character of ordinary
judging as a self-relation in which two representations are combined by the
copula "is."17 In order to have any cognition, an attribute must simulta­
necessarily be related and distinguished from a subject of predication. Kant sees
in that activity evidence for a rational spontaneity that presupposes certain
conditions. Those conditions, being equivalent to the categories of object­
hood of concern to traditional ontology, are not directly intuitable or
constructible like mathematical concepts. Yet metaphysicians have tried to
represent those categories as certain objects—God, the soul, and the world­
and as completed wholes, thus supposing they could be realized in intuition
as objects. This error has given rise to the antinomies and paradoxes of spec­
ulation, which are central to the current crisis of reason.

A peculiar new kind of deduction eventually comes into view for Kant
after 1769, which would show that the categories have functions only as

15See KgS XX, 181.1–4.
16KgS II, 369.
17See KgS II, 57–61.
conditions for the self-relation of reason in judging, and no other use theoretically. As such conditions, the categories apply only to finite minds such as ours, for which minds self-relation implies a distinction between conceptual universality and intuited singularity. This demonstration, Kant thinks, removes the temptation to suppose that the categories could apply to the world in itself, as the object of a divine mind or any possible mind. This new discussion of ontological categories is actually a logic of the finite mind's self-consistent activity, so Kant gives it the name "transcendental logic."

Now Kant repeatedly asserts that the primary benefit of this logic is practical; its theoretical interest falls far behind its moral import, since theoretical science must abandon the proud claims of the old ontology, of extending human knowledge into being in itself. What the propaedeutic logic achieves definitively, Kant claims, is a new finality—one could even say an end to history or to the most crucial component of history: the end to the human endeavor to formulate the final human ends or wholes, for which reason always strives, in terms of an independent order of nature or being. Ancient views of reason, as much as modern instrumental views, make this error of subordinating reason to nature or being. Critical philosophy, bringing an end to a misguided epoch of human history, allows self-legislative practical reason to determine ultimate purposes without hindrances from speculative thought.

I close with a quotation from the Critique of Pure Reason that strikingly brings together metaphysics, moral history, and teleology into a single focus:

We find, in the history of pure reason, that until the moral concepts were sufficiently purified and determined, and until the systematic unity of their ends was understood in accordance with these concepts and from necessary principles, the knowledge of nature, and even to a considerable degree the culture of reason in many other sciences, could at times give rise to only crude and incoherent concepts of the deity, or at other times resulted in an astonishing indifference with respect to this question.

18See Critique of Pure Reason, Bxiv, Bxxxi, B25.
19See Critique of Pure Reason A852-56/B880-84 ("The History of Pure Reason").
20Critique of Pure Reason A817/B845.
The germ of the true system of reason lies in moral reason, which undergoes progressive self-purification in the course of history, thereby uncovering its essence as the mastery of nature by freedom. At the same time, this insight provides the key to the true conception of deity, as the source of the unity of the ends pursued by free rational beings. Metaphysics and its highest concern—the existence and nature of the divine ground of the whole—reaches its historical completion and destiny not through theoretical insights and arguments alone, but on the foundation of humanity's discovery of its right (and duty) as rationally self-legislating to be the ground of the true "system."

*The Catholic University of America*

*Washington, DC*