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SCIENCE AND FAITH IN KANT'S FIRST *CRITIQUE*

by

EVERETT C. FULMER

Under the Direction of Dr. Eric Entrican Wilson

ABSTRACT

This thesis engages in an interpretative debate over Kant's general aims in the first *Critique*. I argue that a defense of the rational legitimacy of religious faith is at the very center of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Moreover, I argue that Kant's defense of faith is inextricably bound up with his views on the legitimacy of science. On my account, Kant's *Critique* not only demonstrates that science is fully consistent with religious faith, but also that science, when properly understood, actually favors religious belief over non-belief.

INDEX WORDS: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Religion, Science, Faith and reason, Critical philosophy, General aims of the first *Critique*

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EVERETT C. FULMER

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Master of Arts

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SCIENCE AND FAITH IN KANT'S FIRST *CRITIQUE*

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DEDICATION

To my wife, without whose love my concept of faith would be bland and empty.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. OVERVIEW

In the first half of the twentieth century, there was a tendency in Anglo-American Kant scholarship to treat the *Critique of Pure Reason* as primarily aimed at overcoming external-world skepticism.[1] It's fair to say that this tendency has now been successfully overturned.[2] In the past few decades, scholars have shown that such a narrow reading of the *Critique* misrepresents the grandeur of Kant's work and veils the eighteenth century masterpiece in the preoccupations of twentieth century analytic philosophers. I applaud this development. However, I suggest that it has not yet gone far enough. Several contemporary Kant scholars still read the *Critique* as primarily concerned with forms of skepticism—Humean, Pyrrhonian, or both.[3] Others read the *Critique* as primarily concerned with undercutting metaphysical dogmatism.[4] It is my view that in both cases a substantial contemporary bias persists. I seek to show that, in spite of the paucity of such references in contemporary literature, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is centrally concerned with defending the rational legitimacy of religious faith.[5]

B. ARGUMENATIVE AIMS AND KEY TERMS

In what follows, I demonstrate three claims. I will attribute two claims to Kant and then, thirdly, argue that those two claims are central to the structure of the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

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[1] P.F. Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense* is the paradigm of this tendency.

[2] A nice example of this overturning is, Paul S. Loeb, "The Anglo-American Revision of Kant's Epistemology" (PhD diss., University of California Berkeley, 1991).

[3] For Pyrrhonian, see Forster, Michael, *Kant and Skepticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). For Pyrrhonian and Humean see Guyer, Paul. "Kant on Common Sense and Scepticism." *Kantian Review*, Vol. 7 (2003): 1-37

[4] See Stern, Robert. "Metaphysical Dogmatism, Humean Scepticism, Kantian Criticism." *Kantian Review*, Vol. 11 (2006): 102-16.

[5] All references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* will cite the standard (A) and (B) edition page numbers. References to Kant's other works will include an abbreviation of the work's title along with the volume and page number of the Academy edition of the *Gesammelte Schriften.* Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of Kant's texts will be from the current Cambridge edition of Kant's works.

First, I claim that Kant's *Critique* argues that religious faith and science are fully consistent. That is to say, the assertion "God exists" and the claims of science can both be true.[6] Moreover, Kant argues that faith and science are *necessarily* consistent. Hence, no finding of science could ever contradict the belief that God exists.[7]

Secondly, I will show that Kant argues that science favors belief in the existence of God over its denial. The sense of "favoring" here will be cashed out in term of rational coherence. Hence, Kant argues that faith and science form an internally coherent whole, whereas the combination of science and atheism is incoherent. The claimed coherence between faith and science is not in regard to any particular finding of science. Instead, the coherence is claimed to hold between faith in God and the most basic assumptions of the scientific enterprise.

Thirdly, I will argue that these two claims are central to the argumentative structure and stakes of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. To fail to acknowledge Kant's religious aims is to fail to understand the argumentative structure that unifies the *Critique* around a single critical position.

Before continuing, I would like to explain what "science" and "faith" mean in the context of these three theses. Both are technical terms. Science (*Wissenschaft*), for Kant, is far more inclusive than the contemporary English term connotes. Kant understands "science" to include all systematically organized bodies of knowledge: empirical science, pure physics, mathematics, logic, and philosophy (*MAdN* 468).[8] This inclusive sense of science was not unique to Kant in his day; the eighteenth-century Latin, French, Italian, and even English cognates were all understood to refer to any systematically organized body of knowledge.[9] In Kant's view, "systematic unity is that which first

---

[6] For Kant, the consistency also extends to the claims "the soul is immortal" and "the will is free." However, the focus for this paper will be on the theological claim.

[7] This follows because consistency is equivalent to the absence of a contradiction. A set of statements is consistent IFF there is at least one true value assignment such that all statement are true. But such a true value assignment is possible IFF there is no contradiction between statements. Conversely, to say that two statements are inconsistent is just to say that they cannot both be true.

[8] Technically, according the preface to the *Critique,* Kant considers logic to be the propaedeutic to *Wissenschaft* and not *Wissenschaft* proper (Bix). However, the distinction between the propaedeutic to science and science proper is irrelevant to this discussion.

[9] Gary Hatfield, "Notes on Terminology" from the introduction to *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xxiii.

makes ordinary cognition into science" (A832/B860).[10] In other words, science is the attempt to integrate knowledge claims into systematic wholes.

"Faith" (*Glaube*) in this context will specifically refer to the claim "God exists." Kant discusses faith as one of the modes of assent (*Fürwahrhalten*), along with knowledge (*Wissen*) and opinion (*Meinung*).[11] Kant distinguishes between these three modes of assent in terms of the grounds (*Gründe*) that one has in each case. The grounds of faith are described as follows, "If taking something to be true is only subjectively sufficient and is at the same time held to be objectively insufficient, then it is called having faith (*glaubend*)" (A822/B850).[12] By "objectively insufficient" Kant means that the grounds of faith do not include an object of possible experience.[13] By "subjectively sufficient" Kant intends that the grounds of faith are claimed to be "necessarily valid for everyone," i.e., for every subject (A822/B850). Hence, faith is a mode of assent in which the assertion is neither confirmed nor denied by experience and where the assent is based on reasons that any rational subject would also have.

Kant distinguishes among three kinds of faith: pragmatic, moral and doctrinal. Each is distinguished in terms of the sort of subjectively sufficient grounds that it has. In Kant's terms, pragmatic beliefs are grounded on the "hypothetically necessary conditions" for achieving some end that I have set for myself (A823/B851). Moral beliefs are based on the "absolute necessary" end of willing the highest good (A828/B856). And finally, doctrinal beliefs are based on the necessary conditions for achieving some end where the necessary condition itself is merely a theoretical proposition (A826/B854). Kant is clear that faith in God is a matter of doctrinal belief: "Now we must

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[10] "Every doctrine that is supposed to be a system…is called a science" (*MAdN* 467).

[11] Andrew Chignell has recently published a nice discussion of this section. I will be loosely following his lead. See Andrew Chignell, "Belief in Kant" *Philosophical Review* 116:3 (2007) 323-360.
In their translation of the Cannon of Pure Reason, Guyer and Wood who tend to use "belief" and "believing" for "*Glaube*" and "*glauben*." Guyer and Wood admit that at some points in the Cannon, "faith" would be a better translation, but they forgo these points in the interest of terminological consistency (c.f. Cambridge Edition of *KrV* p.687 ft.d). In contrast, I will, where English allows without too much stretching, translate *Glaube* and *glauben* as "faith" and "having faith" respectively. Since my project focuses on the religious dimension of *Glaube,* this translation choice is appropriate.

[12] In contrast to faith, knowledge has both objectively and subjectively sufficient grounds and opinion has neither.

[13] Chignell, "Belief in Kant" 337.

concede that the thesis of the existence of God belongs to doctrinal faith" (A826/B854).[14] According to Kant, "God exists" is a theoretical proposition that is necessary for a certain end—namely, natural science. "[T]heoretical knowledge of the world," Kant writes, "necessarily presupposes this thought [God exists] as the condition of my explanation of the appearances of the world" (A826/B854).

Finally, a few words are in order on Kant's sense of "God." At least insofar as doctrinal faith is concerned, Kant's God is exceedingly abstract. In regard to God as a mind-independent transcendental object, Kant writes, "we have only presupposed a Something, of which we have no concept at all of what it is in itself" (A697/B725). However, we are given notice of this transcendental "Something" by means of the human idea of God; it is this subjective *idea* that is Kant's focus (*Prol.* 4:355).[15] Kant refers to the idea of God in several related ways: as the idea of the "complete sum total of the possible" (*Prol.* 4:330); as the idea of "perfect systematic unity" (A681/B709); and as the idea of the "greatest systematic and purposive unity" (A699/B727). In addition, Kant distinguishes the *ideal* of God from the *idea* of God. The *idea* of God is a set—the set of the entire field of possibility. In contrast, the *ideal* of God is an individual—the singular ground in which the entire field of possibility is unified (A575/B607). However, Kant often conflates the distinction between idea and ideal. In fact, one of Kant's standard ways of referring to the idea of God, "the perfect systematic unity," already conflates the two terms—since perfect systematicity, for Kant, seems to require that the entire system be unified in a single grounding principle.[16] I suggest that much of Kant's discussion operates at a level on which the distinction between "idea" and "ideal" is not rel-

[14] Kant also writes that faith in the existence of God can be grounded on moral belief. Hence, for Kant there are both moral and theoretical grounds for faith in God (A828/B856).

[15] In regard to the claim that we are given notice of a transcendental something: "Thus is one asks (in respect of transcendental theology) first whether there is anything different from the world which contains the ground of the world order…the answer is: without a doubt. For the world is a sum of appearances and so there has to be a transcendental ground for it" (A696/B724). "[A]ppearnces always presuppose a thing in itself, and so provide notice of such a thing, whether or not it can be cognized more closely" (*Prol.* 4:3555).

[16] Kant discusses "perfection" as requiring one and only one ground at B114. Furthermore, Kant's claim that reason drives towards parsimony also seems to require this (cf. A305/B361).

evant.[17] Hence, following Kant, I will tend to use "idea of God" in a manner at that is not meant to exclude the "ideal of God." At those places where Kant's argument does seem to exclude one or the other sense of God, I will make note.

C. THE STAKES

I take the stakes of my three aims to be twofold. First, Kant's *Critique* is relevant for contemporary discussions on the relation among faith, reason, and science. Recent decades have seen both religious fundamentalists and secular atheists make claims about the incompatibility of science and religion. On the one hand, Kant's *Critique* should be read as directly arguing against all those who think that religion is undercut by science or that faith is in anyway irrational. On the other hand, the *Critique* should be read as arguing against any religious person who devalues science as contrary to devout faith. Critique, if successful, truly does provide the middle way. Secondly, my project takes a novel stand in the secondary literature insofar as it emphasizes a religious focus in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Below, I will briefly indicate the extent to which my project is in tension with current interpretive trends.

1. Two Trends in the Contemporary Literature

This project seeks to correct two tendencies in the secondary literature: one according to which the *Critique of Pure Reason* has no religious aims, and one according to which Kant's positive religious thought excludes the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I will begin with the former.

Four recent works purport to address the primary aims and arguments of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, yet none of them contain a single reference to the work's religious aims. Jay Rosenberg's (2005) commentary mentions nothing of Kant's religious aims, yet claims to have "at least

[17] Furthermore, if the *Critique* aims to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith, then the transition from the idea of God to the ideal of God would constitute progress; hence after the introduction of the ideal it would be contrary to Kant's aim to return to the idea at the exclusion of the ideal.

briefly, met and elucidated all of its [the *Critique*'s] constructive theses as well as its most important critical conclusion."[18] George Dicker (2004) equally ignores the *Critique*'s religious concerns and writes that the *Critique*'s primary aims are exhausted by this two-fold characterization: (1) to defend scientific and everyday knowledge against Humean skepticism and (2) to show that traditional metaphysics is impossible.[19] Even the extensive Blackwell companion to Kant (2006) contains not one article pertaining to critical philosophy's defense of faith.[20] Finally, Jay Reuscher (1996) has written a concordance of the first *Critique* in which he claims to index "virtually all the texts of substantive importance."[21] The topical index includes entries on philosophy of language, the mind-body problem, and the problem of other minds; however, there is not a single entry for God, faith, or religion.

Of those scholars who do understand Kant's positive religious aims, there is a tendency to treat Kant's defense of faith as more or less exhausted by his moral arguments in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. This tendency is somewhat understandable, since Kant does make some remarks that seem to suggest such a reading, but it is, on my account, an incomplete view of Kant's positive religious thought. Several recent works display this trend. The stated goal of Allen Wood's *Kant's Moral Religion* (1970), for instance, is to vindicate the argumentative rigor of Kant's rational defense of faith.[22] However as the title of the work suggests, and as its content makes clear, Wood takes Kant's rational defense of faith *per se* to be nothing more than Kant's moral arguments for faith in the second *Critique.*[23] More recently, Lara Denis, in an article entitled "Kant's Criticism of Atheism," discusses only Kant's moral arguments in the second *Critique*. [24] Similarly, Christopher Insole argues that religious concerns are irreducibly important for Kant.[25] However, this amounts to argu-

[18] Jay Rosenberg, *Accessing Kant: A Relaxed Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason* (OUP 2005), 297
[19] Georges Dicker, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* (OUP, 2004), 6
[20] Grahm Bird (ed.) *A Companion to Kant* (Blackwell, 2006).
[21] Jay Reuscher, *A Concordance to the Critique of Pure Reason* (Peter Lang Publishing, 1996).
[22] Allen Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1970) p. xii
[23] Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, xii
[24] Lara Denis, "Kant's Criticism of Atheism" *Kant-Studien* (2003) 94.2:198-219
[25] Christopher Insole, "The Irreducible Importance of Religious Hope in Kant's Conception of the Highest Good" *Philosophy* (2008) 83, 3: 333-351

ing only that religious hope is irreducibly important to Kant's moral theory. Stephen Palmquist explicitly endorses this trend when he writes that "the theology [Kant] presents in…the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), is essentially *negative*…Kant's unambiguous confession that he believes in God…[is attributed to] requirements that arise out of our moral nature."[26] My project challenges both of these trends in the secondary literature. On my account, scholars must treat the first *Critique* as centrally aimed at defending religious faith, and scholars must regard Kant's positive religious thought to include his theoretical philosophy.

D. THE *PRIMA FACIE* PLAUSIBLITY OF THIS PROJECT

Kant is one of those rare writers who states explicitly how he should be interpreted. In the following project, I aim to read the *Critique* according to its author's instructions. It is widely acknowledged that the first *Critique* contains many passages that are in tension with each other—or worse, that flatly contradict each other. One standard response to these inconsistencies is to attempt to construct the most philosophically plausible interpretation of the first *Critique*, while discounting conflicting passages as moments when Kant was merely careless in his writing. This hermeneutical principle has its merits, but it ignores Kant's own advice. Kant acknowledges the plausibility of finding inconsistent passages in the *Critique*, and he addresses this problem:

> Also, in any piece of writing apparent contradictions can be ferreted out if individual passages are torn out of their context and compared with each other…*but that can be very easily resolved by someone who has mastered the idea of the whole*. (Bxliv, emphasis mine)

I read this passage (and others like it) as containing Kant's views on how the *Critique* should be interpreted. Kant's hermeneutical injunction, in short, is to resolve inconsistencies between individual passages by deferring to the *Critique*'s primary aims. In order to follow Kant's injunction we must have some initial sense of the *Critique*'s main goals. In the preface to the second edition, the same place where we found Kant's interpretive injunction, he makes several remarks on the stakes and aims of critical philosophy. When he does so, faith and religion are prominent themes.

[26] Stephen Palmquist, "Kant's Moral Panentheism" *Philosophia* (2008) 36: p. 20-21

Kant writes that the *Critique*'s aim to limit speculative reason is "simultaneously" a positive defense of the legitimacy of God, the simple nature of the soul, and morality (Bxxv- Bxxix). Kant takes the limitation of reason to be required for the legitimacy of these ideas; hence he writes, "Thus I cannot even **assume God, freedom, and immortality**…unless I simultaneously **deprive** speculative reason of its pretension to extravagant insight" (Bxxx, boldface is Kant's). Kant's limitation of speculative reason, i.e., his undercutting of traditional metaphysics, is uncontroversially regarded as one of the *Critique*'s primary aims. But Kant clearly indicates that the positive results of this project are a defense of God, freedom, and immortality. Hence, Kant's famous dictum, "Thus I had to deny **knowledg**e in order to make room for **faith**," seems to be a succinct formulation of the *Critique*'s main aims and not a tangential historically conditioned aside (Bxxx). While a brief reference to a few passages in the preface does not settle the question, it does make it initially plausible that the *Critiqu*e aims to defend the legitimacy of God, immorality, and freedom.

Hence, the B-preface recommends the following hermeneutic: apparent inconsistencies in the *Critique* should be resolved by reference to Kant's defense of the concepts of God, freedom, and immortality. Aside from the transparency this gives to my project, I also take it to give *prima facie* plausibility to my three theses (that Kant argues that faith and science are (1) consistent, (2) coherent, and (3) central to the *Critique*), since they are so clearly in line with Kant's own claims about the stakes and aims of critical philosophy.

II. KANT ON THE CONSISTENCY OF FAITH AND SCIENCE

If we take Kant's own statements on the aims of the *Critique* seriously, then we should expect the *Critique* to contain determinate arguments for the legitimacy of religious faith. It is helpful to think of Kant's defense of faith as a two-step process. The first step is to show that religious faith is no obstacle to rationality or science. I will refer to this as the consistency argument. The second step is to show that science, when properly understood, actually favors religious faith over non-belief. I will call this the coherence argument. We will begin with the consistency argument.

A. THE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE

The argument that I am referring to as the consistency argument, if we include all of is sub-premises, spans the majority of the Aesthetic and the Analytic. This is in part because the scope of Kant's conclusion is broader than just science—Kant argues that proper knowledge acquisition and faith are consistent. Since science is a sub-domain of proper knowledge acquisition, it follows that science and faith are consistent. Due to this argumentative structure, a few words on Kant's sense of "knowledge" are in order.

"Knowledge" (*Wissen*) for Kant is properly understood as having the logical form of judgment. Since Kant divides judgments into analytic and synthetic, knowledge can take the form of either an analytic or synthetic judgment. Both analytic and synthetic judgments can yield new knowledge claims, though the sort of new knowledge is distinct in each case. In analytic judgments the implicit nature of the subject term is made explicit in the predicate; in such a way analytic judgments can yield a new degree of insight into that which was previously known less clearly. For example, the analytic judgment "All bodies are extended" yields a greater degree of insight into the nature of bodies by making explicit the fact that extension is part of the concept of body (A7/B11). In contrast, synthetic judgments add a predicate to the subject that is external to the subject term.

For example, the judgment "All bodies are heavy" positively extends my knowledge of bodies by attaching to it a wholly distinct predicate (A7/B11).

Knowledge in the form of synthetic judgments is a key focus in the *Critique*, so much so that Kant has a special term for it, "cognition" (*Erkenntnis*). There is some disagreement as to whether cognition, for Kant, is equivalent to knowledge in the form of a synthetic judgment or whether such knowledge is the result of successful cognition.[27] In either case, what matters for our purposes is that the expansion of human knowledge requires cognition. Cognition, in turn, requires a synthesis of the activities of two distinct mental faculties—sensibility and the understanding. The understanding supplies concepts while sensibility provides intuitions from experience. Cognition is attained by means of subsuming an empirical intuition under a concept of the understanding. In such a way, the intuition is cognized through the abstract concept and the abstract concept is made concrete through the intuition. This position—Kant's claim that cognition requires the subsumption of intuitions under concepts—is known as the "discursivity thesis."[28]

If the discursivity thesis specifies the necessary conditions for knowledge in the form of a synthetic judgment, then every instance of such knowledge presupposes the existence of two things: the relevant concept and the relevant empirical intuition. If any claim to extend knowledge fails to include its needed concept or intuition, then that claim cannot—by definition—count as a genuine extension of knowledge.

[27] See Gary Hatfield, "Notes on Text and Translation" in *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xlii

[28] Henry E. Allison coined this term in his seminal work *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense (*Yale University Press, 1983).

B. THE INFERENCE

The claim "God exists" has the form of a synthetic judgment; it is a claim that purports to extend our knowledge of the real.[29] Thus, if it is possible to know that God exists, such knowledge must be synthetic. Hence, the claim "God exists" must be a cognition. And therefore, the claim "God exists" must be the synthesis of a concept(s) with an empirical intuition(s).

The problem is that God could never be an object of empirical intuition. Whether we take Kant's idea of God as the complete systematic unity of the possible or some more common idea of God, in either case God is atemporal. Hence, God cannot be an object of spatiotemporal experience. Thus, since it is not possible to have an empirical intuition of God, it is not possible to have a cognition about God. From which it follows that synthetic knowledge about God is impossible. Therefore, since the judgment "God exists" is a claim of purported synthetic knowledge, it follows that we could never know that God exists. By parity of reasoning, the opposite judgment, "God does not exist," purports to extend our knowledge of the real. But since God cannot be an object of genuine synthetic knowledge claims, it is also impossible for humans to know that God does not exist.

Admittedly, there is more to say here. Kant's reasoning seems entail the implausible claim that we could never know any claims of non-existence. Kant's principle seems to require that to know that "unicorns do not exist" would require that unicorns can be objects of empirical intuition. But if unicorns could be objects of empirical intuition, then it would be false that unicorns do not exist. Thus, Kant seems to hold that the necessary conditions for the truth of any claim of non-existence would always entail its falsity. This would be clearly absurd.

I suggest that Kant's position is that judgments of non-existence are properly expressed as infinite judgments. So, the judgment "unicorns do not exist" is shorthand for the judgment "the planet earth does not contain unicorns," or even, "the set of earthly land mammals does not con-

[29] This claim has its dissenters: the tradition of ontological arguments can be understood as a tradition that affirms the analyticity of the judgment "God exists." However, Kant famously denies that existence is a predicate, and thereby he denies that existence is analytically contained in the concept of God (c.f. A598/B626).

tain unicorns." On this account, the empirical intuition in question would be that of the planet earth or the set of earthly land mammals. These things should count as possible objects of empirical intuition. Even if no human has ever intuited every land mammal or every square inch of land on earth, these intuitions are, in principle, possible. Moreover, through testimony and complex representations that compile a huge multiplicity of intuitions, we clearly have some sort of intuition, however incomplete, that represents the set of mammals or the planet earth.

While the details are complex, the infinite judgment interpretation will allow Kant to avoid the absurdities discussed above and still to claim that the judgment "God does not exist" cannot be a genuine instance of knowledge. On this reading, the judgment "God does not exist" would be shorthand for the infinite judgment "non-spatiotemporal reality does not include God." But since non-spatiotemporal reality, by definition, cannot be an object of empirical intuition, it follows that the judgment "non-spatiotemporal reality does not include God" could never count as a cognition and hence could never count as a genuine instance of knowledge in the form of a synthetic judgment. Thus we could never know that God does not exist. As Kant writes:

> When I hear that an uncommon mind has demonstrated away the freedom of the will, the hope of a future life, and the existence of God…I am completely certain in advance that he will not have accomplished any of this…the transcendental critique…has completely convinced me that just as pure reason is entirely inadequate for affirmative assertions in this field, even less will it know what to do in order to be able to assert something negative about these questions (A753/B781).

C. THE RESULTS

At this point, Kant takes himself to have shown that the human mind could never know that God exists and could never know that God does not exist. It follows from this that claims about God's existence are not claims within the domain of possible knowledge. And since claims about God's existence are not within the domain of possible knowledge, no actual or possible knowledge could ever come into conflict with claims about God's existence. Therefore, faith in God is not threatened by the human pursuit of knowledge. Faith in the existence of God is fully consistent with everything that humans know and with everything that humans could possibly

know. And finally, since science is one way that humans attain knowledge, it follows that faith in God is fully consistent with science.

It is worthwhile to highlight two aspects of Kant's conclusion. First, since Kant's conclusion is that no piece of knowledge can contradict the assertion "God exists," the argument demonstrates standard logical consistency, i.e., a set of statements is consistent if and only if there is at least one truth value assignment such that all statements are true.[30] Secondly, since the conclusion results from the claim that the truth of God's existence is beyond the scope of *possible* knowledge, it follows that it is impossible for faith to be inconsistent with knowledge. Moreover, since if a proposition is impossible, the opposite proposition is necessary ($\sim\Diamond p \equiv \Box\sim p$), it follows that faith and science are necessarily consistent.[31]

Thus the conclusion of Kant's consistency argument is quite strong. No finding of science, actual or possible, could ever contradict belief in God. More generally, the human pursuit of knowledge will, for all time, be fully consistent with faith. Finally, since faith can never be contradicted by any knowledge claim, it follows that faith can never be contrary to reason. Thus it is necessary that faith in God is not irrational.

One may be tempted to think that Kant has been able to arrive at such strong conclusions only by reducing faith to emptiness.[32] The nonsense claim "the upside down nothing is four" will never conflict with the rational pursuit of knowledge, but that doesn't make the claim any less nonsense. Consistency presupposes that the statements at issue have truth values (otherwise there could not be one truth value assignment such that all statements are true), however it may seem like the claim "God exists" cannot have a truth value for Kant, since we could never know whether or not the statement obtains.

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[30] Since logical definitions are given their most precise expression in reference to a particular method of analysis, I will give the following: In terms of truth-tables, a set of statements is consistent if and only if there is at least one row of the joint truth table for all member of the set in which "T" appears in the column under the main operator of each member; in terms of the truth-tree method, a set of statements if consistent if and only if its completed tree has at least one open branch.

[31] N.B. This is not logical necessity but nomological necessity, since the impossibility of knowing whether or not God exists results from the laws (νόμοι) of human cognition.

[32] I am indebted to Eric Entrican Wilson for bringing this objection to my attention.

This objection would be mistaken on four accounts. First, Kant explicitly defines faith as a mode of *Fürwahrhalten* (literally, a holding to be true), so the very semantics of Kant's terms suggest that Kant takes statements of faith to have truth values. Second, Kant explicitly states that judgments of faith are claimed to be "necessarily valid for everyone" (A822/B850). This is the sense in which faith has subjectively sufficient grounds. Hence, Kantian faith is not nonsense, since nonsense cannot be necessarily valid for every rational subject. Third, the nonsense objection would conflate the limits of human knowledge with the limits of the transcendentally real (since it would assert that because humans cannot know whether or not God exists, there is no truth to the matter). Kant explicitly warns against the temptation to mistake mere limits of human reason as transcendental limits on the real; in fact, he chastises Hume for falling victim to this way of thinking (*Prol.* 4:351). Finally, it would be philosophically implausible, and excessively anthropocentric, to assert that everything that humans (in principle) cannot know has no truth value. Even the domains of mathematics and logical seem to include unknowable statements that necessarily have truth values (e.g., Goldbach's Conjecture and Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem both attest to this fact).[33] Thus for both textual and independent philosophical reasons, Kant's claim that we can never know whether God exists does not mean that the assertion "God exists" is without truth value. Kant's understanding of faith suggests the exact opposite. Thus, the assertion "God exists" has a truth value and believing its truth is necessarily consistent with science.

At this point, Kant takes himself to have given a "proof of the ignorance of the opponent" of religion (Bxxxi). However, Kant's proof, it must be said, has a slightly odd result. Since Kant has arrived at this conclusion by showing that *any* claim about God's existence is outside of the scope of possible knowledge, it follows that the theist and the atheist are in the same boat, so to speak. Kant has successfully buffered a pre-existing faith from rational attacks only by simultane-

[33] Goldbach's Conjecture is the claim: every even number greater than two is the sum of two primes. Gödel demonstrates that no consistent formal system of axioms could prove all arithmetic truths and furthermore, no such system could demonstrate its own consistency.

ously buffering a pre-existing atheism from rational attacks. That is to say, science is consistent with theism if and only if science is consistent with atheism.

If Kant's defense of faith ended here, it would be a rather unusual defense of faith—it would result in a sort of stalemate between theism and atheism. However on my account, Kant's defense of faith does not end here. While it is true that the domain of possible knowledge, and hence science, is consistent with both theism and atheism, this does not rule out the possibility that rationality may, in principle, favor either theism or atheism. On my account, Kant does engage in such a project; Kant seeks to show that, while it is not a matter of consistency, the proper understanding of science rationally favors theism over atheism.

III. KANT ON THE COHERENCE OF FAITH AND SCIENCE

Of those scholars who acknowledge that Kant does seek to give a positive defense of religious faith, the overarching trend is to view this defense merely in terms of practical reason. In this section I hope to show that this approach is mistaken. I argue that, on Kant's account, speculative reason favors the theoretical belief that God exits over its denial. I will refer to the argument that establishes this conclusion as the coherence argument.

For the purposes of the coherence argument, the sense of both "God" and "science" are slightly more restricted than they were in the consistency argument. While the consistency argument can operate with any atemporal conception of God, the coherence argument requires Kant's "God"—that in which the sum total of the possible is unified (*Prol.* 4:330). Similarly, while the consistency argument only bears on science qua a mode of proper knowledge acquisition, the coherence argument treats science as *systemically organized* bodies of knowledge (*MAdN* 467). In fact, since systematicity is the specific difference that distinguishes science proper from the larger domain of knowledge acquisition, what is at issue in the coherence argument is the relation between systematicity and faith.

On my account, Kant seeks to conclude that science and faith form a coherent whole, while the combination of science and atheism is incoherent. Since the claim that "God exists" is not a proposition of science (since it is not a knowledge claim), the issue is not the internal coherence of science, but the internal coherence of speculative reason insofar as one seeks both to assert that empirical reality is properly known by scientific methods and to consider whether or not God exists. In short, the object under examination is the scientific worldview. Kant argues that internal coherence demands that the scientific worldview include the claim that God exists.

A few words are in order on the nature of the coherence at issue. When compared with consistency, there is far less unanimity among logicians on the precise meaning of coherence. What is agreed upon is that coherence is a stronger relation than consistency in that coherence requires relevance. By contrast, sets of statements can be consistent and be utterly irrelevant to each other. For example, a set of statements that correctly describes the gestation process of a butterfly would be consistent with a set of statements that correctly describes Jupiter's moons. However, the truth of each set is irrelevant to the other set. On the contrary, a set of statements can only be coherent if the truth values of the statements are in a relationship of interdependent relevance. There seem to be three main views on how to characterize the sort of truth-relevance that coherence requires.[34] Some philosophers treat coherence in terms of strict logical entailment (such that two sets of statements are internally coherent if and only if each set strictly entails the other).[35] Others treat coherence in terms of logical support that need not reach the level of strict logical entailment (such that two sets are internally coherent if and only if each set follows from the other, whether deductively or inductively).[36] A third group treats coherence in terms of mutual explanatory support (such that two sets are internally coherent if and only if each set explains how the other is true).[37] For the

[34] The following three part distinction comes from Young, James O., "The Coherence Theory of Truth", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/truth-coherence/>.
[35] I have found no other examples of this view other than Young's taxonomy (see above ft 37).
[36] This seems to be the view of Laurence BonJour. See L. BonJour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985)
[37] This version seems to be the most popular of the three. One of its earlier defenses can be found in Bradley, F., *Essays on Truth and Reality*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914)

purposes of my argument I will take it that Kant intends the weakest sense of coherence (two sets are internally coherent if and only if each set explains how the other is true). As long we accept that coherence in this sense is normatively binding (that rationality requires that we seek coherent systems of belief and avoid incoherent systems of belief) then my conclusion still holds, since this would still mean that Kant argues that speculative reason favors belief over non-belief.

A. THE SORT OF DEFENSE AT ISSUE

Alvin Plantinga comments that natural theology has traditionally had two distinct aims: (1) to demonstrate that God exists and (2) to demonstrate that it is rational to believe in God.[38] Often these aims overlap. For example, if it could be demonstrated that God exists, then, *ipso facto*, it would be demonstrated that belief in God is rational. However, these aims need not overlap. An argument could demonstrate that rationality requires belief in God without claiming to demonstrate that God exists. In fact, Plantinga takes his modal version of the ontological argument to have achieved (2) but not (1).

Kant has clearly argued that aim (1) of traditional natural theology is impossible (cf. §II).[39] However, aim (2) is consistent with critical philosophy. Only aim (1) purports to make a claim in the form of a synthetic judgment without a corresponding intuition. Aim (2), by contrast, is merely a claim about the nature of rationality, arrived at by reason examining itself. Critical philosophy must hold that aim (2) is legitimate, since the entire *Critique* is nothing more than reason purporting to make claims about its own structure. Thus, aim (2)—the aim of demonstrating that rationality favors belief in God—is wholly consistent with critical philosophy. Moreover, this is an aim that the *Critique* itself pursues.

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[38] Alvin Plantinga, *God Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans Publishing 1977) p. 112

[39] In addition, Kant's lengthy criticism of all attempts to rationally prove the existence of God can be found here: A592/B620- A642/B670.

B. THE ANALYSIS OF REASON

Since I have claimed that Kant's coherence argument is properly understood a claim of rational self-knowing, it is not surprising that this argument rests on Kant's analysis of the nature of reason. Kant understands reason to have a twofold nature: "there is in the case of reason a merely formal, i.e., logical use…but there is also a real use, since reason itself contains the origin of certain concepts and principles" (A222/B355). Kant identifies the "logical use" of reason with syllogisms, and he identifies the "real use" of reason with the guiding of the understanding (A303/B360). As Kant puts it, "If the understanding may be a faculty of unity of appearances by means of rules, then reason is the faculty of the unity of the rules of the understanding under principles" (B359). I will discuss each the two uses of reason in turn. We will find that they are thoroughly interconnected with each other and with the idea of God.

1. Reason as the Faculty of Syllogisms

Kant identifies three basic kinds of syllogism: categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive. From this basic taxonomy of syllogisms, Kant argues to the existence of three corresponding pure concepts of reason—which he refers to as the "transcendental ideas" (A321/B378). His strategy here is similar to the deduction of the categories in the Analytic. There, Kant derives the pure concepts of the understanding—the categories—from the list of judgments; here, he here derives the pure concepts of reason—the ideas—from the list of syllogisms (A321/B378).[40] In this sense, the deduction of the ideas is structurally similar to the metaphysical deduction of the categories. However, there is another similarity. In the transcendental deduction, Kant derives the *a priori* validity of the categories (i.e., that they are valid *a priori* for all objects of experience) by showing that they are necessary conditions for the possibility of experience in general (B161).[41] Similarly, Kant derives the

[40] Also: "Since I had found the origin of the categories in the four logical functions of all judgments of the understanding, it was completely natural to look for the origin of the ideas in the three functions of syllogism" (*Prol.* 4:330).

[41] The core inference of the transcendental deduction occurs on B143- B144. The first edition version of the transcendental deduction can be found on A115-A123.

a priori validity of the ideas by showing that they are necessary conditions for the possibility of syllogistic reasoning (A308/B365). While Kant admits that his deduction of the ideas is different in kind than his deduction of the categories, nevertheless, "if [the ideas] are to have the least objective validity, even if it is only an indeterminate one…then a deduction of them must definitely be possible…that deduction is the completion of the critical business of pure reason" (A670/B698).[42] Hence, the ideas are as essential to reason as the categories are to the understanding. The ideas and the categories are both *a priori* and are both indispensable for the proper use of human cognitive faculties.

Kant's derivation of the ideas of reason begins with the claim that syllogisms are internally paradoxical (*Widersinniges*).[43] Syllogisms lead to "questions that never cease" (Aviii). The point here seems to be rooted in the thought that the most basic maxim of reason is "have a reason for what you believe!"—or—"seek why something is the case!"[44] While this basic claim is likely uncontroversial, Kant wants to point out that this basic maxim leads to an infinite regress. Kant uses the following example of a categorical syllogism to make his case:

1. All humans are mortal. (major premise)
2. Caius is a human. (minor premise)
3. Therefore, Caius is mortal. (conclusion)[45]

Kant points out that syllogistic relationships are actually bi-directional. To distinguish between each direction Kant divides syllogism into "episyllogism" and "prosyllogism" (*Jäsche* 134). "Episyllogism" refers to the syllogistic movement that goes from the first premise to the conclusion. The major premise, which is a general rule, is instantiated or made concrete in the conclusion. This instantiation is made possible by means of the minor premise, which serves as the condition for the instan-

[42] I take indeterminate objectively validity to imply that the ideas are not valid for any object of experience, but instead are universally valid for reasoning in general, which insofar as knowledge is concerned, ultimately relates to objects: syllogisms are composed of judgments, judgments are composed of concepts, and concepts (at least for synthetic judgments) must be composed of empirical intuitions.

[43] Kant refers to reason as paradoxical (*Widersinniges*) at A302/B358.

[44] Michael Rohlf suggests this. See Michael Rohlf, "The Ideas of Pure Reason" *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010) 195.

[45] The example is used at A322/B378.

tiation. In the syllogism above, the general rule (All humans are mortal) is correctly made concrete in the conclusion (Caius is mortal). However, the syllogistic relationships also go the other direction: the syllogism affirms that the concrete individual, Caius, is properly subsumed under the general rule "All humans are mortal." This upward syllogistic relationship Kant calls "prosyllogism" (*Jäsche* 134).

Though they rely on the same general syllogistic relationships, episyllogism and prosyllogism differ in that the episyllogism has a final backstop—in this case, the concrete individual Caius—while the prosyllogistic drive has none. We are lead to ask, "if the concrete individual is properly subsumed under the first premise, then under what is the first premise properly subsumed?" Hence, by prosyllogism we get:

1. All animals are mortal.
2. Humans are animals.
3. Thus, all humans are mortal. ↑
4. Caius is a human. ↑
5. Therefore, Caius is mortal.[46]

However, prosyllogism does not stop here. Just as easily, we are lead to ask "under what is the premise 'All animals are mortal' properly subsumed?" In fact, any more general statement will always be incomplete, since we can always ask "and under what is *that premise* properly subsumed?" Hence, prosyllogism leads to infinite regress.

One might think this shows that episyllogism is the only legitimate syllogistic inference. However, Kant thinks that such a position is untenable. We engage in syllogisms in the first place in order to follow the fundamental maxim of reason—"seek why something is the case!" But since this is the first maxim of reason, it applies to everything that reason can consider—including the first premise of a syllogism. In other words, it is the very rational pursuit of knowledge—the pursuit of "why?"—that leads to infinite regress. Furthermore, since it is the same syllogistic relationships between premises that enable either upward (prosyllogistic) or downward (episyllogistic) in-

[46] Rolf, "The Ideas of Pure Reson" 197

ferences, episyllogistic reasoning is possible if and only if prosyllogistic reasoning is possible (*Jäsche* 134). Hence, syllogistic thought is, by nature, bi-directional. But this means that syllogistic thought is paradoxical by nature, since it is the bi-directionality that leads to infinite regress.

Having established that syllogisms lead to infinite regress, Kant seeks to show that this realization confirms the validity of the ideas of reason as *a priori* principles. To see how, we must bring into view another feature of syllogisms.

Syllogistic reasoning is always aimed at parsimony—i.e. toward a smaller number of more general principles. Whenever we make a valid inference, we subsume a concrete term under a general rule, but just in virtue of the first premise being a general rule, "[it is a] rule that is also valid for other objects of cognition" (A305/B361). Hence, syllogisms unify multiple objects of cognition under a single rule. However, as soon as we combine this structural feature of syllogisms with the prosyllogistic drive, it follows that reason seeks the highest principle that can explain empirical reality. As Kant writes:

> From this we see that reason, in inferring, seeks to bring the greatest manifold of cognition of the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions), and thereby to effect the highest unity of the manifold (A3405/B361).

Thus, syllogistic reasoning results in infinite regress, but the direction of the regress is aimed at the highest principle that could explanatorily unify empirical reality. Kant sums up this fact of reason, with the claim that reason drives toward the "unconditioned" (A307/B364).[47] In broad terms, the thought is just that the highest possible explanatory principle would be a condition of all reality that is not further conditioned by another principle—i.e., an unconditioned condition.[48] In regard to the fact that syllogistic reasoning includes the maxim "seek the unconditioned!" Kant writes:

> But this logical maxim cannot become a principle of **pure reason** unless we assume that when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given (i.e., contained in the object and its connection). (A308/B364)

[47] We also see this claim on page Bxx, among others.

[48] The term "unconditioned" is intended to refer to classical syllogistic terminology; for example the middle term in a syllogism is the condition by which the major premise is instantiated in the concrete conclusion.

But to affirm that the unconditioned is given, Kant continues, is to affirm the existence of a supreme principle of pure reason (A308/B365). Hence, reason is not a merely formal faculty but includes at least a single *a priori* principle—the principle of the unconditioned. Such a "supreme principle" of reason would have to be synthetic, since no condition could be analytically related to the unconditioned (A308/B365). And such a principle would have to be *a priori* since the unconditioned could never be encountered in experience (A308/B365).

Kant's discussion quickly passes over the question of why we must assume such a supreme *a priori* principle. I think we can gain some sense of Kant's thinking if we consider the claim that reason is paradoxical while denying the existence of any such a supreme *a priori* principle. On this account, reason is a merely formal faculty that leads to infinite regress; there is no way to understand the regress except as a failure. However, if we do assume an *a priori* principle of the unconditioned, then reason can understand all of its conclusions to be incomplete but not failures. Each answer is still one step closer to the goal that reason sets for itself, each answer is more complete even if not fully complete. In other words, reason can affirm the correctness of syllogistic reasoning only if it includes the *a priori* principle of the unconditioned. But without such a principle reason could not affirm its own correctness. Hence, including the *a priori* principle enables the various aspects of reason (bi-directionality, parsimony, regress, and the unconditioned) to be in relationships of mutual explanatory support. That is to say, including the principle of the unconditioned yields an internally coherent view of reason. In contrast, denying the principle of the unconditioned yields an incoherent view of reason (it could neither explain the relationship between parsimony and bi-directionality nor the infinite regress). Thus, on my view, it is coherence that demonstrates the validity of the *a priori* principle of the unconditioned.

Once Kant takes himself to have shown that there is an *a priori* principle of the unconditioned, he argues that this one "supreme principle" divides itself into three *a priori* concepts or ideas, since there are three kinds of syllogism each of which leads to the unconditioned. Kant writes:

> There will be as many concepts of reason as there are species of relation represented by the understanding by means of the categories; and so we must seek an **unconditioned, first,** for

> the **categorical** synthesis in a **subject, second** for the **hypothetical** synthesis of the members of a **series**, and **third** for the **disjunctive** synthesis of the parts of a **system** (A323/B379).

Hence, the categorical idea is "the idea of a complete subject" or the idea of the soul (*Prol.* 4:330). The hypothetical idea is "the idea of complete series of conditions" or the idea of the world as a whole (*Prol.* 4:330). And the disjunctive idea is "the idea of a complete sum total of the possible," or the idea of God (*Prol.* 4:330).[49] Of the three, the relation of the idea of God to disjunctive syllogisms is the most opaque.[50] In a footnote intended to clarify the relation between the idea of God and the disjunctive syllogism, Kant writes:

> That act of reason in the disjunctive syllogism is the same in form with that by which reason achieves the idea of a sum total of all reality, which contains in itself the positive members of all opposing predicates. (*Prol.* 4:330)

We know from Kant's claims about the unconditioned in general that any act of syllogistic reasoning includes the unconditioned as the *a priori* end towards which syllogistic activity is directed. So here we have the claim that disjunctive syllogism includes, as its *a priori* aim, the idea of "sum total of all reality, which contains in itself the positive members of all opposing predicates." This later claim is a reference to the principle of complete determination.[51] This principle states that to determine anything fully requires that we affirm or deny of it each possible positive predicate. Hence, determining fully any individual thing involves the entire set of possible predicates; it considers a

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[49] Some commentators have objected that Kant's connection of the three ideas with the three syllogisms is arbitrary (e.g. Karl Ameriks, "The Critique of Metaphysics" in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy* ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge University Press, 2006). It seems just as plausible that all the syllogisms seeks the sort of all-encompassing completeness that only the idea of God can convey (this would only be better for my paper, but worse for Kant). Paul Guyer has suggested that the division has more to do with the three exhaustive domains of knowledge (the self, all empirical reality that is not the self (i.e., the world), and the full unity of all reality that includes the first two, God). Cf. Guyer *Kant on Freedom, Law, and Happiness* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 80-84

[50] The full explanation of why the idea of God is the idea of disjunctive syllogisms, the soul the idea of categorical syllogisms, and world the idea of hypothetical syllogisms is beyond the scope of this paper. These details span much of the entirety of Book II of the Dialectic (A338/B396- A704/B732).

[51] The principle of complete determination: "Every thing as regards its possibility, stands under the principle of thoroughgoing determination; according to which, among all possible predicates of things, insofar as they are compared with their opposites, one must apply to it" (A572/B600). This is pointed out in Michelle Grier "The Ideal of Pure Reason" *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010) 267. I will follow Grier for this explanation.

thing in relation to the whole of possibility (A572/B600). As one might guess, Kant inherited this principle from the Leibniz-Wolffian school.[52] However, the critical Kant accepts the principle not as a metaphysical principle about reality but as an epistemological principle about the nature of reason.[53] Furthermore, in contrast to the Leibniz-Wolffian school, Kant holds that we can never actually fulfill the principle of complete determination; since objects for Kant are always given under the conditions of space and time, we could never *a priori* exhaust their set of possible predicates.[54]

If we now take an example of a disjunctive syllogism, we can see how it involves the idea of God:

1. Virgil is either Roman or Grecian.
2. Virgil is not Grecian.
3. Therefore, Virgil is Roman.

The first premise gives two possible predicates of Virgil. When prosyllogism asks "Why is Virgil either Roman or Grecian?" The next higher condition, since this is a disjunctive syllogism, will be a longer string of possible predicates—e.g., Virgil is either Roman or Grecian or Carthaginian. To this, of course, we only ask again, "why?" As the questions continue, the only end would be the complete set of all possible predicates of reality. Hence, disjunctive prosyllogism drives toward "the complete sum total of the possible," which, as we have seen, is the idea of God (*Prol.* 4:330). Furthermore, since Kant has argued that every syllogistic act must include the *a priori* end toward which it drives, disjunctive syllogism involves the idea of God.[55]

However, Kant also wants to show that disjunctive reasoning involves the *ideal*, in addition to the *idea*, of God. Kant writes:

> We nevertheless find on closer investigation of this idea [the sum total of the possible]…refines itself to a concept thoroughly determined *a priori*, and thereby becomes the concept of an individual object…and then must be called the **ideal** of pure reason. (A574/B602)

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[52] Grier, "The Ideal of Pure Reason" 268.
[53] Grier, "The Ideal of Pure Reason" 268.
[54] This is also why Kant holds that only *a priori* constructed concepts can be defined. Empirical concepts can only be explicated because we can never exhaustively determine the concept.
[55] Kant discusses the topic of this paragraph on A577/B605; there I take him to be explaining the same process I have indicated here.

Thus the *ideal* of God is the thought of a singular ground for the entire set of the possible (the individual in which the possible is unified), instead of the sum total of the possible itself (A579/B607). On this point Kant's most explicit, yet exceedingly dense, argument concludes that the ideal of God is a necessary condition for the principle of complete determination (cf. A578/B606).[56] However there seems to be another, far more straightforward, move.

Kant has already argued that the internal structure of syllogisms contains a drive toward parsimony—"reason, in inferring, seeks to bring the greatest manifold of cognition of the understanding to the smallest number of principles" (A305/B361). Hence, the idea of "the sum total of the possible" satisfies the rational drive toward completeness (since it provides the complete determination of a thing), but it does not satisfy the drive toward parsimony (since it is the idea of an indefinitely, if not infinitely, large set). The perfectly parsimonious organization of the sum total of the possible would be that of a single unifying principle of all possible reality—it would be the ideal of God.[57] Hence, since parsimony is part of the upward prosyllogistic drive of reason, we may say that the final aim of the disjunctive prosyllogism must be the *ideal* of God. And thus, since Kant has argued that every syllogistic act must include the *a priori* end toward which it drives, disjunctive syllogism involves not just the *idea* of God, but also the *ideal* of God.

Before, leaving this section I want to emphasize the key points of the discussion. Kant has argued that if reason is a purely formal faculty, if there are no *a priori* principles of reason, then the paradoxical structure of syllogisms would mean that the faculty of reason itself is a failure. Thus the transcendental ideas (God, soul and world) must be *a priori* ideas of reason. This conclusion can be easily misunderstood. Kant is not arguing that the transcendental ideas are innate and conceptually prior to syllogistic thought (*Prol.* 4:330). Nor is Kant arguing that the ideas of reason are mere by-products of syllogistic thought (*Prol.* 4:328). Instead, the claim is that the ideas of reason are internal to the act of syllogism itself; each transcendental idea and its related syllogism come as a

[56] Michelle Grier has a helpful discussion of this "notoriously tortured passage" in her article "The Ideal of Pure Reason." The quote is from p. 270.
[57] Kant describes perfection as requiring singular grounding on B114.

package, so to speak. In other words, the ideas are essentially involved in syllogistic thought. Thus, if the three syllogisms are valid inference patterns, then God, soul, and world are valid *a priori* ideas.

At this point we can formulate the first premise of the coherence argument:

1. The idea of God is an a priori valid pure concept of reason.

2. *Reason as the Guide of the Understanding*

We began our discussion with Kant's claim that the faculty of reason has both a logical and a real use (A222/B355). Kant begins with the traditional view of reason as a mere formal faculty of logic and shows that this view is untenable. Reason cannot coherently engage in formal syllogisms unless it also includes *a priori* content of its own—the transcendental ideas. The claim that reason has its own *a priori* ideas is, in part, Kant's claim that there is a real use of reason. Hence, the real use of reason and the logical use of reason are not two totally distinct activities; they are interrelated aspects of a more complex understanding of the nature of reason.

The real use of reason extends beyond the mere claim that the transcendental ideas are necessary for the coherent use of syllogisms. More broadly, these ideas guide the whole understanding toward its proper aim. To use a sailing analogy, if the categories of the understanding are seen as the sail, then reason is the rudder. In Kant's terms, the ideas of pure reason are "regulative principles" for the proper use of the understanding (A644/B672).[58]

The transcendental ideas, as we have seen, convey the completeness that reason seeks: the idea of a complete subject (the categorical idea or the soul), the idea of a complete series of conditions (the hypothetical idea or the world), and the idea of the sum total of the possible (the disjunctive idea or God) (*Prol.* 4:330). However, the completeness that each idea conveys is not the completeness of simple homogenous unity. The subject, the series of conditions, and set of the possi-

[58] Kant also claims that the principles of reason are: homogeneity, specification, and continuity of forms (A658/B686). It seems unclear if these principles are just new names for the transcendental ideas or if they are distinct principles that serve as the application conditions between the ideas and the categories (just as the principles of the understanding do for the application of the categories to intuitions). Gary Hatfield seems to suggest the former (cf. *Prol.* ed.'s ft. on p83). However, this issue is irrelevant for the current discussion.

ble, are all concepts that purport to be internally differentiated. Since complete unity of a heterogeneous set is achieved in terms of interrelated systematicity, the completeness that the ideas of pure reason attest to is the completeness of a system (A645/B673).

These ideas cannot be derived from experience (as Hume has shown), nevertheless, these ideas are essential to syllogistic thought (as Kant has shown). Since the ideas of reason are necessary for syllogisms, they are valid concepts if syllogisms are valid acts of reason. Moreover, since reason should seek to connect judgments by means of syllogisms (I take it as uncontroversial that syllogistic thought is normatively binding), and since the ideas of reason are essentially involved in syllogistic thought, it follows that reason should seek to connect judgments in conformity with the ideas of pure reason. In other words, reason should seek to interconnect judgments toward the aim of systematic completeness.

Insofar as the ideas of pure reason are what enable the rational drive toward systematicity, the ideas of reason are the necessary conditions for systematicity in general. And since Kant understands systematicity to be the hallmark of science (*Wissenschaft*), the ideas of reason are necessary conditions for science in general (A651/B679).

While the ideas of reason are *a priori* valid, they are only so as regulative principles—they only serve to regulate the use of the understanding. The ideas, by definition, signify a content that is beyond the scope of possible experience, thus there could never be a corresponding empirical intuition for the ideas of reason. And hence the ideas can never constitute experience, and for that reason, could never constitute a genuine object of knowledge (in the form of a synthetic judgment).

Nevertheless, the ideas of reason are not meaningless, since the ideas of reason make science possible. But, their ability to do this requires that the ideas have a significance that extends beyond the limits of possible experience. This latter claim, that Kant's system asserts that possible experience is properly thought of by means of ideas that extend beyond possible experience, has key implications for the coherence argument. Enumerating those implications will be my next task.

We are now able to formulate the second premise of the coherence argument. The first two premises read as follows:

1. The idea of God is an a priori valid idea of reason.
2. The idea of God is a necessary condition for science in general.

These two premises already support a preliminary defense of the concept of God. Since the idea of God is an *a priori* valid concept that is also a necessary condition for science, it follows that the pursuit of science (qua systematicity) requires assent to the idea of God—at least to the idea of God *as a regulative principle*. But merely assenting to God as a regulative principle is only assenting to a logical principle of reason. Such an assent does not commit one to the transcendental claim that the sum total of possible reality is a perfect system unified in a single ground. In other words, assenting to God as a logical principle is not equivalent to assenting to actual faith in the transcendental existence of God.

The remainder of Kant's defense of faith can be understood as arguing for the following claim: coherently assenting to the idea of God as a regulative principle requires actual faith in the transcendental claim "God exists." From this it would follow that science, coherently pursued, requires faith in the transcendental claim "God exists."

The next stage of Kant's argument seeks the broader implications of the claim that reason guides the understanding. In short, we will take the results of our discussion thus far and place them within the larger context of Kant's views on the entire cognitive system, especially in reference to the limits and boundaries of possible knowledge.

C. THE KNOWABLE AND THE UNKNOWABLE IN KANT'S SYSTEM

We know that the transcendental ideas of reason (God, soul, and world) have a dual use: they provide the norms for the proper use of the understanding and they enable reason to account coherently for the infinite regress of syllogistic reasoning. In other words, the transcendental ideas are the point of overlap between the real use and the logical use of reason.

While the ideas are necessary conditions for science (the proper use of the understanding), they are both necessary and sufficient conditions for the internal coherence of the structure of syllogistic reasoning. That is to say: if syllogistic reason is coherent, then reason contains *a priori* ideas of completeness toward which syllogistic regress is directed. And, if reason contains *a priori* ideas of completeness, then the structural facts of formal reason (the infinite regress and parsimonious drive) are internally coherent. However, note that the ideas do not stop the infinite regress. The ideas merely prevent the regress from yielding the result that reason is a failed and incoherent faculty. Hence the structure of syllogistic reasoning includes: the drive toward infinite regress, the drive toward parsimony, and the *a priori* ideas of completeness. But, since the existence of the ideas is equivalent to the coherent structure of formal reason (which includes the infinite regress), and since the ideas are a necessary condition for science, it follows that a necessary condition for science is syllogistic regress. That is to say, science requires that reason drives itself into "questions that never cease" (Aviii).

Syllogisms are the means by which a body of knowledge is expounded as a science (*Jäsche* 149). But, syllogisms produce "questions that keep recurring to infinity" (*Prol.* 4:353). Hence, that which drives toward infinite regress is the means by which a body of knowledge is expounded as a science. The task that now stands before us is to unpack the meaning of this result. I will suggest the following: we can engage in science only if reason can approach the boundaries of possible knowledge and think rationally about the unknown.

1. The Ignorance that is Unavoidable for Us

A recurring theme of the *Critique* is Kant's claim that there is an "ignorance that is unavoidable for us" (A767/B795). From my perspective, Kant's claims about unavoidable ignorance constitute one of his central positions on the nature of reason. Elucidating such claims, I suggest, will provide insight into Kant's broader conception of reason and thereby bring into focus the next

premise in the coherence argument—a premise that makes a claim about the necessary conditions of reason if reason is to function as the guide of the understanding.

The importance of Kant's claims about unavoidable ignorance is indicated by the fact that that Kant chose to introduce all of critical philosophy with such a claim. The first sentence of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* reads as follows:

> Human reason has the peculiar fate in one species of its cognitions that it is burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss, since they are given to it by the nature of reason itself, but which it also cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason. Reason falls into these perplexities through no fault of its own. It begins from principles whose use is unavoidable in the course of experience and at the same time sufficiently warranted by it. With these principles reason rises (as its nature also requires) ever higher, to more remote conditions…. [Reason] becomes aware in this way that its business must always remain incomplete because the questions never cease (Avii-Aviii).

One and the same faculty, reason, both produces questions and requires that those questions are unanswerable. Moreover, this "peculiar fate" results from the correct use of reason in experience. That is to say, the means by which reason correctly thinks about empirical reality simultaneously force reason to think about unknowable conundrums. The engine of this peculiarity is claimed to be the rational requirement to rise "ever higher to more remote conditions." Per our earlier discussion (§III.B.1), we know that Kant is referring to the nature of syllogisms. I suggest that *full* meaning of this passage, i.e., the depth of reason's essential ignorance, becomes clear only when we place the bi-directional nature of syllogisms within the larger framework of the entire cognitive system. It is to this task that I now turn.

2. Critique and the Establishment of Limits

The scope of my project and the nature of this topic force me to severely limit the present discussion. Kant's claims about the scope of possible knowledge are vast and involved. I will be able to offer only the most rudimentary treatment. Nevertheless, the basics are sufficient to understand the next premise in Kant's coherence argument. Furthermore, what I say here will have implications for one of the most contested issue in Kant scholarship, the proper interpretation of

transcendental idealism. In broadest terms, I follow Henry Allison in regarding transcendental idealism as primarily a thesis about the limits of knowledge.[59] While I cannot here argue for the correctness of this reading, I would like to note that it seems to be the interpretation favored by Kant's injunction to read the *Critique* in a top-down manner, since both prefaces make clear that one of critical philosophy's primary aims is to deny knowledge.[60]

In the A-Preface, Kant writes that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is a critique of the faculty of reason in general; i.e., it aims to determine the sources, extent, and boundaries of the legitimate use of reason (Axii). Such a project will be centrally concerned with demarcating the limits of knowledge, since knowledge is a primary pursuit of reason. Moreover, demarcating the scope of possible knowledge requires applying rational analysis to all three component faculties involved in the acquisition of knowledge: sensibility, the understanding, and reason. Thus, the *Critique* establishes the legitimate scope of each mental faculty and the manner in which the three integrate for the successful acquisition of knowledge.

Sensibility is the faculty of spatiotemporal representations, or intuitions. Sensibility limits by means of the imposition of spatiotemporal form the raw jumbled content (the manifold) that our bodily senses take in. The understanding is the faculty of discursive thought. The categories of the understanding are the rules by which particular spatiotemporal representations are subsumed under more general concepts. Hence, the understanding limits the domain of spatiotemporal representation by legislating how representations should be structured. Finally, reason is the faculty of syllogistic thought and systematic organization. Reason limits the understanding by legislating the direction in which discursive thought should be aimed (as we saw in §III.B.2). Hence, sensibility limits the manifold, the understanding limits sensibility, and reason limits the understanding. And conversely, the understanding exceeds the limits of sensibility and reason exceeds the limits of the

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[60] Denying the knowledge claims of traditional metaphysics amounts to denying that humans can ever know the fundamental structure of ultimate mind-independent reality. I take transcendental idealism's denial of things-in-themselves and noumena [ISN'T THIS REDUNDANT WITH 'THINGS-IN-THEMSELVES'?] to be equivalent to just such a denial of fundamental mind-independent reality.

understanding.[61] In other words, due to the distinct activities of each faculty and the manner in which the faculties limit each other, the three faculties have distinct but overlapping spheres of activity.

Knowledge, on this picture, is the result of the correct application of the rules. The correct subsumption of a spatiotemporal representation under a more general concept constitutes knowledge in the form of a synthetic judgment. The correct logical analysis of a concept into its component concepts constitutes knowledge in the form of an analytic judgment. Science, on this picture, is also the result of the correct application of rules. Empirical science would be the correct systematic organization of those judgments that constitute empirical knowledge. Mathematics would be the correct systematic organization of the body of synthetic judgments that constitute mathematical knowledge. And metaphysics would be the correct systematic organization of those analytic and synthetic judgments that constitute knowledge of experience in general. We can represent the entire cognitive system this way:

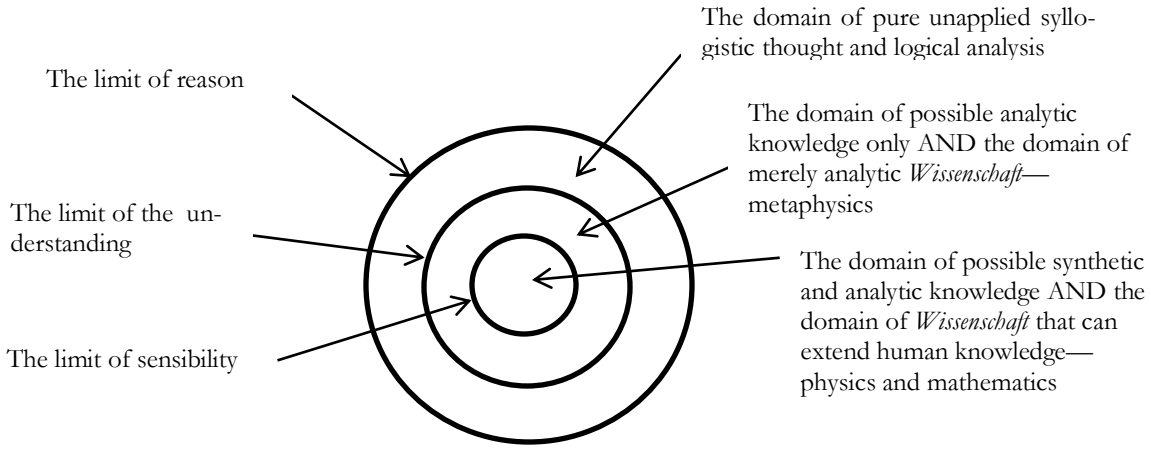

Figure 1: Limits in the Kantian Mental System

First, this visual analogy should not be read as a series of rings, with the understanding as merely the middle ring between sensibility and reason. This would falsify Kant's theory. The picture is better seen as set of circles laid on top of one another such that the understanding overlaps with,

[61] For the claim that the understanding exceeds sensibility see: A254/B309. For the claim that reason exceeds the understanding see: A327/B383 and *Prol.* 4:329.

but extends beyond, sensibility, and reason overlaps with both the understanding and sensibility as well as extends beyond them both.

For our purposes, the key points here are the ways in which the understanding both limits and extends beyond sensibility as well as the way in which reason both limits and extends beyond the understanding. Kant's claim here is that the understanding could not limit sensibility if it did not extend beyond the limits of sensibility (A254/B310). And reason could not limit the understanding if it did not extend beyond the limits of the understanding (A238/B297). In schematic terms, the claim that X is not subject to the limits of Y is a necessary condition for X's ability to guide Y. This claim alone has deep implications for the essential unknowability contained within the nature of reason.

3. The Janus-Faced Capacity of Reason

We began this section (§III.C) by making the results of the previous section explicit. Namely, that a necessary condition for science is the infinite regress of syllogisms. Now we are in a position to unpack this claim.

Recall that the infinite regress is part of the nature of syllogisms because syllogisms are bi-directional. Prosyllogism is possible if and only if episyllogism is possible, since both rely on the exact same inferential relationships between judgments. Secondly, recall that infinite regress is a necessary condition of science only because the entire structure of syllogism is a necessary condition of science; i.e., syllogisms are the inferences by which judgments are connected in science (*Jäsche* 149). Hence, reason's ability to guide the understanding toward science is also subject to the same bi-directional nature of syllogisms.

As we have seen, reason must extend beyond the understanding if reason can guide the understanding toward science (§III.C.2). Hence, when reason guides the understanding toward science, reason organizes concepts of the understanding (qua judgments) from a perspective beyond the limits of the understanding. In the language of our visual diagram, reason "looks inward" to or-

ganize the activities of the understanding systematically into a science. This "inward-looking" of reason can focus either on judgments within the sphere of possible experience (the inner most circle of our diagram, e.g., physics and mathematics), or on analytic judgments about the forms of experience in general (the pure categories abstracted form this or that intuition, i.e., metaphysics). But in either case the "inward-looking" activity of reason is, directly or indirectly, aimed at possible experience. However, we have established that reason's ability to guide the understanding toward science rests on the bi-directionality of syllogisms. Hence, we may say that reason can only look "inward" toward possible experience if reason can also look "outward" toward that which could never be an object of experience.

This "outward-looking" activity of reason Kant characterizes in terms of its approaching the limits and boundaries of knowledge ((*Prol.* 4:353). As Kant writes, reason "make[s] the progression up to these limits necessary for us, and [has] therefore led us, as it were, up to the contiguity of filled space (of experience) with empty space (of that which we can know nothing)" (*Prol.* 4:354). The "outward-looking" capacity of reason, Kant writes, "is necessary for us" (*Prol.* 4:354). It is necessary, as we have seen, precisely because reason's ability to guide the understanding is based on the bi-directional nature of syllogisms. Reason can guide the understanding toward science only if reason can also approach the edge of possible knowledge and stare out into the "empty space of…which we can know nothing" (*Prol.* 4:354). I shall refer to this double capacity of reason as the claim that reason is, by nature, Janus-faced.

Kant is famous for admonishing us to not fall into the illusion that we can know anything beyond our boundaries. However, we now see that the solution is not—as the empiricists might say—to restrict all legitimate thought to the realm of experience. Kant's position is far more nuanced. We couldn't have empirical science if we didn't extend our mental faculties beyond the realm of possible experience.[62] Herein lies the key to understanding Kant's defense of the rationality of religious faith. Once we realize that rational science is not even possible for us unless we can

[62] This claim is equally true for empirical knowledge; however I must forgo the temptation to make this point explicit.

think rationally about what is beyond human cognition, then the question is not if, but how we should think rationally about the beyond. As we will see, Kant argues that to think rationally about the unknowable beyond is to believe in God.

We can now formulate the third premise in Kant's coherence argument:

3. The Janus-faced capacity of reason is a necessary condition for reason's ability to guide the understanding in the production of science.

In the following section we will arrive at a more precise understanding of what it means to approach the boundaries of cognition rationally.

4. *The Boundary of Pure Reason*

Kant makes a clear distinction between the terms "limit" (*Schranke*) and "boundary" (*Grenze*); this distinction is crucial to understanding Kant's defense of the rationality of faith. Kant elucidates this distinction through a few examples.

Kant writes that the domain of mathematics is circumscribed by a proper limit (*Schranke*) —the limit between what is and is not susceptible to mathematical treatment (*Prol.* 4:352). What is beyond the limit of mathematics, what is not susceptible to mathematical treatment, is nothing to mathematics. Thus, the boundary between what is and is not susceptible to mathematical treatment is not itself an object of mathematical treatment. As Kant writes, "[limits] are mere negations that affect a magnitude insofar as it does not possess absolute completeness" (*Prol.* 4:352). Likewise, in the Kantian system the domain of possible experience, *from the perspective of sensibility*, is subject to a limit. That which is not a possible object of intuition is nothing to sensibility; in addition, the limit of possible experience itself is not a possible object of experience.

In contrast, a boundary (*Grenze*) is more than a mere negation. A boundary has the two features that a limit lacks. A boundary presupposes the positive existence of space beyond its edge, and the boundary itself is a positive existence (*Prol.* 4:352). Kant gives the example of the spatial boundaries of an empirical object, such as a table, or the spatial boundaries of a legal territory, such

as Prussia. The boundaries of both the table and Prussia presuppose the positive existence of space beyond their borders, and the boundary of the table is part of the table just as the boundary of Prussia is part of Prussia.

From the perspective of reason, the entire human cognitive system (the whole of figure 1) has a boundary and not merely a limit. In our concentric circle analogy reason views the outermost circle as a positive object of rational thought, and reason presupposes the existence of unknowable reality fully beyond the bounds of human cognition.[63] As Kant writes, "Our reason, however, sees around itself as it were a space for the cognition of things in themselves, although it can never have determinate concepts of those things" (*Prol.* 4:352).

It seems to me that the unknown reality that reason presupposes beyond its boundary must be two-fold. First, as indicated in our previous discussion on the nature of sensibility (III.C.2), sensibility imposes spatiotemporal form onto the raw jumbled content (the manifold) that our bodily senses provide. But within this way of talking lurks a question that Kant's system, in principle, cannot answer: "Whence the raw content to which sensibility gives form?" Kant's quote above—that reason "sees…a space for the cognition of things-in-itself, although it can never have determinate concepts of those things"—speaks to this question. The suggestion would be that when reason approaches the boundaries of cognition, reason looks "downward" toward the unknowable mind-independent reality that provides the matter for our intuitions and grounds our shared experience. (I'll refer to this as the earthly sense of the beyond).

However, in other passages Kant seems to suggest otherwise—especially in his discussions of syllogisms. Kant writes that syllogistic thought results in "questions that keep recurring to infinity...[questions that reason] is denied all hope of completely answering" (*Prol.* 4:353). Kant continues this discussion by transitioning to a discussion of limits, boundaries, and the unknown. He writes:

> Above (§§33, 34)[64] we noted the limits of reason with respect to all cognition of mere beings of thought; now, since the transcendental ideas nevertheless make the progression up to the-

[63] In fact, it seems that from the perspective of reason, all three circles are boundaries and not limits.
[64] §§33-34 of the *Prolegomena* establish the proper use of the pure categories: the mere analysis of the logical forms of experience in general (metaphysics); it is the limit of analytic knowledge.

> se limits necessary for us, and have therefore led us, as it were, up to the contiguity of the filled space (of experience) with empty space (of that which we can know nothing—the *noumena*), we can also determine the boundaries of pure reason; for in all boundaries there is something positive…The limits announced in the cited sections are still not enough after we have found that something lies beyond them (although we will never cognize what that something may be in in itself) (*Prol.* 4:354).

Passages like this seem to suggest that when reason approaches the boundary of cognition, the unknown reality that reason gazes toward is properly characterized by the aims of syllogistic thought: the first ground of empirical reality, the highest unity of oneself, and the highest unity of the possible. This sense of the unknowable I will refer to as the lofty sense of the beyond, since for Kant it implies the soul, the whole of reality, and the divine.

The two readings that I have highlighted (the lofty and the earthly) correspond to two ways that reason can approach the boundaries of cognition. On the one hand, reason leads us to the boundary by means of analysis the of the nature of sensibility, which leads to the question: "whence the matter of empirical intuition?" On the other hand, reason leads to the boundary by means of the innate paradoxes of reason, including the infinite regress of syllogistic thought. I hope to show that both of these readings (the lofty and the earthly) are correct; the unknowable beyond for Kant does not emphasize one side over the other. Since it might appear strange that I am calling the earthy sense of the unknown a thought of reason when I also claim that this unknown is discovered in the discussion of sensibility, I will begin by showing that the earthly sense of the unknown is properly characterized in terms of the faculty of reason approaching the boundary of cognition.

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is said to be a work in which the object of knowledge is reason and the method of knowing, or the perspective from which the knowing occurs, is also reason. Some think Kant relies on an implicit distinction between Reason (big R) and reason (little r).[65] On such a distinction, **r**eason would refer to the faculty of syllogisms, whereas **R**eason would comprehensively refer to the entire cognitive system (reason, the understanding, and sensibility). But a much more parsimonious way to account for the nature of the Kant's project and his seeming to

[65] E.g. Michael Rolf endorses this reading (cf., "The Ideas of Pure Reason," 195).

use "reason" in different ways is clearly illustrated by the visual analogy of concentric circles (see figure 1). As the diagram shows, the three distinct faculties—sensibility, the understanding, and reason—have distinct scopes of activity, but these scopes overlap. Since reason has the largest scope, there are three distinct modes of rational activity for one and the same faculty of reason: (1) rationality in itself beyond the scope of the understanding, (2) rationality overlapping with the understanding **only** (outside of the scope of sensibility), and (3) rationality overlapping with both the understanding and sensibility (within the scope of sensibility). This approach cleanly explains how both the Aesthetic and the Analytic can be rational investigations of reason and also can be about sensibility and the understanding, respectively. In short, the *Critique*'s claims *about* sensibility are not claims *of* sensibility and the *Critique*'s claims *about* the understanding are not claims *of* the understanding. These are, and could only be claims from the perspective of reason. For only "reason has this peculiarity about it, that it can and should measure its own capacity" (Bxxiii). Thus when Kant asserts his discursivity thesis—that cognition requires the subsumption of an intuition under a concept—this is a claim of reason. Hence, it is reason that realizes that it's logically possible for the categories to have different content than that provided by sensibility. And it is reason that is able to think that the source of the matter of intuition is an unknowable ground of experience. Thus the beyond in the earthly sense is properly characterized in terms of reason approaching the boundaries of cognition.

However, reason also approaches the boundary of cognition in a different way. The syllogisms of reason lead to infinite regress. The hypothetical syllogism leads reason to seek an endless series of grounds. The categorical syllogism leads reason to seek an endless series of hierarchically subsumed concepts. The disjunctive syllogism leads reason to seek an endless pursuit of unifying distinct possibilities. In all three cases reason is led through a series of questioning that comes to an end, not because an answer is found, but because reason self-reflectively realizes that it can legitimately go no further. This moment is a two-fold realization: (1) reason sees that it cannot know the answer, and (2) reason realizes that the series must keep going, there must be an answer, if the ra-

tional principles that reason has followed to this point are correct.[66] In such a way, reason carries itself "up to the contiguity of the filled space (of experience) with empty space of that which we can know nothing" (*Prol.* 4:354).

Of the two ways that reason carries itself to the boundary of cognition (rational paradox and critical insights into possible experience), neither can be said to be superior to the other. As we saw in the previous section (III.C.3) reason is Janus-faced. Reason can look inward to the fundamental constitution of possible experience only because it can also look outward to the ideas of a complete subject, the complete causal chain of the world, and systemic unity of the possible. We can see this very determinately in the following manner: since it is the goal of systemic coherence that drives reason to examine itself—i.e., engage in critique—it is the goal of systemic coherence that enables the critical investigation into possible experience and yields the result that there is an unknowable ground of experiential reality (the beyond in the earthly sense). However, the goal of systemic coherence is a goal set by the pure principles of reason. These principles are essential to syllogistic thought—and it is syllogistic thought that drives reason, via rational paradox, to approach the boundary of cognition (in the lofty sense). Thus both ways that reason approaches the boundary of cognition are equally central. They are both based upon the same Janus-faced capacity of reason.

At this point, I have shown that for Kant reason must think about the unknowable beyond, and furthermore, it must think about the beyond in two ways. We can now state the fourth premise in the coherence argument:

> 4. The Janus-faced capacity of reason entails that it is required to rationally think about both the boundary of knowledge itself and the unknowable emptiness beyond.

[66] "All questions that pure reason poses must absolutely be answerable, and that the excuse of the limits of our cognition…cannot be permitted here" (A695/B723). N.B. the term "limit" is used since the limits of the understanding are what make such questions unknowable for us—however that fact does not mean that reason cannot find answers to those questions, even if the answers of pure reason cannot count as knowledge (which is why reason recognizes a boundary and not a limit).

D. A COHERENT SCIENTIFIC WORLDVIEW

Once we acknowledge that the very nature of reason drives us to approach the boundaries of cognition, we must ask not if but how we should think such boundaries. As Kant writes:

> For the question now arises: How does our reason cope with this connection of that with which we are acquainted to that with which we are not acquainted, and never will be? Here is a real connection between the known and the wholly unknown (which will always remain so), and even if the unknown should not become the least bit better known—as is not in fact to be hoped—the concept of this connection must still be capable of being determined and brought to clarity. (*Prol.* 4:354)

On Kant's account, rationally thinking the boundary includes two distinct thoughts: (1) of the boundary itself and (2) of the positive existence of unknowable reality beyond the boundary. As it turns out, the proper modes of these two thoughts are quite different. In the cases of both a table and Prussia, the boundary is part of what it bounds; the boundary of the table (its edge) is part of the table and the boundary of Prussia (its border) is part of Prussia. The same holds for the boundary of cognition. As Kant writes:

> But since a boundary is itself something positive, which belongs as much to what is within it as to the space lying outside a given totality, reason therefore, merely by expanding up to this boundary, partakes of a real, positive cognition …(*Prol.*4:361).

The fact that Kant uses the term "cognition" here might strike one as surprising, but it should not, since I take Kant merely to intend knowledge in the form of an analytic judgment. In fact, the entire critical project can be rightly regarded as reason "cognizing" its own boundaries in this sense.[67] Hence, I suggest that the mode of thought that properly characterizes reason's positive cognition of the boundary itself is displayed throughout the entire critical project.[68] *The Critique of Pure Reason* is reason taking the boundaries of human cognition as its proper object of knowledge.

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[67] "Yet by this [the critique of pure reason] I do not understand a critique of books and systems, but a critique of the faculty of reason in general…the determination of its sources, as well as its extent and **boundaries**, all, however, from principles" (Axii, emphasis mine).

[68] I take my discussion in §III.C.2 to be an example of this.

According to Kant's views on nature of boundaries, reason must also conceive of the positive existence of reality beyond the boundary of cognition. I begin this discussion by quoting from the same passage above:

> But *setting the boundary* to the field of experience through something that is otherwise unknown to it is indeed a cognition that is still left to reason from this standpoint, whereby reason is neither locked inside the sensible world nor adrift outside it, but, as befits knowledge of a boundary, restricts itself solely to the relation of what lies outside the boundary to what is contained within. (*Prol.* 4:361)

The final clause of this passage provides the key to understanding how reason can conceive of unknowable reality on the other side of the boundary. Rationality must conceive of the relation "of what lies outside the boundary to what is contained within" (*Prol.* 4:361). Thus, while we are not permitted rationally to conceive of an unknowable beyond *in itself,* we are able to rationally conceive of what the beyond is *for us*.

When Kant discusses how rationality requires that we think about this relation, he often does so in term of the phrase "rational satisfaction." The following passage is helpful for understanding this phrase:

> Reason, through all of its concepts and laws of the understanding, which it finds to be adequate for empirical use, and so adequate within the sensible world, nonetheless does not thereby find *satisfaction for itself*; for as a result of questions that keep recurring to infinity, it is denied all hope of completely answering those questions. (*Prol.* 4:353, emphasis mine)

I take the claim here to be based upon Kant's understanding of the Janus-faced capacity of reason. Reason guides the understanding in the sensible world toward the production of science. The principles that make such systematic cognition possible are the pure ideas of reason. But the pure ideas of reason also drive reason toward harmonious, complete, systemic unity—which could never be attained in phenomenal reality. In fact, as Kant's discussion of the nature of syllogisms shows, reason could not be driven toward any degree of systematicity if it were not driven toward complete systematicity as such. Thus it is due to the exact same principles that, on the one hand, reason finds its concepts and laws adequate for empirical use and, on the other hand, reason finds the empirical as whole to be unsatisfactory.

Hence, the locus of reason's possible satisfaction could only be found beyond the boundaries of possible experience. The "uncritical" mind might be tempted to satisfy reason's longing by making knowledge claims about reality in itself, beyond the bounds of experience. However, Kant has shown that such an approach will eventually lead reason into distinct but equally unsatisfactory positions.[69] Even though we cannot satisfy our reason by knowing beyond the boundaries, it is not the case that reason is condemned to perpetual dissatisfaction. There are rational cognitive positions that don't meet the high bar of knowledge but, nevertheless, enable rational satisfaction. On Kant's account, such a position is faith:

> We should, then, think for ourselves an immaterial being, an intelligible world, and a highest of all beings (all noumena), because only in these things, as things in themselves, does reason find *completion and satisfaction*, which it can never hope to find in the derivation of the appearances from the homogeneous grounds of those appearances; and we should think such things for ourselves because the appearances actually do relate to something distinct from them (and so entirely heterogeneous), in that appearances always presuppose a thing in itself, and so provide notice of such a thing, whether or not it can be cognized more closely. (*Prol.* 4:354-4:345, emphasis mine)

Only the ideas of reason—God, the soul, and the world as whole—signify the systematic completion that reason desires. If we believe that these ideas properly characterize reality itself beyond the boundaries, even though we can never know that they do, then reason is able to think of its own drive toward systematicity as properly so aimed. We can accept the incomplete systematicity of empirical reality insofar as we believe it is part of a higher harmony, completeness, and unity that includes both knowable and unknowable reality. However, in asserting faith in God, the soul, and the world-as-a-whole, we cannot take the content of our assertion to refer to ultimate reality *in itself*. These assertions have meaning only insofar as we take them to refer to what ultimate reality is *for us*. Furthermore, conceiving of what ultimate reality is *for us*, Kant writes, is something that we *must* do—"we *must* nonetheless assume such beings in relation to the sensible world and connect them with it through reason" (*Prol.* 4:355, emphasis mine).

Kant's claim, then, is that belief in God is a requirement of rational satisfaction. This claim may be easily misinterpreted. One might take Kant to mean that reason chooses to believe in God

[69] I take demonstrating this point to be much of the thrust of The Transcendental Dialectic.

merely because God just so happens to be the thing that gives reason what it wants—namely complete systematicity. If this were Kant's argument, his defense of faith would be abysmally poor—since it would be structurally analogous to believing in God merely because it makes one feel happy or safe. We can see that such a reading would be mistaken in that it implies that the object of faith, God, is something wholly distinct from reason. In contrast, I take it that the key to understanding Kant on this point is the realization that Kant's "God" is not something distinct from reason. The idea of God at issue *is* an idea of reason. Hence, Kant's sense of "rational satisfaction" is reason's internal satisfaction with itself. On my account, this internal self-satisfaction of reason is properly characterized as internal coherence.

Since the idea of God is an idea of reason, the question of faith is a question of how reason should view one of its component ideas. Part of this answer was given much earlier (§III.B). There we said that, according to Kant, the idea of God must be regarded as an *a priori* valid regulative principle. This is because the validity of the idea of God, as a regulative principle, is a necessary condition for the validity of science—and Kant clearly takes science to be valid (especially in terms of mathematics and physics).

The question now at hand is whether reason must regard the idea of God as something more than as a mere regulative principle. This question, Kant has shown, is unavoidable. Due to the Janus-faced nature of reason, reason cannot affirm the valid use of the ideal of perfect systematicity without also proceeding to the very "contiguity of the filled space (of experience) with empty space (of that which we can know nothing)" and asking whether that systematicity continues beyond the bounds of possible experience (*Prol.* 4:345). This unavoidable question has only two options: affirm transcendental continuation of systematicity or deny it. Hence, as long as we accept the legitimacy of science we can formulate the two options as follows:

1. Reason should guide the understanding toward systematicity AND reason should view the relation of the known to the wholly unknown in terms of **continuing systematicity**.

OR

2. Reason should guide the understanding toward systematicity BUT reason should view the relation of the known to the wholly unknown as **devoid of such systematicity**.

I take Kant to claim that speculative reason favors option (1) over option (2). I hold that this rational favoring is best cashed out in terms of internal coherence. To make this clear, let us consider what the content of speculative reason would be in each case:

1. Reason_1 {syllogistic infinite regress, the drive toward parsimony, the regulative idea of God, and belief in continuing transcendental systematicity}

2. Reason_2 {syllogistic infinite regress, the drive toward parsimony, the regulative idea of God, and denial of continuing transcendental systematicity}

Speculative reason_1 is coherent in the following manner: the syllogistic drive toward regress and the drive toward parsimony are both explained by appeal to the claim that reason includes the *a priori* goal of perfect completeness. And conversely, the claim that reason includes an *a priori* goal of perfect completeness is explained in terms of the claim that reason endlessly seeks the most parsimonious and most complete explanation of empirical reality. However, reason also asks itself why it has this entire rational subset {syllogistic regress, parsimony drive, and the regulative ideal of perfect systematicity}. The answer is that reason_1 takes its subjective idea of perfect systematicity to be more than a mere subjective idea. Reason_1 understands itself to be striving to understand all of knowable reality in terms of systematicity, not because of some odd quirk of human reason, but because that is really the way transcendental reality relates to the empirical realm. Hence, the transcendental belief in systematicity explains the subjective idea of perfect systematicity and thereby the entire subset {syllogistic regress, parsimony drive, and idea of perfect systematicity}. Conversely, the entire subset {syllogistic regress, parsimony drive, and idea of perfect systematicity} demands that reason strive for perfect systematicity in everything that reason can conceive of—

including the relation across the boundary of pure reason. Hence this subset explains why reason believes in transcendental systematicity.

Conversely, Reason_2 cannot coherently explain itself. While Reason_2's subset {syllogistic regress, parsimony drive, and idea of perfect systematicity} is still internally coherent, that subset conjoined with the denial of transcendental systematicity is not. Reason_2 cannot explain its endorsement of the subjective maxim to seek systematicity in the empirical world, since it denies that transcendental reality *for us* is actually systematic. On this account, reason's subjective maxim is merely a useful quirk of humanity; it is not regarded as actually directed at the truth of transcendental reality *for us*. Similarly, the denial of transcendental systematicity is inexplicable on the basis of the rational subset {syllogistic regress, parsimony drive, and idea of perfect systematicity}. That subset, insofar as it coherently yields the maxim "think systematically!" drives reason to think systematically about everything that reason can conceive of. But the relation of the transcendental unknown to the empirical realm is something that reason can conceive of. Hence, denying transcendental systematicity is an inexplicable departure from the subjective maxim to think systematically. Thus, Reason_2 is internally incoherent.

One might think that Reason_2 could merely refrain from asking the transcendental question and maintain is full contents as {syllogistic regress, parsimony drive, and idea of perfect systematicity}. Since we have said that this three-part set is coherent, Reason_2 could maintain its coherence by not expanding to include the transcendental denial of systematicity. However, Kant has argued that this will not work—as long as one accepts the validity of science. The three-part subset, applied to the understanding, results in science. However, this very application means that science is based on what we have called the Janus-faced nature of reason. Reason cannot drive the understanding in the production of empirical science if it cannot also drive the understanding in the other direction—toward the limits of knowledge and the boundary of rational thought. Furthermore, rationally thinking the boundary requires conceiving of the relation between the unknowable beyond the whole of knowable reality. Hence, merely accepting the validity of science means that the transcen-

dental question is unavoidable. The scientific worldview must ask whether the relation across the boundary of pure reason is to be thought of in terms of systematicity or not. Kant has argued that only the former option is coherent, and since coherence is normatively binding for reason, speculative reason favors belief in transcendental systematicity over its denial.

In sum, a necessary condition for the validity of science is the Janus-faced nature of reason. But the Janus-faced nature of reason forces us to conceive of the boundary of pure reason, which requires conceiving of the relation across the boundary—the relation between the wholly unknowable and the empirical knowable. The only way to conceive of this relation in a manner coherent with reason's own principles is in terms of systematicity. To affirm the correctness of science but deny transcendental systematicity would be to: (1) make reason unable justify the correctness of its demand that empirical reality be known systemically and (2) to make reason view its demand on empirical reality as inherently failed, since empirical reality can never actually achieve systemic completeness and, *ex hypothesi*, there is no higher completeness. Hence, the only way coherently to affirm the validity of science is to affirm that transcendental reality *for us* is actually systematic.

For Kant, assenting to the claim that transcendental reality *for us* is systematically ordered is equivalent to asserting faith in the existence of God (A698/B726). Believing that transcendental reality *for us* is systematic amounts to viewing the subjective drive toward systematicity in the empirical realm as reaching fruition beyond the bounds of human knowledge. This drive, as we have seen, is a drive toward a perfectly parsimonious and complete system—i.e. a system grounded on a single principle that unites the totality of reality into one internally differentiated yet coherent whole. Furthermore, since for Kant we understand any actual object as completely determined through the affirmation or denial of all possible predicates (c.f. §III.B.1), a complete system of reality, insofar as such a system is completely determinate, would involve the whole of possible reality. Furthermore, since the actual is a subdomain of the possible (what is actual is possible, but not everything that is possible is actual), it follows that a complete system of reality would be a complete system of possible reality. Hence to conceive of transcendental reality *for us* according to the subjective maxims of

reason is to conceive of there being one single ground within which the entirety of actual and possible reality is explanatorily unified into a systematic whole. This one ground would be the "original being (*ens originarium*)" insofar as it would be conceptually prior to any actual being (A578/B606). This original being would also be the "highest being (*ens summum*)" since it would be the highest ground of possible and actual reality (A578/B606). For this reason, it would also be the "being of all beings (*ens entium*)," since it would be the condition under which all begins stand. Finally, as the condition under which all beings stand, it is the condition for all beings without itself having any further condition, thus it is a necessary being (*ens necessarium*).[70] From which considerations Kant writes:

> Now if we pursue this idea…then we will be able to determine the original being through the mere concept of the highest reality as a being that is singular, simple, all-sufficient, eternal, etc., in a word…unconditioned completeness through all predications. The concept of such a being is that of **God** thought of in a transcendental sense. (A580/B608)

One might take Kant to have here violated his own maxim. In the Fourth Antinomy Kant argues that the claim "there belongs to world, either as its part or its cause, a being that is absolutely necessary" leads to rational contradiction.[71] More specifically, however, what leads to a contradiction is not the idea of a necessary being *per se* but the claim that reason can *know* or *prove* that there is a necessary being.[72] As Kant specifically remarks:

> What is here in dispute is not the **matter** but the **tone**. For enough remains left to you to speak the language, justified by the sharpest reason, of a firm **faith**, even though you must surrender that of **knowledge** (A745/B773).[73]

Hence, while Kant argues that we cannot know whether God exists, this denial of knowledge has also made room for faith (Bxxx). Moreover, the faith for which Kant makes room is not only per-

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[70] "If something, no matter what, exists, then it must also be conceded that something exists **necessarily.** For the contingent exists only under the condition of something else…from this same inference holds further all the way to a cause not existing contingently and therefore necessarily without condition" (A584/B612).

[71] C.f. A452/B480-A460/B488

[72] N.B., the thesis of the antinomy explicitly asserts a necessary being *as part of or cause of the world.* This may be another way in which Kant's critical faith is distinct from the topic of the Fourth Antinomy; cf. Michelle Grier, "The Ideal of Pure Reason," 273 ft. 17.

[73] I have here rendered *Glaube* as "faith" where Guyer and Wood have "belief."

mitted, but is required by the central principles two of reason—the same principles that make science possible (A698/B726).

We are now in a position to add the two final premises to Kant's coherence argument. On my view, the *Critique of Pure Reason* contains the following argument:

1. The idea of God is an *a priori* valid idea of reason.
2. The idea of God is a necessary condition for science in general.
3. The Janus-faced capacity of reason is a necessary condition for science.
4. If reason is Janus-faced then it is required to think rationally about both the boundary of knowledge itself and the unknowable beyond.
5. To think rationally about the boundary of knowledge requires determinately conceiving of the relation across the boundary—the relation between the knowable and the unknowable.
6. The only way to conceive of the relation across the boundary in a manner that is coherent with science is to believe in God.

From these six premises it follows that:[74]

7. If science is valid, then the idea of God is a valid regulative principle and reason should assent to the transcendental existence of God.

At this point I take myself to have demonstrated two of my three theses. I have shown that the *Critique of Pure Reason* argues that faith and science are necessarily consistent and, moreover, that science actually favors faith in God. These two claims together sufficiently show that the first *Critique* defends the rational legitimacy of faith. I will now turn to defend my third and final thesis. I will provide textual evidence to show that the *Critique*'s defense of faith is deeply central to the most basic aims of critical philosophy.

[74] The full version of this inference with every intermediate step made explicit can be found in the appendix.

IV. THE DEFENSE OF FAITH IS CENTRAL TO THE FIRST *CRITIQUE*

My demonstration that the *Critique* does contain a positive defense of the rationally legitimacy of religious faith (in terms of consistency and coherence) still leaves open the possibility that such a defense is a minor or tangential moment in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the following section I hope to show otherwise. I argue that the *Critique*'s defense of faith is central to the primary aims of critical philosophy and that the *Critique of Pure Reason* should therefore be read as centrally aimed at defending the rational legitimacy of religious faith.[75]

A. THE B-PREFACE SUPPORTS THIS READING

The second edition preface (1787) is a key section of the critical corpus for understanding the core aims of the *Critique*. Kant wrote this section after coming to believe that many readers of the first edition (1781) had misunderstood the general nature of critical philosophy. Kant begins by addressing the misinterpretation that the *Critique* is essentially a negative project. He writes:

> Hence a critique that limits the speculative use of reason is, to be sure, to that extend **negative**, but because it **simultaneously** removes an obstacle that limits or even threatens to wipe out the practical use of reason, this critique is also in fact of **positive** and very importantly utility (Bxxv).[76]

There are two aspects of this passage that I wish to address: (1) the emphasis on morality and (2) the simultaneity claim.

(1) In this passage Kant's emphasizes practical reason and morality. However, this is only how Kant *begins* his discussion of the positive aims of critical philosophy. After explaining how critical philosophy defends morality and freedom (these two are inextricably linked for Kant), he writes, "Just the same sort of exposition of the positive utility of critical principles of pure reason can be given in respect to the concepts of **God** and the **simple nature of our soul**" (Bxxix). Hence the *Critique* defends three concepts (freedom, God, and the soul) and the defense of each concept is

[75] Many of the passages that I cite in this section were first brought to my attention by Eric Entrican Wilson. I am indebted to him for much of my thinking about the importance of these themes.
[76] The bolding of "simultaneously" is mine while the other bolded words are Kant's emphasis.

of the "same sort." Thus, the way in which Kant describes the *Critique*'s defense of morality and freedom equally applies to the *Critique*'s defense of God.

(2) The above passage asserts that the *Critique*'s negation of the pretensions of speculative reason is **simultaneously** its positive defense of morality. And per point (1) above, it follows that the *Critique*'s negation of speculative reason is simultaneously the *Critique*'s defense of the concept of God. In other words, the negative and positive phases are two sides of the same coin. If the negation of traditional metaphysics and the positive defense of faith are two sides of a single critical position, then it is not possible that the *Critique*'s defense of faith is less central than the former aim. I take this to be expressed succinctly by the line, "Thus I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith; and the dogmatism of metaphysics…is the true source of all unbelief"(Bxxx). This argumentative structure necessarily requires that Kant's defense of faith is as central as its negative aim. The fundamental equality of all of the *Critique*'s opponents is made clear in the following passage:

> the critique of reason is bound once and for all to prevent…the scandal that sooner or later has to be noticed even among the people in the disputes in which, in the absence of criticism, metaphysicians (and among these in the end even clerics) inevitably involve themselves, and in which they afterwards even falsify their own doctrines. Through criticism alone can we sever the very root of **materialism, fatalism, and atheism**, of freethinking **unbelief**, of **enthusiasm** and **superstition,** which can become generally injurious, and finally also of **idealism** and **skepticism,** which are more dangerous to the schools and can hardly be transmitted to the public. (Bxxxiv)

This passage makes explicit two important points. First, critical philosophy proposes a single position, which entails the falsity of the root of materialism, fatalism, atheism, freethinking unbelief, enthusiasm, superstition, idealism, and skepticism. All of Kant's opponents are taken to be proponents of a single incorrect view of the nature of human reason (the root), which the *Critique* aims to correct. Due to this argumentative structure, the *Critique*'s defense of faith cannot be any less central than any of its aims, since they are all entailed by the single critical position. Second, this passage indicates the importance of the *Critique*'s religious aims. The list of opponents contains two

distinct sorts of unbelief (atheism proper and freethinking unbelief[77]) and Kant specifically mentions religious clerics, in addition to metaphysicians, remarking that only critique can prevent the clerics from falsifying their own doctrines. This seems to indicate that Kant is concerned with religious faith proper and not just the philosopher's God.

Finally, in the preface Kant addresses the social import of critique. As we would expect, Kant writes that critique finally sets metaphysics on the "course of a secure science" so that "young people hungry for knowledge" can avoid useless illusion and put their energies toward the proper advancement of human knowledge (Bxxx-Bxxxi). However, Kant continues by describing another legacy of critique, even more important than the first:

> But we see it [the social import of critique] above all when we take account of the way criticism puts an end for all future time to objections against morality and religion in a Socratic way, namely by the clearest proof of the ignorance of the opponent…. Hence it is the first and most important occupation of philosophy to deprive dialectic once and for all of all disadvantageous influence, by blocking off the source of errors. (Bxxxi)

The language here is strong and jarring. Kant explicitly asserts that the most important result of critical philosophy is its defense of religion and morality.

Hence, the preface to the second edition of the *Critique* contains several claims that indicate the centrality of Kant's defense of faith. Not only does the B-preface highlight faith as a central theme of critical philosophy, it also describes the *Critique*'s argumentative structure in a way that requires the defense of faith to be just as central as any of Kant's aims.

B. THE DOCTRINE OF METHOD SUPPORTS THIS READING

The Transcendental Doctrine of Method indicates the centrality of the *Critique*'s defense of faith primarily through the conjunction of two descriptive facts. First, every single chapter of the Doctrine of Method includes reference to God, and several of the subchapters consist largely of

[77] I take the later to refer to Enlightenment deism (c.f. *Prol.* 4:355-4:360 and A696/B724-A702/B730).

discussions of God, the soul, and faith.[78] In fact, the final section of the entire *Critique of Pure Reason* begins with the remark that the proper end of philosophy is God and hope in the afterlife.[79] Second, the Doctrine of Method seems to hold a prominent place in Kant's conception of his own critical project. In Kant's table of contents, the Doctrine of Method appears as one of the two main sections of the *Critique,* on par with the Aesthetic, Analytic, and Dialectic combined (Axxiii). But more even importantly, Kant characterizes the entire *Critique of Pure Reason* itself a "treatise on method" (Bxxii).[80] This suggests that the section of the *Critique* entitled, The Doctrine of Method would be a key place for determining the general stakes and aims of Kant's project. This observation, combined with thematic centrality of God and faith in the Doctrine of Method, indicates that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is centrally concerned with faith in God.

Furthermore, in the second chapter of the Doctrine of Method, entitled the Discipline of Pure Reason, Kant refers to the very sort of two-step (consistency and coherence) defense of faith that I have expounded above. There, Kant begins by writing that there is no hope that "the two cardinal propositions of our pure reason: there is a God, and there is a future life" will be demonstrated (A742/B770). "But it is also apodictically certain," Kant continues, "that no human being will ever step forward to assert the opposite with the least plausibility, let alone assert it dogmatically"(A742/B770). As the discussion continues, Kant writes:

> We can therefore be entirely unconcerned that somebody will someday prove the opposite [of theism]…. For the opponent (who cannot here be considered a mere critic) we have our *non liquet* ready, which must unfailingly confound him, while we do not need to refute his retort, for we always have in reserve the subjective maxims of reason, which he necessarily lacks, and under their protection we can regard all his shadow-boxing with tranquility and indifference. (A742/B770)

[78] The subchapters I am referring to are: The Ultimate End of the Use of Pure Reason, The Ideal of the Highest Good, and On having an Opinion, Knowing, and Believing

[79] "It is remarkable enough, although it could not naturally have been otherwise, that in the infancy of philosophy human beings began where we should now rather end, namely, by studying first the cognition of God and the hope or indeed even the constitution of another world." (A852/B880)

[80] I am indebted to Eric Entrican Wilson for pointing this out to me: "It is a treatise on the method, not a system of the science itself; but it catalogs the entire outline of the science of metaphysics" (Bxxii).

The key move here is the claim that there are "subjective maxims of reason," which the atheist "necessarily lacks" and which give the theist "tranquility." I suggest that this refers to what I have deemed the coherence argument, since, for Kant, the subjective maxims of reason are the maxims of systematicity and these are the same maxims that the atheist cannot coherently follow.[81] This is made more evident by the final conclusion that Kant draws from the above discussion—"Thus there is properly no antithetic of pure reason at all" (A743/B771). Hence, a passage that begins with a reference to God as one of "the two cardinal propositions of our pure reason" concludes that reason is devoid of any internal antithesis at all. In other words, a rationality that includes faith in God is fully and completely coherent.

In sum, I take it that the thematic centrality of God throughout the entire Doctrine of Method indicates that the *Critique* is centrally concerned with faith in God. Furthermore, the specific passage that I have highlighted from the Discipline of Pure Reason asserts that there is a purely theoretical basis for rational faith in God—the subjective maxims of reason and coherence of theism.

C. THE DIALECTIC SUPPORTS THIS READING

The Dialectic terminates in two short concluding sections: On the Regulative Use of the Ideas of Pure Reason and On the Final Aim of the Natural Dialectic of Human Reason. After so much of the Dialectic has focused on showing that God, the soul, and the world-as-a-whole can never be objects of knowledge, these two sections explain the positive results of the Dialectic.

The penultimate section of the Dialectic emphasizes, once again, that the ideas of reason are necessary for the scientific use of the understanding. But Kant here distinguishes between accepting the ideas of reason as mere logical principles and accepting them as transcendental principles. Since we have seen that the latter amounts to making a claim about the relation across the

[81] Kant says that "maxims of reason" are all subjective regulative principles of reason that drive reason in its speculative interests toward "possible perfection of the cognition of objects" (A666/B694).

boundary of pure reason and thereby asserting faith, it is particularly striking that Kant writes the following:

> In fact it cannot even be seen how there could be a logical principle of rational unity among rules unless a transcendental principle is presupposed, through which such a systematic unity, as pertaining to the object itself, is assumed *a priori* as necessary (A651/B697).

Kant continues by writing that to deny the transcendental reality of the ideas would be to claim that reason operates "directly contrary to its vocation" since it would strive for the systematic cognition of empirical reality while denying that transcendental reality *for us* is actually systematic (A651/B697). Most striking, Kant ends this discussion by claiming that assenting to the transcendental reality of the ideas of pure reason is the lynchpin of his entire theory of human cognition. He claims that without such assent all three faculties—reason, the understanding, and sensibility—would crumble:

> For the law of reason to seek unity is necessary, since without it we would have no reason, and without that, no coherent use of the understanding, and, lacking that, no sufficient mark of empirical truth; thus in regard to the latter we simply have to presuppose the systematic unity of nature as objectively valid and necessary. (A651/B679)

Whatever we make of the details of this claim, one point is unmistakable: Kant takes assent to the transcendental reality of the ideas of reason, including God, to be a fundamental piece of his entire critical position on human cognition.[82]

The final section of the Dialectic directly addresses the question of faith in God: "The ideas of pure reason can never be dialectical in themselves; rather it is merely their misuse which brings it about that a deceptive illusion arises out of them" (A669/B679). Hence, the arduous Dialectical assault is not an attack on the ideas of God, immorality, or freedom, but only on a certain approach to those ideas—the approach that takes them to be objects of proper knowledge. While never attaining that level of knowledge, Kant repeatedly affirms the rational necessity of believing in God. Kant writes that due to the nature of reason, "I am not only warranted but even compelled to realize this idea" (A677/B705). He explains:

[82] I take the precise claim here to be that faith is needed for rationally endorsing the correctness of knowledge claims.

> Hence now it happens if I assume a divine being, I do not have the least concept either of the inner possibility of such a highest perfection or the necessity of its existence; but then I can deal satisfactorily with all other questions concerning the contingent, and reason can obtain the most perfect satisfaction in regard to the greatest unity for which it is searching in its empirical use…**this proves that it is in reason's speculative interest**…which **justifies** starting from a point so far beyond its sphere in order to consider its objects in one complete whole. (A676/B704, emphasis mine)

In an attempt to clarify his position further, Kant engages himself in the following imaginary interview, in which he is asked specific questions about faith in God. I will use (Q) to refer to the questioner and (K) to refer to Kant.[83]

(Q) Is there anything different from the world which contains the ground of the world order and its connection according to universal laws?

(K) **Without a doubt.** The world, as appearance, must have a transcendental ground.

(Q) Is this being a substance? A being of the greatest reality? A necessary being?

(K) **This question has no significance at all**. For all the categories are only legitimate for empirical use.

(Q) **Can** we nevertheless assume a unique wise and all-powerful world author?

(K) **Without any doubt;** and not only that, but we **must** presuppose such a being.

(Q) But then do we extend our cognition beyond the field of possible experience?

(K) **By no means**. For we have only presupposed a Something which we have given just those properties that could contain the ground for such a systematic unity in accordance with the conditions of our reason.

In sum, the Dialectic indicates the importance of faith in the first *Critique*. It does so both in terms of an explicit discussion of faith in God and by affirming the central importance of the ideas of reason for Kant's general theory of human cognition.

[83] Some of this dialogue has been annotated. The full version spans from A696/B724 to A698/B726.

D. THE *PROLEGOMENA* SUPPPORTS THIS READING

The *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (1783) was published between the first and second editions of the *Critique*. In the work's preface, Kant writes that one of his goals in the *Prolegomena* is to correct common misunderstandings of the general nature of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

> But with regard to a certain obscurity—arising in part from the expansiveness of the plan, which makes it difficult to survey the main points upon which the investigation depends—in this respect the complaint is just; and I will redress it through the present *Prolegomena*. (*Prol.* 4:261)

Hence, I take it that the *Prolegomena* is an indispensable work for determining the primary aims of critical philosophy.

One thing that is immediately clear in the *Prolegomena* is Kant's emphasis on his discussion of reason as the real point of the entire critical project—in other words, the discussions of sensibility and the understanding are only preparatory for the real heart of the issue—the nature of reason. The *Prolegomena* beings with a short section entitled, "General Question of the Prolegomena: Is Metaphysics Possible at All?" and the section of the book that discusses the faculty of reason has the same title—"Is Metaphysics Possible at All?" Hence, the general question of the entire book is identical with the title of the section that is roughly analogous to the Dialectic and the Doctrine of Method. Moreover, Kant explicitly asserts that the discussion of the faculty of reason, beyond the use of the understanding, is the real central issue of critical philosophy:

> Nevertheless our laborious analytic of the understanding would have been entirely superfluous, if our aim had been directed toward nothing other than mere cognition of nature insofar as such cognition can be given in experience; for reason conducts its affairs in both mathematics and natural science quite safely and quite well, even without such a subtle deduction; hence our critique of the understanding joins with the ideas of pure reason for a purpose that lies beyond the use of the understanding in experience. (*Prol.* 4:331)

Hence, the *Prolegomena* favors a reading of the first *Critique* that treats Kant's discussion of the transcendental ideas of reason as central.

Moreover, the section of the *Prolegomena* that addresses reason (How is Metaphysics in General Possible?) is centrally focused on the idea of God. The idea of God is first introduced only

four pages into the chapter, in terms of its necessary relation to syllogistic thought. From here, God remains a constant theme throughout the remaining thirty four pages of the section. In other words, God, theology, and faith are constant themes for approximately ninety percent of the chapter that Kant labels as pertaining to the central issue of critical philosophy.

Finally, this section of the *Prolegomena* emphasizes the necessity of faith in God for the rational pursuit of science. For example, Kant writes:

> the only possible way to compel the use of reason in the sensible world (with respect to possible experience) into the most thoroughgoing harmony with itself is to assume, in turn, a supreme reason as a cause of all connections in the world; such a principle must be thoroughly advantageous to reason and can nowhere harm it in its use in nature. (*Prol.* 4:359)

In sum, the *Prolegomena* features the topic of God as the central issue of discussion, and it emphasizes the importance of faith for rational science. These two facts strongly support a reading the first *Critique* that takes faith to be central, since Kant explicitly states that one of the goals of the *Prolegomena* is to clarify the general aims of the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

I hope to have shown that numerous passages in the *Prolegomena,* the Dialectic, the Doctrine of Method, and the B-preface support my claim that the *Critique of Pure Reason* centrally defends the rational legitimacy of religious faith. I do not take any one of these sections of the critical corpus to be sufficient to settle the issue; however, together they provide strong evidence for reading the *Critique of Pure Reason* as centrally offering a defense of faith.

V. CONCLUSION

This project has engaged in an interpretative debate over Kant's general aims in the first *Critique*. I have argued that a defense of the rational legitimacy of religious faith is at the very center of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Moreover, I have argued that Kant's defense of faith is inextricably bound up with his views on the legitimacy of science. I have argued for this interpretation by means of three distinct theses: (1) the *Critique* argues that faith is necessarily consistent with science. (2) The *Critique* argues that science actually favors religious belief over non-belief—that is to say, the only coherent scientific worldview is one that includes faith in God. (3) I have argued that both the consistency and the coherence arguments are central to the general stakes and aims of the *Critique*.

These claims are fairly controversial. Two common trends in the secondary literature are inconsistent with my claims. First, there is the trend that wholly ignores Kant's religious aims in the first *Critique*. Second, even among those who take Kant's religious aims seriously, there is a trend to regard Kant's positive religious thought to be more or less restricted to the *Critique of Practical Reason*. If I have convincingly demonstrated the truth of my three theses, it follows that these two trends are mistaken: all discusses of Kant's primary aims in critical philosophy must include his defense of faith and all discussions of Kant's defense of faith *per se* must include this theoretical arguments in the first *Critique*.

I take the results of this project to be exciting in two ways. First, the results of my project emphasize the grandeur of Kant's project and its central engagement with issues of deep human concern. Secondly, it makes Kant's *magnum opus* relevant to current issues in a new way. Recent decades have seen both religious dogmatists and secular scientists argue, or assume, that science and religion are antithetical to one another. On the one hand, Kant's *Critique* should be read as directly arguing against all those who think that religion is undercut by science or that faith is in any way irrational. On the other hand, the *Critique* should be read as arguing against any religious person who devalues the importance science as irrelevant to devout faith. In opposition to both of these trends,

Kant argues that science requires belief in God, since only faith in God can enable the scientific worldview to be internally coherent. Critique truly does provide the middle way.

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APPENDICES

In the two appendices below I will provide the full standardized versions of the two arguments that I attribute to Kant, the consistency argument and the coherence argument.

A. THE CONSISTENCY ARGUMENT

1. Knowledge claims that either affirm or deny existence take the form of a synthetic judgment.
2. A synthetic judgment subsumes an empirical intuition under a concept.

Thus

3. The existence of the relevant empirical intuition is a necessary condition for the legitimacy of any synthetic judgment. [from 2]
4. There is no empirical intuition of either God or the totality of non-spatiotemporal reality.

Thus,

5. It is impossible to know whether or not God exits. [from 1,3-4]
6. Science is a subdomain of general knowledge acquisition.

Thus,

7. No legitimate piece of scientific knowledge could ever entail the falsity of the faith assertion "God exits." [from 5-6]
8. A set of statements if logically consistent if and only there is at least one truth value assignment such that all statements are true.

Therefore,

9. The faith assertion "God exists" is necessarily consistent with science; i.e., faith is consistent with all actual and possible sciences. [from 7-8]

B. THE COHERENCE ARGUMENT

1. The idea of God, as a regulative principle, is a necessary condition for syllogistic thought.
2. The idea of God, as a regulative principle, is a necessary condition for the rational purist of systematicity.
3. A body of knowledge is a science if and only if the relevant knowledge-judgments are connected by syllogistic inferences into a coherent system.

Thus,

4. The idea of God, as a regulative principle, is a necessary condition for the pursuit of science. [from 1-3]
5. An additional necessary condition for the rational pursuit of systematicity is the Janus-faced capacity of reason.
6. If reason is Janus-faced then it is required to rationally think about the boundary of knowledge itself.
7. To rationally think about the boundary of knowledge requires determinately conceiving of the relation across the boundary—the relation between the knowable and the unknowable.

Thus,

8. Determinately conceiving of the relation between the knowable and the unknowable is a necessary condition for the rational pursuit of science. [from 3, 5-7]
9. The only way to conceive of the relation across the boundary in a manner that is coherent with science is to believe in the existence of God.

Thus,

10. The only way to coherently fulfill the necessary conditions of science is to both assent to God as a regulative idea and to assert faith in the transcendental existence of God. [from 4,8,9-10]
11. Coherence is normatively binding on speculative reason.

Therefore,

12. Speculative reason, insofar as it assents to the legitimacy of science, favors theism over its denial.