

Phil 465: The argument of *Groundwork* III, in relation to theoretical and practical reason [Oct 20]

What we as rational beings are required to believe/posit as existing (but which we cannot actually know): *freedom*

What speculative reason must show/prove to be possible: *freedom*

Freedom seems *not* to be possible since the world that we can know is governed by causal necessity—every event that takes place in that world (the “world of sense/appearances/experience”) is necessitated by prior events.

This poses a problem for practical reason, since if there were only the world of experience, the fact that practical reason has to posit freedom would not carry any weight in face of the fact that theoretical reason would have shown that such freedom could not exist.

The solution to this “dialectic” is that theoretical reason can allow for the *possibility* of a world other than the world of experience. So freedom could be a characteristic of our wills insofar as they reside in another world/realm. It is *possible* that there is a freedom in some possible non-empirical realm.

What speculative reason cannot show to be actual: *freedom*.

It is impossible for theoretical reason to prove that freedom exists, since it is impossible to possess knowledge of something outside the world of the senses/experience/appearances.

Relation between theoretical and practical reason, following from these observations:

(a) Theoretical reason has primacy in the sense that if it shows something to be false, that trumps whatever practical reason posits, i.e. shows it not to exist. (b) However, if theoretical reason shows something to be possible, then the fact that practical reason posits it is sufficient. Practical reason can just plow ahead on the assumption of that thing, without having to get further validation of it as actual by theoretical reason.

What does Kant think can be said about the world of things-in-themselves/understanding?

Minimalist view: *Nothing* positive or definitive can be said about it, since it lies outside the only world of which we can have knowledge. All that can be said is that that world could possess characteristics other than those possessed by the world of experience. (see e.g. p. 114, bottom paragraph; 117, first full paragraph)

Maximalist view: But sometimes Kant appears to attribute important positive characteristics to the world of TII. E.g. 116, end of 1st paragraph: world of appearances is subordinated to the TII. 115, end of 1st par: the laws of the world of TII are *not* the same as those of the world of appearances.

Of what **value to living morally** (contrasting this with value to a theoretical understanding of morality) is getting clear about the true character and limits of reason? (117, final par)

What **synthetic a priori** proposition or connection does Kant think he has made in this section (which he promised at the end of section II)?