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Author Replies to the Comments by Hoffer, Tizzard, and Lewin

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Introduction

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to my three commentators—Noam Hoffer, Jessica Tizzard, and Michael Lewin. I am very grateful for their profound and critical engagement with my Cambridge Element on *Kant's Ideas of Reason* (henceforth, *KIR*). Their insightful and diligent comments offer me the opportunity to clarify and refine my interpretation of the regulative use of ideas of reason – a particularly fascinating, but also deeply puzzling aspect of Kant's theoretical philosophy. I also thank Paula Órdenes for initiating this special issue on my book in *Con-Textos Kantianos* and for inviting these three distinguished experts to engage my work. In what follows, I will reply to the comments in the following order: Hoffer, Tizzard, and Lewin.

Before I start discussing their points, I would first like to make a general remark. The three commentaries raise a plethora of questions, bringing to the fore the complexity of the subject matter and advancing the interpretative options. Since a Cambridge Element is primarily intended as an accessible guide for (new) readers of Kant, in *KIR* I offer a taxonomy for the spectrum of views through a simplifying approximation on a linear axis: an axis that ranges from what I call *noumenalism* to what I call *fictionalism*. My goal in *KIR* is to reconcile these views through essential modifications into a view that I call the *perspectivalist* reading. But, of course, like any approximation, this approximation does not do full justice to the diversity of views we find in the literature. Therefore, I have readily acknowledged that probably none of the views actually held by scholars correspond exactly (or verbatim) to one end or the other of the spectrum (see *KIR*, p. 17). Most commentators are sufficiently – not to say painfully – aware of the fact that Kant's own formulations in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (and in supplementary texts) at times seem to pull in different directions, thereby lending support to one line of interpretation while possibly undermining another, and vice versa.

In their comments, Hoffer and Tizzard further complicate the simplified picture through which I charted the territory of views, while Lewin's comments shed light on some methodological and conceptual challenges. Hoffer finds a new "horizontal axis" to the axis from noumenalism to fictionalism, grouping both of them at one end as *representationalist* views and contrasting them, at the other end, with what he calls *expressivism*—a view to which he himself subscribes.[1] According to his expressivist reading, ideas of reason neither describe reality nor prescribe norms to reality but simply express the subjective norms of reason. In contrast, Tizzard presses for a stronger sense in which reason is related to a mind-independent reality, as a source of objectivity or even as the ground of (a projected) reality. This stronger relation of reason to reality results from her quest for a unified interpretation that applies both to the ideas of theoretical reason, which *KIR* focuses on, and to the ideas of practical reason, which her own excellent research centers on.[2] Hence, *prima facie*, Hoffer and Tizzard appear to represent two opposite ends of yet another axis in the complex territory of views, an axis that runs from reason's expression of its *subjective* norms, at one end, to reason's projection of an *objective* reality, at the other end. If this observation is correct, then it not only reveals the challenging complexity of the spectrum of views on the table, but also reinforces the need to reconcile opposing aspects in Kant's account of ideas of reason. Addressing these two opposing challenges from Hoffer and Tizzard thus gives me the opportunity to refine my own perspectivalist reading. So it will be helpful to keep this new axis between subjective expression and objective projection in mind for the replies to follow.[3] In response to both these challenges, I will emphasize throughout my argument the *relationality* between the cognizing subject and the

1 Hoffer (forthcoming).
2 Tizzard (forthcoming).
3 Although Hoffer presents his views as "horizontal" to the axis from noumenalism to fictionalism, his expressivist view naturally seems closer to fictionalism, while Tizzard explicitly calls for a view closer to noumenalism. In this sense, the two axes I have identified are not precisely "horizontal" but have a more complex relationship with each other.

mind-independent world, which is ultimately to be aimed at in cognition.[4] I take it to be a major advantage of a perspectivalist view like mine to capture this relationality and to ward off one-sided views that collapse either into some form of (post-critical) subjectivism (or relativism) regarding truth or into some form of objectivism (of the sort of pre-critical traditional metaphysics).

1. Reply to Hoffer

Noam Hoffer offers a series of intriguing insights, questions, and refinements concerning my accounts of noumenalism and fictionalism, as well as my own perspectivalist view. In addition, he outlines a highly interesting alternative view, which he calls expressivism. In my replies, I will focus on three issues:

(1) Regarding my accounts of noumenalism and fictionalism, I examine the relation between the normativity of reason and the rationality of pursing an end of reason.
(2) Regarding my own perspectivalist interpretation, I reply to Hoffer's worry about a constitutive use of ideas by refining my definition of the intelligibility of nature, as opposed to the determinability of appearances.
(3) In relation to Hoffer's expressivist interpretation, I raise of a worry about subjectivism, although I cautiously agree with his expressivist move.

1.1. The Normativity of Reason vs. the Rationality of Pursuing Reason's Ends

I welcome Hoffer's proposal to reformulate the positions involved in the debate in terms of norms and ends. Specifically, Hoffer suggests: "The belief that there is something real that makes the end achievable grounds not the normative force of the end, but the rationality of pursuing that end." (p. 226). What he highlights here is the fact that reason with its subjective "law to seek unity" (KrV, A651/B679) is the source of normativity for us.[5] The ideas of reason are derived in complex ways from reason's own inferential procedures and its tendency to seek completeness. As representations of systematic unities that are understood to be unconditioned wholes (unconditioned at least in some respects), ideas state ends for us to be pursued. For example, the idea of the soul states the end to seek the systematic unity of all inner appearances. Since the law to seek systematic unity is essential to reason itself, it is also a prerequisite to any application of the transcendental ideas of reason in the first place. Thus, I agree with Hoffer that ideas inherit their normative bindingness from reason's own intrinsic normativity, as their normative force follows from reason's subjective law to seek unity. They are normatively binding for us *qua* rational subjects. Both noumenalists and fictionalists can (and do) agree with this. However, I argue that this is only half of the story about the normative bindingness of ideas. As Hoffer puts it, there are certain conditions for "the rationality of pursuing [the] end" that is defined by an idea. That is, only if certain conditions are in place, it is rational for us to pursue a specific end set by reason. What are these conditions that make ideas rational ends for us?

Now, I find Hoffer's reformulations for both noumenalism and fictionalism plausible:

> Noumenalists could argue that without doctrinal belief, the possibility of achieving the ends of reason would be unintelligible and hence pursuing those ends would be irrational. (p. 226)
> ...it is not the fictions themselves that are normatively binding. It is the other way round, the normative end of reason to achieve systematic unity justifies the adoption of fictions. (p. 226)

In *KIR*, I discuss this matter in the context of the *real* use of ideas (see KIR, 1.4, pp. 13-17). It is precisely not enough to view ideas of reason as legitimized by subjectively binding norms of reason. If they were only legitimized by the essential norms of reason, they could only have a logical use regarding the relations among concepts and cognitions. They would define, for example, how to deduce a specific application of a law from a general principle; or how to arrange a set of concepts in terms of genus and species concepts. However, the question that is at stake, in my view, is why ideas are applicable to nature in the first and therefore have a world-directed applicability. This is what I take to be indicated by Kant's repeated claim that ideas have "objective but indeterminate validity" (KrV, A663/B691).

The issue Hoffer's reformulations address is the question as to why ideas of reason are normatively binding for us *given the subjective nature of our reason*. And his answer is – correctly in my view – that ideas of reason are normatively binding *for us*, because they derive their normative force from the normativity of our reason. However, this leaves open the question as to why ideas of reason are normatively binding *in light of an objective reality* or *nature as it is given to us*. Hoffer seems to hint at this second question with his phrase "the rationality of pursuing the end". Of course, *prima facie*, it is only rational for an agent to pursue an end, if the end is achievable or realizable by the agent. In the case of theoretical reason, this means, it is only rational to use ideas to define the ends or goals for (scientific) inquiry into nature, if nature in fact complies with the end set by reason.

The overarching end of theoretical reason is *truth*, specifically, getting things right in our empirical cognition of objects in nature. For the idea of nature as a systematic whole to supply "mark[s] of empirical truth", "we simply have to presuppose the systematic unity of nature as objectively valid and necessary" (KrV, A651/B679). Hence, it is not enough to consider the normative force that the idea derives from the subjective law of reason. If ideas are to give us orientation in the world in order to find appropriate research goals, then

4 Mind-independence here always means independence from the *human* mind, but does not necessarily exclude dependence on a divine, or absolute, intellect.
5 All translations of Kant's works are according to *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992–).

they must formulate conditions that nature itself must satisfy in order for these research goals to be rational, achievable, or realizable for us.[6] Thus, in my view, ideas not only arise from the intrinsic norms of reason, but also state how the world must be constituted in order for the norms of reason to be meaningfully applied. This naturally raises the question of why ideas, if they are ultimately products of reason, can articulate conditions regarding a mind-independent reality—an issue that both Hoffer and Tizzard press on. Before I pursue this question further in light of Hoffer's concerns about a possible constitutive use of ideas, I would like to clarify my accounts of noumenalism and fictionalism regarding their existential commitments. In my analysis, both noumenalists and fictionalists could get on board with the thought that ideas state conditions about a mind-independent reality, and yet they differ significantly in the kind of their existential commitment to these conditions.

For noumenalists, ideas can only legitimately be used to set goals for investigations into nature if their subjective normative force is supplemented by an existential commitment to the world that cognition ultimately aims at. This is the world of things-in-themselves as it is given to us. Therefore, the ideas of human reason must be assumed to (in some sense) to truthfully correspond or refer to a mind-independent reality. For, otherwise, as Hoffer puts is, it would be "unintelligible" for us to pursue the ends defined by ideas.

In contrast, fictionalists reject any such existential commitment. I admit that some of my formulations, for example that idea-based fictions are "empty or non-referential" (*KIR*, p. 19), suggest Hoffer's reading of my account of fictionalism as a commitment to the *non-existence* of what ideas prescribe. However, I am willing to accept Hoffer's weaker formulation, according to which fictionalists lack an ontological commitment or are simply non-committal with regard to the ontological status of an idea's potential referent. Regardless of whether these fictions get anything right about the mind-independent reality, the crucial point is that their legitimate application as ends of scientific inquiry does not depend on their relation to such a reality. The most characteristic feature of fictionalism —to which I also counted the hypothesis-formation view— is then, as Hoffer suggests, their non-committal attitude, their refraining from any assertion about the ontological status of a possible referent (rather than a commitment to the non-existence of any referent of these ideas). It simply does not matter whether our fictions get anything right, they are heuristically useful anyway because we are necessitated to use them qua the nature of our reason alone.

However, this weaker reading raises the question as to why Kant calls them nonetheless "heuristic fictions" (KrV, A771/B799) and claims that they give rise to "transcendental illusions" (e.g., KrV, A298/B354, A422/B449-450, A462/B490). Both these locutions seem to imply their genuinely fictious nature, rather than implying a merely problematic or hypothetical nature. But I grant Hoffer's point that the weaker reading makes a transition from the theoretical ideas of the soul and of God to the practical ideas of the soul and of God more intelligible, especially as the latter culminate in practical postulates that assert the immortality of the soul and the existence of God as benign creator of a just world. I will come back to this point in connection to Tizzard's considerations concerning practical reason.

1.2. Hoffer's Worry about a Constitutive Use of Ideas

Hoffer worries that the ideas of reason have an "almost constitutive" role in the formation of empirical concepts, if "they [i.e., ideas] constitute their [i.e., the concepts'] intelligibility, i.e., their possibility of playing a role in theorizing, by outlining *a priori* structures of domains of reality and defining the most general kinds of objects in them" (p. 227). In this context, it is important to draw a distinction between the semantic function of ideas in the formation of empirical concepts and the epistemic function in the evaluation of the truth of empirical cognition. The former, the semantic function, concerns what I called the "human horizon" within which empirical objects appear for us, viz. the world of appearances, whereas the latter, the epistemic function, concerns the mind's relation to a mind-independent reality, which I called "ultimate reality".

Now, I argue that the ideas of the soul and of the world-whole (though not the idea of God) define the *a priori* structure of the human horizon, namely by outlining domains of nature within which we can find certain generic natural kinds, such as soul-like beings or material beings. This "structuring" of the world of appearances does not amount to a constitutive use of ideas, in my view, since it does not entail determinate claims with regard to a mind-independent reality, for example the existence of soul-substances. Only if we take the human horizon to be identical with this ultimate reality, are we overstepping the bounds of sense and use our ideas in a constitutive way.

Let me explain why I think that the productive function of human reason in "structuring" the world in which we perceive objects is not a constitutive use of ideas. Ideas primarily give structure in a negative or restrictive sense: they set limits beyond which we do not have any cognitive grasp. These limits can be understood as the outline of the *contexts of intelligibility* within which we can at all hope to find objects that we can meaningfully cognize with our empirical concepts and based on the empirical intuition we receive. But this outlining of a domain of nature is not the positive determination of the boundaries of that domain (see *KIS*, p. 51). In consequence, our empirical concepts — the concepts that can have semantic meaning for us in describing objects in nature — must be formed against the backdrop of these limitations. For example, the idea of the soul outlines the limitations of a single mind, demarcates what belongs to the individual consciousness from what is foreign to it, and as such considers all mental states belonging to it as originating from a single fundamental mental power, etc. In this sense, the idea of the soul outlines the domain of reality within which

6 Of course, no empirical investigation, no single researcher, and no community of researchers can ever fully achieve what ideas prescribe as the goal of reason. I will leave aside for now the question of what kind of condition of realizability would be considered rational.

we can find inner states belonging to one and the same individual, but it cannot be used to determine this individual as an empirical substance through to a constitutive use of the category of substance. I thus grant the determinability of mental states (as the inner states of a person) within the context, but I reject the determination of a person as an empirical substance.[7]

Regarding its role in concept-formation, the idea of the soul opens up a system of hierarchical ordered psychological concepts, with the highest genus-concept <soul> (or <psychological being>) at the top, and more specific concepts describing psychological states, mental faculties, or character traits subordinated to it. Importantly, reflecting an intuition under the idea of the soul does not amount to a determinate cognition of an empirical soul-substance. It only allows access to an adequate conceptual system, namely the system of psychological concepts to the describe the states of psychological beings.

Here a difference between *intelligibility* and *determinability* comes to bear, which I would like to emphasize more than I did in the book. Determinability concerns appearances (and their cognizability as objects of experience), whereas intelligibility concerns nature as the sum total of appearances. I agree with Hoffer that determinability is a matter of degree, but I think that intelligibility is a binary condition. Either the condition of nature's intelligibility is fulfilled, making systematic conceptualization and hence systematic cognition of objects in nature possible, or the condition is not fulfilled, rendering all our attempts to build scientific systems in the natural sciences futile. The intelligibility of nature as a whole is, therefore, a necessary condition for the determinability of objects within (certain domains of) nature.

Ideas of reason play an important role in outlining *contexts of intelligibility*. These contexts are the domains of nature in which a certain type of systematization can take place and objects of a certain kind can be determined at all. Only if we reflect our appearances under an idea, are we able to render them intelligible for us as objects of a certain kind, or as belonging to a certain domain of nature. Reflecting an appearance under an idea gives us access to a system of empirical concepts adequate for this domain. For example, only if we reflect inner appearances under the idea of the soul, can we recognize them as belonging to inner nature and apply psychological concepts to them. If we do not reflect given appearances under an idea, they remain unintelligible to us in the sense that they cannot be said to belong to a particular domain of nature (e.g., inner nature, outer nature, living nature). We may still give some determination to these appearances in terms of the generic categories (e.g., they can be said to have a certain quantity in space and time, to be filled with a certain quality of sensation, or to have a cause). But they cannot be said to be this or that kind of being (e.g., psychological being, physical-material being, living organism).

I agree with Hoffer that determinability is a matter of degree. By refining our empirical concepts, by revising and completing our system of empirical cognitions, we can approach a more and more determinate cognition for a given appearance. Specifically, by reflecting appearances under general laws of nature, by simplifying these laws and at the same time specifying more details of each appearance, we make progress towards a higher degree of systematicity thus determination. But the determinability of appearance within a domain of nature would not be possible without the global condition that nature — as a whole — is intelligibility, that is, that in principle each object in nature can have a thoroughgoing determination and thus that each empirical cognition can have a definite truth-value.

To avoid a constitutive use of ideas, it cannot be asserted that ultimate reality, or things-in-themselves, really correspond to the structure that ideas give to nature (as the sum total of appearances). Ideas define the structural lenses, as it were, through which we can look at things at all, that is, things can only appear to us under the limiting constraints set by ideas. In reflecting an appearance under an idea, we gain access to a systematic set of empirical concepts to determine this appearance. But ideas themselves do not positively determine appearances, nor do they determine things-in-themselves independently of the human mind.

Nonetheless, the epistemic function of ideas grants them a relation to things-in-themselves. This function concerns the truth-evaluation of empirical cognitions in light of how the mind-independent world of things really is. Here the idea of God plays a pivotal role. So I largely agree with Hoffer's interpretation of the idea of God as the ground of all essences of things and thus as the ground of the systematic unity of the laws of nature. In fact, I have benefited greatly from Hoffer's earlier work on this topic (see Hoffer 2023). However, I am more cautious about the essentialist picture that Hoffer paints. Even if God must be regulatively assumed as the ground of all essences of things, it is important to see that these essences are not identical with the (most general) natural kinds by which we approach the study of nature. The natural kinds primarily derive from our ideas of reason, as the limiting conditions of contexts of intelligibility for us. I will discuss this further in my replies to Tizzard's comments.

1.3. Hoffer's Expressivist View: Cautious Agreement and a Worry about Subjectivism

In the final part of his comments, Hoffer sketches his own expressivist view according to which "the function of the ideas is not that of representing objects, whether real or fictional, but rather that of expressing the commitment to semantic and epistemic norms of reason" (p. 229; see also Hoffer (forthcoming)). I find this expressivist reading of ideas intriguing and see ways to combine it with my perspectivalist view. I agree with Hoffer that ideas do *not* have their regulative function because they represent anything. So I, too, reject that ideas have a representational content regarding the world. In this sense, I am open to the suggestion that ideas express, rather than represent, something. Elsewhere, I myself have defended an expressivist interpretation of the phrase "I think" as an expression of the unity of transcendental apperception (see Kraus

7 For discussion and different views on this point, see Kraus (2020) and my exchange with Frierson (2022).

2020, Freitag and Kraus 2020). However, I have one hesitation about Hoffer's expressivist account of ideas. My worry is that it slides into a subjectivist account of reason and internalizes the regulative principles that are to have "objective but indeterminate validity" (KrV, A663/B691). If what is expressed through ideas are the subjective norms set by reason, then this raises the question as to why these norms should be applicable in a real-world setting. In other words, if the norms expressed by ideas are justified by reason alone, then it seems questionable what legitimizes their real world-directed use. Hoffer gives examples of these norms:

> For example, the idea of God expresses the norm to conceptualize nature as governed by a system of necessary laws; the cosmological ideas reflect the norm of treating causal, temporal, and spatial series as indefinitely extendable; and the psychological idea expresses the norm of explaining mental life according to one enduring principle, a character. (p. 229)

These formulations seem to indicate norms that have a certain "content" with regard to the world: the norms are *about* "nature as governed by a system of necessary laws" or *about* "causal ... series as indefinitely extendable". Moreover, these "contents" are prefaced by verbs about mental activities, such as "conceptualize", "treat", and "explain". This suggest that the norms expressed cannot simply be subjective norms grounded in reason alone, but that they concern the relation between reason and the reality towards which our mental activities are directed. If the expression of norms is understood as a merely reason-internal matter, then the expressivist interpretation is threatened by subjectivism. If it is about the expression of object-related norms, then it raises the question as to what legitimizes the applicability of these norms to an objective reality. Following this line of reasoning, we are again faced with the problem of whether we must assume the existence of a mind-independent reality that may satisfy our norms, so that it is rational for us to pursue these norms. Hoffer himself agrees that ideas must express "something beyond mere internal systematicity" (p. 228).

The expressivist view I envision can be combined with my perspectivalist view, if it incorporates the *relationality* between the mind and the world. The norms we express through ideas are not simply the norms of our subjective reason, such as "systematize your cognitions", but the norms that guide the relation between a rational cognizer and the reality aimed at in cognition. In this sense, ideas express how the state of the world must be like in order for the norms of reason to be *satisfiable*. But they express not simply an existential condition about the objective world either. Rather, they express *conditions of satisfiability*, that is, they express the conditions under which our norms are satisfiable. Based on theoretical reason, we cannot know that we actually live in a world that satisfies our norms, but we must take "an attitude of confidence", as Hoffer puts it: "if it is rational to apply the principles of reason, there must be an attitude of confidence that reality is amenable to them" (p. 228). In my view, this attitude of confidence is a kind of *practical commitment concerning the relationship of mind and world*, that is, a commitment that makes the practice of cognition and hence science for minds like ours in a world possible at all. What the ideas of reason thus express is neither simply a subjective norm nor an objective state, but rather the complex relationship between reason, thus normatively constituted, and the world in which the rational subject is situated. They express the subject's commitment towards a world that satisfies its norms. This commitment involves, in my view, the projection of something mind-independent, beyond the subjective conditions of the human mind and beyond the human-structured world of appearances. It is the projection of an ultimate reality as an end that satisfies my norms in a sufficient way, without amounting to existential or even determinative assertions about this reality. As a practical attitude (or perhaps as a *practical belief*—I will discuss this in my replies to Tizard's comparison with the ideas of practical reason), this commitment should not be understood as a descriptive proposition about an ultimate reality, but rather as an imperative: *Act as if the world were such that your epistemic norms could be satisfied in it, that is, as if the world were susceptible to reason's demand for systematicity, and then proceed with your conceptualization and cognition of nature.*

One advantage I see in emphasizing the relationality, as in my perspectivalist interpretation, is that it makes conceptual space for the thought that the subjective normativity of reason is not the only normativity that plays a role in the evaluation of cognition and science. Rather, we can allow for a normative standard that does not originate in the mind but in the world of things and justifies why a particular law of nature is true or not. That is, our cognition must not only conform to the norms of reason, but also meet the standards of the world, i.e., it must correspond to how the world actually is in accordance with an objective standard of adequacy or correctness. And the idea of God—as the ideal of an objective, mind-independent standard—plays a central role in this context, as I will explain in my replies to Tizzard.

2. Reply to Tizzard

Jessica Tizzard provides a set of insightful comments and challenging questions, focusing specifically on the conception of an "ultimate reality" and the comparison between the ideas of theoretical reason and those of practical reason. In contrast to Hoffer, Tizzard pushes for a stronger emphasis on the realist aspects of ideas and shows a tendency towards the noumenalist view, at least in a weak variant. In my replies, I will focus on three issues:

(1) The conception of an "ultimate reality" in the perspectivalist interpretation as an actually existing entity and as a projected ideal
(2) The question as to whether the standard of objectivity is set by reason or by the world and the question whether the perspectivalist view warrants a weak variant of noumenalism
(3) The similarities and differences between the ideas of theoretical reason and those of practical reason.

2.1. Ultimate Reality: Actual Existence and Projected Ideal

The starting point for Tizzard's reflections is my argument regarding the idea of God: on my view, the idea of God enables the projection of an ultimate reality as an ideal standard against which we can measure the progress of cognition and science. These projections, although only imaginary focal points (*foci imaginarii*), are, on my view, placeholders for a mind-independent reality: that is the reality that grounds the objects of experience in such a way that it ultimately makes our cognitions of these objects true. For Tizzard, this seems puzzling, as she suspects that there must be two kinds of ultimate realities involved: things-in-themselves, or the mind-independent world, on the one hand, and a reason-projected reality (as an ideal for truth-evaluation), on the other hand. If this were the case, it could indeed have troubling consequences for my view, since the position could easily tip over to one side. If the projected reality is understood to correspond to things-in-themselves, it collapses into a strong form of noumenalism. If, in turn, the projected reality is understood as being substantially different from things-in-themselves, we are back to fictionalism.

While I agree with Tizzard that a central question is whether the projected reality and things-in-themselves correspond, this question must be left open on the perspectivalist view. Nonetheless, the view entails these two assumptions: Firstly, the assumption of the actual existence of things-in-themselves as the ultimate, albeit unknowable, ground or truth-maker of our cognition, and secondly, the assumption of a normative, objective ideal for assessing the truth of our cognition. To avoid a doubling of reality, it is important to consider how these two assumptions relate to each other. My thought here is this: since our cognition is ultimately responsive to how the state of the world actually is, independent of any human making, and since this ultimate reality lies outside of our direct (cognitive) reach, we must both assume its existence (as independent from the human mind) and project its nature using the subjective means available to us. The very existence of an ultimate reality as the ultimate truth-maker of our cognitions makes it necessary to measure the progress of cognition and science against an objective standard of truth—a standard that is independent of the subjective features of the human mind and of the situatedness of the cognizer in the world. Since we, however, lack a mind-independent representation or access to such a standard, we can only take the representational means (or, to follow Hoffer, the expressive means) available to our minds. The central means is reason's own idea of God, that is, the idea of a divine intellect that grasps the nature of things as they are in themselves (i.e., their real essences) and that can therefore be understood as the source of the *ideal* of an objective standard of truth. Consequently, the idea of God enables the projection of an ideal standard by means of other, more specific ideas of reason, which as concepts of totalities or wholes serve as *foci imaginarii*. They stand in as placeholders for an ultimate reality to which we do not have access, but which underlies our cognition.

The question of the fit between ultimate reality and our projection of it must remain open on the perspectivalist picture; at least there is no further theoretical truth that justifies this fit. Rather, as I discussed in 1.3 with regard to Hoffer's expressivist proposal, the question of correspondence is transformed into an "attitude of confidence" or a "practical belief" or imperative. If there is an actually existing ultimate reality independent of the human mind, then there is the need for an objective standard of truth, and due to the human limitation, it makes necessary the projection of this ultimate reality for human purposes of truth-evaluation.

2.2. The Standard of Objectivity

For Tizzard, this triggers deeper questions about the nature of objectivity in Kant's theoretical philosophy, and also the question as to whether my view allows for a weak variant of noumenalism, in so far as we simply have to take certain assumptions about an ultimate reality to be true.

> I wonder if Kraus would be open to describing perspectivalism as a form of noumenalism that succeeds through this type of structure [i.e., modest statements about ultimate reality], which forges a relation between pure rational principles and things-in-themselves by treating the former as the source of objectivity. (p. 233)

Objectivity, in my view, should be understood (in accordance with the basic subject-object model that is so prevalent in Kant's entire philosophy) as a relation between a subject and its object, for example, a relation of cognition.[8] However, the term is ambivalent, and I would like to distinguish between objective validity and (objective) truth. A cognition is objectively valid, if it has objective content, that is, if its content can be grasped by any subject of its kind (i.e., human cognizers) and can be evaluated in terms of its truth. By contrast, a cognition is (objectively) true, if it is true (adequate or appropriate) in light of the object it represents. The conditions for objective validity are the formal conditions of the mind; specifically, the categories of the understanding define the conditions that make it possible for us to represent objective contents, i.e., contents that are valid for everyone. The conditions for truth are far more complicated, as I explained in 1.1. Since we cannot directly evaluate the correspondence between a cognition and its objects, we require principles of systematicity to obtain "touchstones" or "marks" of empirical truth. However, the subjective demand for systematicity is not the only normativity at play in the evaluation of truth. So I take Tizzard to ask specifically about the sources of truth.

In my reply to Hoffer, I noted as an advantage of the perspectivalist view its emphasis on the relationality between the cognizing subject and the world to be cognized. Emphasizing this relationality makes conceptual space for a normativity that originates from things, in addition to the normativity that is grounded in reason.

8 See Kraus (2020,##).

These two types of normativity can be explained in terms of Kant's hylomorphic terminology: there is a formal and a material aspect to normativity. Formally speaking, the standard by which we decide whether a cognition is true must be compatible with the normative structure of our reason. Hence, formally speaking, objectivity can be understood as universal validity: being true for everyone, or at least for all cognizers with similarly constituted minds and the same forms of normativity. Materially speaking, the standard by which we decide whether a cognition is true must originate from the world we aim to cognize. From the point of view of matter, objectivity can be understood as being true (adequate or appropriate) in light of the object(s) thus cognized. The category of causality, in conjunction with reason's law of systematic unity, defines a formal condition of truth: it demands that there must be systematically related causes for all changes in nature. But the exact cause of a specific (type of) change is due to the nature of things, i.e., to their real essences. Hoffer's (2019) regulative essentialism offers a helpful explanation of this material source of objectivity and truth, and of the role of our regulative projections thereof.

I do not believe that my perspectivalist view warrants weak noumenalism of the sort that Tizzard suggests: it is not the case that the principles of pure reason can be understood as a material source of objectivity that prescribe the essence of things. We cannot derive the nature of things from the nature of reason with the certainty of a theoretical assertion. (If this were the case, the view would transform into a Fichtean account of theoretical cognition.) Rather, the essence of things is *given to us* as an ultimate reality independent of our own minds, and as such it lends objectivity a material level in addition to the formal level defined by the categories and the laws of reason. Where does the role of ideas lie? Here, too, ideas are projections of the material conditions, of the essence of things, as the objective ideal against which we ought to measure and evaluate our cognitions. These projections may prove to be false or inadequate. But it must be our practical commitment or our "attitude of confidence" to hope to live in a world that reasonably matches our projections.

2.3. Comparing Theoretical and Practical Reason

Tizzard rightly points out that there are important similarities, but also differences between theoretical and practical reason and their respective ideas. She sees potential for the perspectivalist view to do important work in the interpretation of Kant's practical philosophy, emphasizing the distinction between "the productive/semantic and realist/epistemic functions of the ideas" (p. 233). In particular, she suggests that "there is room to argue that the ideas of freedom, the soul, and God also serve an important semantic function in the practical philosophy, by providing what, following Kraus, we could call contexts of intelligibility for practical cognition" (p. 233). Building on Tizzard's proposal, I would like to offer some preliminary thoughts on the applicability of the perspectivalist view in Kant's practical philosophy.

Parallel to the distinction between the semantic and the epistemic function, we can draw a distinction between the *semantic* and the *moral* function of reason. The semantic function concerns the formation of the action-concepts (and other moral concepts) that are used in the articulation of maxims (i.e., subjective principles of action). Think, for example, of the semantic field of "killing", which includes terms such as "murder", "assassinate", "slaughter", "terminate a life", "eliminate", "liquidate", and "let die". Each of these terms has a distinct definition, and which term is used in a maxim is crucial to the moral evaluation of the maxim. Reason's general principle of systematic unity applies to the formation of action-concepts, as it does in the case of scientific concepts. More specifically, the idea of the soul opens up a system of psychological concepts, including concepts such as "motive" and "intention", which figure in action descriptions. They are important, for example, to draw meaningful and systematic distinctions within the semantic field of "killing", as this depends on the agent's intention behind the act of killing. The idea of the soul therefore has a practical role in outlining what I called a *context of intelligibility* for practical purposes, that is, the context in which a particular type of action can be meaningful at all (for human subjects).

Parallel to the epistemic function of evaluating truth, the moral function concerns the evaluation of the moral value of a maxim, i.e., whether the maxim is commanded, permitted, or prohibited, or more precisely, whether the maxim should be included in the system of duties. The universalisability test for maxims, as derived from passages in the *Groundwork* (see GMS 4:420ff.) and illustrated by Kant's notoriously controversial examples, is often portrayed as a simple and straightforward test procedure. In real-life situations, however, maxims are more complex and situational factors are difficult to discern. There are cultural, scientific, social, and political developments that influence the way we describe actions and that can lead to the acquisition, revision, or refinement of action-concepts. Barbara Herman (2024) recently offered an important interpretation of Kant's practical philosophy, in which she emphasizes the role of systematic unity in Kant's theory of duty. What she calls the "moral habitat" is the realm of moral judgments that we occupy together. She describes the complex process by which we define and refine a system of duty as our moral habitat.

A further question is what role exactly the "ideas of God, an intelligible world (the kingdom of God) and of immortality" (of the soul) play in the practical context (KpV 5:137).[9] These ideas are often discussed in connection with yet another idea: the *idea of the highest good*, that is, the concept of an ideal state in which all moral agents are happy in proportion to their morality (i.e., their virtue or morally good character) (see KpV 5:110). The highest good is understood as the genuine object of pure practical reason, and hence as the final

9 I bracket the idea of freedom mentioned by Tizzard, as it differs significantly from the other ideas: it is understood as a condition of the moral law and hence as a necessary prerequisite for rational agency and moral responsibility. Kant therefore argues that we can presuppose its objective reality based on our experience of ourselves as free agents and our feeling of respect for the moral law, even though we cannot determine any specific action as free in experience (see GMS 4:448ff., 4:461, and KpV 5:48). See also Lewin's classification of practical ideas (p. 237).

end of all human conduct — an end that we, qua pure practical reason, are demanded to realize (see, e.g., KpV 5:109ff.).

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant develops an important argument showing that the three ideas of God, an intelligible world, and immortality are precisely the conditions that make the realization of the highest good at all possible for us. In a highly instructive passage, Kant distinguishes the practical role of these ideas from their theoretical analogues, taking pains to make space for the assumption of their objective reality on practical grounds, without undermining their merely regulative role for speculative reason. A central line runs as follows:

> The above three ideas of speculative reason [i.e., freedom, immortality, and God] are in themselves still not cognitions; nevertheless they are (transcendent) thoughts in which there is nothing impossible. Now they receive objective reality through an apodictic practical law, as necessary conditions of the possibility of what it commands us *to make an object*, that is, we are instructed by it *that they have objects*, although we are not able to show how their concept refers to an object, and this is not yet cognition of these objects; for one cannot thereby judge synthetically about them at all or determine their application theoretically; hence one can make no theoretical rational use of them at all, in which use all speculative cognition of reason properly consists. Nevertheless, theoretical cognition, *not indeed of these objects* but of reason in general, is extended by this insofar as *object were given* to those ideas by the practical postulates, a merely problematic thought having by this means first received objective reality. There was therefore no extension of the cognition *of given supersensible objects*, but there was nevertheless an extension of theoretical reason and of its cognition with respect to the supersensible in general, inasmuch as theoretical reason was forced to grant *that there are such objects*, though it cannot determine them more closely and so cannot itself extend this cognition of the objects (which have now been given to it on practical grounds and, moreover, only for practical use); for this increment, then, pure theoretical reason, for which all those ideas are transcendent and without objects, has to thank its practical capacity only. In this they become *immanent* and *constitutive* inasmuch as they are grounds of the possibility of *making real the necessary object* of pure practical reason (the highest good), whereas apart from this they are *transcendent* and merely *regulative* principles of speculative reason, which do not require it to assume a new object beyond experience but only to bring its use in experience nearer to completeness. (KpV 5:135)

Here Kant develops an important comparison between the ideas of theoretical and practical reason. Although he grants objective reality to the latter, this does not mean that we now have any theoretical cognition or determination of their objects. Nonetheless, the relationship between the ideas of practical reason and reality is more intimate: they are considered *immanent* and *constitutive* for pure practical reason itself and hence for rational agency, because they define the conditions under which the exercise of practical reason is possible for us at all, that is, the conditions under which reason can realize the highest good (as its genuine object). Without "grant[ing] *that there are such objects* [of these ideas]", no highest good can be realized, and therefore there can be no human morality. Human conduct would be without meaning and orientation towards the good, that is, without a purpose or end to be realized or towards which all human agency should be directed, and therefore no moral duty could be imposed on us.

The important difference from theoretical reason is that it is pure practical reason itself that gives these ideas their *reality*, but precisely not insofar as it allows these ideas to refer to "given supersensible objects". Rather, practical reason itself provides these ideas with an objective reality, insofar as they are the very conditions of realizing the ends of practical reason, that is, the conditions of the "possibility of *making real the necessary object* of pure practical reason (the highest good)". For the purpose of pursuing moral ends, we must simply assume that the conditions of such a pursuit are objectively real.

Now, the overall picture in the practical case still strikes me to be reasonably close to what I proposed in the theoretical case, where the ideas define conditions under which any epistemic inquiry into nature is intelligible and meaningful at all. In the practical case, we could thus formulate an equivalent imperative, as I suggested with regard to theoretical reason in 1.2: *Act as if the world were such that the moral law could be satisfied in it, that is, assume that the world is such that the highest good could be realized in it and then proceed with the practical cognition and selection of your maxims and actions.*

But in the practical case, the moral subject is, unlike the epistemic subject, not a simple bystander and *observer of a given world*, but an agent actively involved in the realization of the world as a *co-maker of the highest good*. Therefore, the ideas of practical reason spell out conditions that are "immanent" to rational agency. Tizzard's proposal to "forge a relation" between pure rational principles and the intelligible world "by treating the former as the source of objectivity" seems warranted with respect to pure practical principles and the kingdom of ends realized through rational agents (p. 233), whereas I previously rejected it for theoretical principles and a given world of things-in-themselves. In other words, there is a constitutive relationship between the acting subject and the objects thereby brought about, as the subject actively contributes to the highest good with its actions (or fails to do so). In contrast, the cognizing subject does not contribute to the essence of things (with the exception of its own essence as knower and agent).

Hence, although Kant is mainly concerned here with explaining the differences between theoretical and practical reason, I see important parallels in the overall picture. The ideas of immortality and God – as prerequisites for realizing the highest good – give human action an end, meaning, and orientation. As in the case with the theoretical idea of God, their main role is not in bringing systematicity and unity to the system of duty, but to define a moral ideal against which our moral progress towards realizing the highest good can

be measured. This ideal is not simply a projection or fiction produced by practical reason. Rather, the moral ideal must be thought of as grounded in a benevolent and wise creator of a purposeful world—a world in which happiness and morality can be proportionate to one another. Only an ideal thus understood would have the kind of objective validity, independent of the human mind and of all cultural, social and political developments. In this sense, Kant concludes that his argument shows how these ideas "ward off *anthropomorphism*" (CpracR 5:136). They make space to understand the idea of the highest good as an idea of moral goodness beyond the human horizon and hence beyond the goodness that applies only for humans.

Finally, I also agree with Tizzard's suggestion that the idea of the soul applies at the level of the individual. It outlines a context of intelligibility in which we can describe the empirical character of a person in terms of a systematic whole comprising all of the person's inner states, including all intentions and maxims. Moreover, following my above considerations, the idea can serve as a projected ideal for evaluating the moral progress towards a perfectly virtuous or completely good moral character. The idea is therefore indispensable for guiding us towards a morally good character, or *Gesinnung*, such that our good deeds actually contribute to the realization of the highest good.

In conclusion, despite important differences between theoretical and practical reason, there are significant parallels that a perspectivalist view can explain: as in the case of theoretical reason, practical reason is the source of normativity, in terms of the moral law. But to discern which duties follow from the moral law, given the empirical world we are situated in as moral agents, remains an ongoing process of practical cognition. Similarly to the process of the theoretical cognition of nature, the process of discerning moral duties is guided by principles of systematicity. The ideas of the soul and freedom (and possibly also the idea of the highest good) may primarily have a semantic function in providing contexts of intelligibility within which certain action-concepts can be defined and a system of duties can be built. In contrast, the ideas of God, the kingdom of ends, and of immortality may primarily have a moral-evaluative function in assessing the moral value of maxims and their status as possible duties, parallel to the epistemic, truth-evaluative function in the theoretical case. Of course, much more needs to be said, and indeed, this deserves a research project of its own.

3. Reply to Lewin

Michael Lewin's comments shed light on some methodological and conceptual challenges. Firstly, Lewin's points out that Kant's conception of "ideas of reason" not only pertains to the transcendental ideas of theoretical reason, viz. the ideas of the soul, the world-whole, and God, but also extends to ideas in various other areas of Kant's philosophy. Lewin provides an insightful table with a possible taxonomy of the diverse ideas of reason in Kant's Critical works. Secondly, his discussion focuses on Kant's conception of "reason in the narrow sense." He claims that I do not sufficiently distinguish between reason in the narrow sense and reason in the broader sense. He believes that an analysis of the conceptual marks of this term would have helped my work, which he then provides in outline with reference to his own work. I am grateful for the conceptual and methodological points Lewin raises, as this gives me the opportunity to offer some remarks and clarifications on three main issues that stand out to me:

(1) Specifying the focus of *KIR* as concerning in particular the *transcendental ideas of speculative reason*
(2) Clarifying Kant's conception of "reason in the narrow sense", as opposed to the understanding (and other faculties of the mind)
(3) Clarifying my perspectivalist view (a) regarding the semantic role of reason in concept-formation and (b) regarding its epistemic role in truth-evaluation (and identifying the major ideas associated with each)

Furthermore, Lewin expresses doubts that my classification of views along the axis between noumenalism and fictionalism is justified in light of the actual views in the literature. At this point, I hope that the initial remarks at the beginning of my replies, as well as my clarifications and refinements in reply to the comments by Hoffer and Tizzard, have sufficiently addressed these doubts. As I explain in the book and in the initial remarks, I acknowledge that this is a simplification of the interpretive tendencies or the conceptual options for possible interpretation. This simplification has been made in an effort to give orientation to new readers of Kant and help them see what is at stake at large for Kant and for those philosophers who struggle with his conception of reason in the aftermath of his three *Critiques*, for example, in German Idealism.

3.1. Ideas of Reason in general vs. Transcendental Ideas

I welcome Lewin's proposal to widen the view towards Kant's broader conception of ideas in general and to shed light on the complex taxonomy of ideas in different areas of Kant's philosophy. In fact, I begin the book in the first paragraph noting that:

> Ideas of reason are concepts of totalities or unconditioned wholes that play a crucial role in all areas of Kant's transcendental philosophy: for example, the idea of the systematic unity of nature in his theory of science, the ideas of freedom and the highest good in his moral philosophy, the idea of the sublime in his aesthetics, the idea of natural purposiveness in his account of life, and the idea of an original contract in his political philosophy. (*KIR*, p. 1)

At the end of this first paragraph, I narrow down the book's subject matter to the "ideas of *theoretical reason* and their regulative use in the study of nature" (*KIR*, p. 1). The fourth paragraph starts with the clarification that "This Element focusses on the ideas of theoretical reason, especially the ideas of the soul, the world-whole, and God, and their regulative function for the empirical study of nature." (*KIR*, p. 2).

In Section 1 of *KIR*, I introduce what I take to be the major aspects of reason in the narrow sense, namely, first, considering reason as the faculty for inference and its use in hypothesis-formation (see 1.1) and, second, explaining reasons natural tendency to seek the totality of conditions and the unconditioned (see 1.2), from which reason forms concepts of totalities, viz. ideas of reason. With 1.3., I dedicate an entire subsection to Kant's technical conception of "transcendental ideas of reason", as the title of this subsection directly indicates (*KIR*, pp. 11-13):

> In its quest for completeness, pure reason becomes 'a genuine source of concepts and judgments' (A305/B362, see also A299/B355), namely of the *pure concepts of reason* or simply of *transcendental ideas* (e.g., A311/B368, A321/B378). These are 'necessary concept[s] of reason' that can be derived from reason's own iterative inferential procedure (A327/B383). These concepts are formed by 'ascending in the series of conditions' until one reaches the totality of conditions (A336/B394): 'So the transcendental concept of reason is none other than that of the totality of conditions to a given conditioned thing' (A322/B379). This totality is then 'explained through the concept of the unconditioned': the concept of the unconditioned represents the 'ground of synthesis for what is conditioned' and hence the ground of the entire series of conditions (A322/B379). (*KIR*, p. 11)

Following this, I introduce the three classes of ideas —pertaining to the soul, the world-whole, and God — in relation to the three types of inferences from which they are derived.

Throughout the rest of the book, I emphasize how important, but also how challenging, it is to give an adequate interpretation of the distinctively "*transcendental*" status that these ideas have, as opposed to other transcendental conditions that arise from the understanding (e.g., *KIR*, p. 23, p. 31, p. 38, p. 66). The challenge lies precisely in explaining their indispensably necessary but regulative status in relation to experience and thus clarifying the objective but indeterminate validity of the principles that arise from them, as I discussed in further detail in my replies to Hoffer and Tizzard.

3.2. Reason in the Narrow Sense

Lewin points to the need to sufficiently distinguished between reason in the narrow sense and reason in the broad sense. In fact, a major motivation for the perspectivalist view stems from an analysis of the distinction between reason in the narrow sense and the understanding, as two distinct but intricately related intellectual faculties (see Section 2). The passage on reason Lewin quotes from *KIR* is intended as a first ntroduction to reason in the narrow sense as the faculty for inference and illustrate how it works with an example. It appears in the context of my explanation of the division of labor between the understanding and reason in the narrow sense (and the power of judgment). It is not, of course, my final word on the subject. Rather, *KIR*'s Section 2 sets out to explain why the understanding is incomplete in two ways. Firstly, the understanding suffers from conceptual underdetermination, as it cannot sufficiently determine the empirical content of the concepts it operates with. Secondly, the understanding lacks sufficient criteria of truth to assess whether its empirical cognitions track real dependence relations. Therefore, it must seek "guidance from reason [in the narrow sense] in two respects: in assessing the truth of empirical cognition (2.2) and in forming empirical concepts (2.3)" (*KIR*, p. 23). The constitutive principles of the understanding can only provide *necessary formal conditions* for the kind of content that can be predicated in general. The regulative principles of reason are needed to give *sufficient conditions* for the formation and evaluation of empirical contents. This two-fold underdetermination of the understanding is therefore *the* central motivation for the two dimensions of the perspectivalist view of reason in the narrow sense, distinguishing its semantic function in empirical-concept-formation and its epistemic function in empirical-truth-evaluation. Thus, I do not think that there is a confusion of reason in the narrow sense and reason in the broader sense. Unfortunately, Lewin does not draw on this section at all in his comments, nor on the subtle interaction I see at play between reason and the understanding.

As for Lewin's methodological suggestion that an analysis of the conceptual marks of the "real concept of reason" would have been illuminating, consider this a helpful addition to my analysis. However, I do not think that such a rather technical method would have helped new readers to get on board with Kant's complex account of reason. Each of the nine conceptual marks Lewin mentions is discussed and explained in what I hope to be a reader-friendly way in the Element, especially in Section 1, which is intended to offer a general introduction to theoretical reason in Kant.

3.3. The Perspectivalist View: Concept-Formation and Truth-Evaluation

What is the perspectivalist view and what is its major benefit? First and foremost, it allows us to distinguish between what belongs distinctively to the human perspective and what must be assumed beyond the human horizon for the sake of the very intelligibility of nature as an object of epistemic inquiry (for humans). In this sense, the perspectivalist view can be understood as a reconciliation of what I call noumenalism and fictionalism — the two opposing views that I detected as the two major interpretive tendencies or conceptual options for possible interpretations. The perspectivalist view can capture aspects of fictionalism by explaining the productive role of reason in structuring the domain(s) of the world of appearances. The view can also capture aspects of noumenalism by taking into view the normative ideals that point beyond the human horizon to a mind-independent world of things-in-themselves. Unfortunately, Lewin does not pay much attention to this crucial distinction and often runs together the semantic and the epistemic function in his comments. This makes it somewhat difficult to discern the core of his criticism of my position.

Lewin picks up on an early passage from Section 3, in which I present an interpretation of the visual metaphors *horizon* and *focus imaginarius*. There, I give a first peek into my perspectivalist interpretation, indicating how it allows me to make sense of both these metaphors. The full passage runs as follows:

> The perspectivalist interpretation, as developed in Section 4, will suggest that ideas of reason serve as the highest genus-concepts opening up the universal horizon of human understanding. (*KIR* p. 35)

KIR´s Section 4 explains precisely how ideas can be understood as highest genus-concepts, defining domains of nature, which ideas can fulfill this function at all, and which cannot. It is, for example, important to note that the idea of God cannot serve as a highest genus-concept and is not immediately involved in the formation of empirical concepts.

The semantic function in concept-formation is primarily fulfilled by those ideas that give rise to regulative principles concerning appearances, such as the ideas of the soul (which defines regulative principles for inner appearances in time) and the ideas the world-whole (which defines regulative principles for appearances in time and space). My argument in Section 4 explicates in four steps in which sense the regulative function of these ideas can be understood as outlining the *a priori* structures of domains of reality:

i. Transcendental ideas define "*a totality, or maximum, that reason prescribes to the understanding*" (*KIR*, p. 40; see 4.1).
ii. In doing so, transcendental ideas "*prescribe rules for the systematic extension of the use of the understanding within this totality*" (*KIR*, p. 44; see 4.2).
iii. Since these rules presuppose a whole, or a domain of reality, within which they can be meaningfully applied, transcendental ideas outline what I call "*contexts of intelligibility*" – as *a priori* mental maps of reality – within which the systematic extension of the understanding is possible at all (*KIR*, p. 46; see 4.3).
iv. Transcendental ideas define the kinds of objects that the understanding should seek to explore in these contexts, or domains of reality (see *KIR*, 4.4). These are the *most generic natural kinds* that can at all be intelligible for us: *soul-like beings* and *material beings*. The former have a *whole-prior-to-part* structure and the latter a *part-prior-to-whole* structure.

In contrast, the idea of God does not provide rules for appearances. Rather, its primary function is epistemic in nature, in that it—as a meta-principle of any epistemic inquiry—justifies that systematicity can be used as a criterion for empirical truth at all. More precisely, it enables us to project normative ideals as objective standards of truth beyond the human horizon, i.e., beyond the world of appearances. These are the projections of the real metaphysical grounds that would make our empirical cognition true, independently of any human making. They could be understood as mind-independent *circumstances of evaluation* for empirical cognition (see, *KIR*, pp. 39f., 55, 64f.).

A confusion of the semantic and epistemic aspects becomes evident, for example, when Lewin first states that "Kraus claims that Kant's transcendental ideas, especially the idea of God, enable a reference to the mind-independent, ultimate reality as a normatively binding standard of truth" (p. 239) and then objects: "Do we require the idea of God in order to efficiently and correctly form such empirical concepts as <rose>, <dog>, and <tree>?" (p. 239), implying that this is what my view entails. But I don't think it does, nor have I argued that it is the role of the idea of God to "enable *reference* to the mind-independent, ultimate reality" or to promote the formation of empirical concept. (Lewin's question as to whether it is justifiable to assume that Kant's idea of God is shared across all religious and cultural contexts, of course, raises an interesting issue: Can we presuppose that Kant's conception of God has universal validity for all humans, as Kant claims, when historically it is the result of his thinking in the context of the Abrahamic religions that shaped much of "Western" philosophy?)

This confusion is also apparent in the conclusion, where Lewin states: "Kraus's proposal to understand reason as having a quasi-constitutive function —as the giver of the criterion of truth even with regard to the empirical concepts— cannot be upheld." (p. 241). Judgments and thus cognitions are the primary bearers of truth and therefore in need of truth-criteria. Empirical concepts by themselves do not have truth-values, even though they may be said to be more or less adequate for certain types of objects or subject matters. But their adequacy is only derived from their potential to be used in true judgments, leading to (more or less) adequate descriptions of empirical objects.

Moreover, Lewin doubts that reason's general principles of homogeneity, specification, and affinity are really necessary for the formation of empirical concepts. Kant offers, for example, an argument from the variety of kinds, in the Appendix, where he explicitly concludes that the transcendental principle of genera (i.e., homogeneity) is indispensable, "because without it no empirical concepts and hence no experience would be possible" (KrV, A654/B682). Similarly, the following statements show some confusion about my view: "As Kant writes, it is 'unbearable to hear a representation of the color red called an idea' (KrV, A 320/B 377); similarly, it seems mistaken to refer to the term 'tree' as a unity of reason (*Vernunfteinheit*)." (p. 241). Statements like this imply that this is my position or that this is at least implied in the perspectivalist view I offer. I do not believe that color concepts or concepts of biological kinds are ideas of reason in Kant's sense, and I nowhere claim anything to the contrary in *KIR*. However, I do suggest that certain ideas of reason such as the idea of the soul and the idea of an organic whole can serve like the *most general* genus-concepts of semantic fields, opening up systems of concepts, for example, the system of psychological concepts by which psychological beings (and their inner states) can be described and the system of biological concepts for the description of living beings.

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