

## A System of Rational Faculties: Additive or Transformative?<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract: In this essay, I focus on two questions. First, what is Kant's understanding of the sense in which these faculties form a "unified system"? And, second, what are the implications of this for the metaphysical relationships between the faculties within this system? To consider these questions, I will begin with a brief discussion of Longuenesse's groundbreaking work on the teleological unity of the understanding as the faculty for judgment. In doing so, I will argue for a generalization of Longuenesse's account along two dimensions. The result will be a picture of these faculties as forming a teleological system – unified under the overarching aims of reason as the highest rational faculty. Then, I will discuss the recent debate between "additive" and "transformative" interpretations of this relationship, before proposing that we should interpret Kant as endorsing a moderate form of the "transformative" reading, which captures important elements of both "additive" and "transformative" accounts.*

In his critical works, Kant attributes a variety of faculties or capacities to sensibly conditioned rational beings. But both he, and those influenced by him, struggled to give a satisfying account of the relationship of these faculties to one another. This issue is particularly important in a Kantian context, because Kant often emphasizes that his philosophical project rests, in no small measure, on the idea of these faculties as forming a single *unified system*, as opposed to a "mere aggregate". And it is particularly challenging in the context of Kant's own philosophy, because, unlike many of those influenced by him, Kant also insists on the *irreducibility* of these diverse faculties to any single ur-faculty or ur-principle. Thus, in order to make sense of the foundations of Kant's philosophical project, we need to make sense of how Kant conceives of this form of (following Leibniz) "unity in diversity".

This topic will be my focus here. More precisely, I plan to focus on two questions. First, what is Kant's understanding of the sense in which these faculties form a "unified system"? And, second, what are the implications of this for the metaphysical relationships between the faculties within this system? To consider these

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questions, I will begin with a brief discussion of Longuenesse's groundbreaking work on the teleological unity of the understanding as the faculty for judgment. In doing so, I will argue for a generalization of Longuenesse's account along two dimensions. First, I will argue that her claims about the teleological unity of the understanding apply equally to all of our basic cognitive or rational faculties. And, second, I will argue that a similar sort of teleological unity applies – not just to each of these faculties on its own – but also to the full system of them. The result will be a picture of these faculties as forming a teleological system – unified under the overarching aims of reason as the highest rational faculty.

Next I will outline how I believe the aims of reason are best understood, and explain briefly why Kant believes that possession of a fully developed capacity of reason (at least in creatures like us) requires possession of the other basic rational capacities that Kant appeals to in the critical philosophy. In this way, from a broadly “top-down” direction, I will attempt to sketch why Kant takes these capacities to form a unified system in the sense outlined above. Then, I will turn to the more familiar topic of the relationship between these faculties from a “bottom-up” perspective – and, in particular, whether possession of the lower faculties in this hierarchy (such as sensibility) entail possession of the higher faculties within it (such as the intellect). Here I will discuss the recent debate between “additive” and “transformative” interpretations of this relationship, before proposing that we should interpret Kant as endorsing a moderate form of the “transformative” reading, which captures important elements of both “additive” and “transformative” accounts.

## 1. “Generalized Longuenessianism” and the Teleological Unity of our Faculties

These are large questions, which I will only be able to discuss in part here. But before turning to the recent debate about them, I want to begin by taking a step back from these debates to look at some work from the “recent historical past” that structures these debates – namely, Beatrice Longuenesse's groundbreaking discussion of the unity of the acts of the *understanding* as a mental faculty. In that discussion, Longuenesse focuses on the idea of the understanding as *the capacity to judge*. (Longuenesse 1998) Then, on this basis, she traces out how all of the acts that Kant attributes to the understanding may be understood as contributing to this basic aim. In this way, she argues that the idea of the understanding as the capacity to judge “provides [us with] a definition of the original capacity from which all aspects of the understanding are developed.” (Longuenesse 2005, 19)

For present purposes, what is most important about Longuenesse's treatment of the unity of the understanding is the manner in which it points towards a more general account of the unity of the entire *system* of rational faculties in Kant. For what Longuenesse says about the understanding should, I think, be seen as following from certain basic features of Kant's *general* account of rational capacities – when this account is applied to the understanding in particular. Most importantly for our purposes here, the acts of any rational capacity must form a teleological system for Kant.

In such a system, the particular acts of any such capacity will be done for the sake of certain more general activities that are characteristic of the capacity in question. More precisely, as Kant says in an important passage: “To every faculty of the mind one can attribute an *interest*, that is a *principle that contains the condition under which alone its exercise is promoted.*” (5:120, my emphasis) As this quote indicates, for Kant, on a formal level, the most fundamental interest of each rational capacity lies in the promotion of that capacity’s proper form of exercise. Thus, on Kant’s broadly Aristotelian conception of them, each of our rational faculties aims at actualizing itself in its characteristic forms of activity, whatever they are.<sup>2</sup> So, within this framework, we should be able to understand all of the activities of any such capacity as contributing in some way towards its characteristic mode of activity.<sup>3</sup>

There is much more to be said about this conception of the unity of any rational capacity’s acts. But the important point for present purposes is that it allows us to see Longuenesse’s account of the teleological unity of the acts of the understanding (conceptualized as the capacity to judge) as the application of a much more general account of the teleological unity of *any* rational capacity to the understanding. And if this is right, then Longuenesse’s account of the teleological unity of the *understanding* is just the beginning of the story here. For, to develop a full account of the teleological unity of our faculties, we need to develop an account of the teleology at work in *each* of these faculties. And, as we will see in a moment, to complete this project, we also need to develop an account of how *all* of these faculties fit together into a single, unified teleological system.<sup>4</sup>

As his contemporary readers quickly realized, the importance of this latter point follows from basic methodological commitments at work within Kant’s critical philosophical project. For reason, for Kant, famously demands what Kant calls “systematic unity” in cognition:

... reason quite uniquely prescribes and seeks to bring about concerning it is the **systematic** in cognition, i.e., its interconnection based on one principle. This unity of reason always presupposes an idea, namely that of the form of a whole of cognition, which precedes the determinate cognition of the parts and contains the conditions for determining *a priori* the place of each part and its relation to the others.  
(A645/B673)

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<sup>2</sup> For the importance of this idea, see Engstrom(2009) and Reath(2013).

<sup>3</sup> This is why, according to Kant, any rational being will experience a sense of “satisfaction” or (at least in sensible beings) “pleasure” in the proper exercise of its own rational capacities. (5:204) Once again, this follows from Kant’s basic model for thinking about the nature of our rational capacities, together with his account of the nature of “pleasure” – for, according to Kant, to experience “pleasure” or “satisfaction” in something (in the broad sense of these terms at issue here) is just to be conscious of the agreement of this thing with the interests of our basic powers or capacities – an agreement which (given the ends of these capacities) will tend to maintain the state that we find pleasurable. (5:220)

<sup>4</sup> For more discussion of this issue, see (Schafer 2019a; n.d.; n.d.).

Thus, according to Kant, philosophy itself will only find a rationally satisfying form insofar as it is unified in this fashion. And this sort of unity is only possible, for Kant, insofar as it is given to philosophy by principle or idea - -- or, at least, by a unified system of such principles or ideas:

The two must be united; for without cognitions one will never become a philosopher, but cognitions alone will never constitute the philosopher either, unless there is in addition a purposive combination of all cognitions and skills in a unity, and an insight into their agreement with the highest ends of human reason. (9:25, compare 24:799)

This raises one of the fundamental questions in the reception of Kant's philosophy – namely, the question of where such a unifying principle or idea is to be found. At least during the critical period, Kant seems to be convinced that the source of these principles or ideas must lie in our own rational capacities and their internal principles and ends:

Nothing here can escape us, because what reason brings forth entirely out of itself cannot be hidden, but is brought to light by reason itself as soon as reason's common principle has been discovered. (Axx)

In this way the *a priori* principles of two faculties of the mind, the faculty of cognition and that of desire, would be found and determined as to the conditions, extent, and boundaries of their use, and *a firm basis would thereby be laid for a scientific system of philosophy, both theoretical and practical.* (5:12, my emphasis, compare 5:169, 5:176)

In this way, then, philosophy for Kant can achieve a rationally satisfying form only insofar as it forms a systematic whole, unified by certain ideas or principles. And, at least given our cognitive limitations, these ideas or principles can only be provided by the principles at work within our rational capacities. As such, for Kant, the success of the critical project is conditional on these rational capacities *themselves* forming a unified system – that is, a system which has the sort of unity that allows it to provide philosophy with the unity reason demands of it.<sup>5</sup>

Now, none of this, I am sure, would come as any great surprise to Longuenesse. Indeed, in her work since *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, she has herself generalized the results of her investigations there so as to apply them (to some degree) to the entire system of higher intellectual capacities. For example, in *Kant and the Human Standpoint*, she writes:

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<sup>5</sup> In other words, through this line of thought, we arrive at the idea of Kant's critical philosophy as a form of what I have elsewhere called "capacities-first" philosophy. See again (Schafer 2019a; n.d.; n.d.) and compare (Kern 2006; Land 2018). See also, Sohn-Rethel's (critical) observation that, "Nietzsche's scorn over Kant's question 'How are synthetic, a priori, judgements possible?' and his answer 'through a capacity' - is totally justified." (Sohn-Rethel 1978)

The understanding is a capacity for concepts. But we form concepts only for use in judgments. And all forms of judgment govern possible forms of syllogistic inference. The understanding, then, or the intellect as a whole – our capacity to form concepts, to combine them in judgments, and to infer true judgment from true judgment in syllogistic inferences – is nothing other than a “capacity to judge” (*Vermögen zu urteilen*) ... (Longuenesse 2005, 18)

In such passages, Longuenesse plainly appreciates the need to be sensitive, not just to the internal teleological unity of each faculty, but also to the teleological unity of the entire system of faculties. As I hope is clear, I am very sympathetic with what I take to be the spirit of Longuenesse’s approach to these issues. But, at the same time, I worry that the letter of what Longuenesse says in passages like this one does not represent the best version of her approach. In particular, passages like this one suggest a picture of the teleological unity of the entire system of faculties, on which Longuenesse’s focus on judgment is extended so that the nature of judgment becomes the lens through which the unity of *this entire system* is understood.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, this way of developing the spirit of Longuenesse’s account does not, I think, represent the most compelling form it can take. For, in particular, the unity of this system cannot be captured by taking the teleological priority of judgment to apply to the *intellect as a whole*. This is for two basic reasons – one which arises even in the context of Longuenesse’s discussion of the understanding – and another which really only comes to the fore when we consider the understanding in the context of this larger system of faculties.

The first of these is, in essence, that while we can of course characterize the understanding as the capacity to judge, this does not capture very well the ultimate ends of the understanding as *cognitive* faculty. For the teleological point of the understanding’s activities (judging or otherwise) is not merely to generate judgments *for their own sake*. Rather, the point of these activities is to give us *cognition*.<sup>7</sup> Thus, from a teleological point of view,

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<sup>6</sup> Whether or not Longuenesse is best read as engaged in this project, it is undeniable that some of those influenced by her work have attempted just this. See, for example, (Engstrom 2009; Rödl 2007; Kern 2006). For example, in his insightful discussion of these issues, Engstrom argues that, “judgment includes ... the awareness of itself as positively self-sustaining”. As should be clear, I think that Engstrom is onto something very deep about Kant’s views in making such claims. But, at the same time, in making this an issue primarily about judgment, as opposed to the activities of rational capacities like reason, I think that his discussion makes Kant’s views about this issue more mysterious than they need to be. After all, for Kant, if anything is “self-consciously self-sustaining”, it must be the activities of our rational capacities – and the activities of the *faculty of reason* in particular – that has this status. For example, it is reason as a capacity that is genuinely autonomous for Kant, and not mere judgment or (certainly) any particular judgment we might form. Thus, to understand the philosophical attractiveness of Kant’s views about these questions, it is more apt to conceive of them in terms of the relationship of a rational capacity to its own exercise as opposed to in terms of Engstrom’s conception of *judgment* as self-sustaining.

<sup>7</sup> For the importance of cognition in this context, see (Smit 2000; 2009; Tolley 2017; Watkins and Willaschek 2017; Schafer forthcoming) amongst others.

the most fundamental characterization of the understanding seems to me to be that of the understanding as the capacity for *discursive cognition* – that is, for cognition through concepts and judgments.

To be clear, this point in no way undermines the importance Longuenesse attaches to judgment in her discussion of the Metaphysical and Transcendental Deductions. For the purpose of her focus on judgment there is to provide us with a *Leitfaden* for understanding the structure of Kant's arguments in those sections of the first *Critique*. And, as long as it is used for this limited purpose, a focus on judgment seems to me quite appropriate. Nonetheless, I think it is fair to say that some readers of Longuenesse have made more of her focus on judgment than this – and in that context, these interpretative worries do become apt.

Still, this is not my real concern here. Rather, what really interests me is how we should think about these issues when we turn from the understanding in particular to the entire intellect or system of rational capacities. For it is here, I think, that these concerns become much more pressing, insofar as this sort of emphasis on judgment threatens to give us a quite distorted picture of this system. After all, as Kant stresses, the ends and interests of *all* of our faculties are ultimately determined – not by the understanding – but rather by *reason* as the highest rational capacity:

To every faculty of the mind one can attribute an *interest*, that is, a principle that contains the condition under which alone its exercise is to be promoted. *Reason, as the faculty of principles, determines the interest of all the powers of the mind but itself determines its own.* The interest of its speculative use consists in the *cognition* of the object up to the highest a priori principles; that of its practical use consists in the determination of the *will* with respect to the final and complete end. ... (5:119-120, my emphasis, compare Bxxiii)

Thus, in conceiving of the ends of this system, we must always keep in mind that (at least in the context of this system) the ends of the understanding are always ultimately in the service of the higher ends of reason.

The foundational role of reason in this regard follows from two other features of Kant's account. First, for Kant, the concept of an end (or an interest) is fundamentally a *practical concept*, whose significance derives from its use by us in activities of practical reasoning. (See, e.g., 5:180, 6:381) Now, as any reader of the third *Critique* knows, such concepts can be used for a variety of purposes. But when we apply them to *our own* rational activities, we thereby treat ourselves (as rational beings) as performing certain activities for the sake of certain ends or interests. Thus, in ascribing these ends and interests to our own rational capacities, we are committed to integrating these ends into the system of ends and interests we ourselves accept.<sup>8</sup> In this way, when we apply

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<sup>8</sup> It is worth stressing here that whether this argument extends to the ends of *sensibility* in particular (as opposed to those of reason, the understanding, and the power of judgment) will depend upon exactly how we understand the manner in which sensibility is integrated into the system of faculties. We will return to that issue later on in this essay, but for now, the reader can restrict these claims to our higher “intellectual” capacities.

these concepts to *our own* rational activities, we become committed to certain practical judgments about these activities – and the correctness of *these* judgments must ultimately be determined by practical reason, as the highest court of appeals for all practical questions.

As a result, it is reason in general – and reason in its practical use in particular – that ultimately determines what the *proper* ends of all of our rational faculties. And so, it is to the ends of reason that we must look, if we want to uncover the ultimate ends that give unity to the activities of all our rational capacities in a teleological system. For it is reason's ends which will ultimately determine the proper ends of each of these capacities as elements within such a system. It is for this reason that Kant writes that “all interest is ultimately practical” and that the interest “even ... of speculative reason is only conditional and is complete in practical use alone.” (5:121)

Now, and this is the second point here, given Kant's emphasis on practical reason as an *autonomous* capacity to set ends, the special role of reason in this regard should hardly be surprising. For reason can only be autonomous in its end-setting activity insofar as its choice of ends is not conditional on anything external to itself. That is, reason can only be autonomous insofar as its choice of fundamental ends is governed solely by reason's own internal principle of activity (as the “law” that reason “gives to itself”). Given this, if the system of faculties is to be unified under certain ends, these ends cannot be provided to the system by any faculty other than reason itself. After all, if we conceived of some other faculty, like the understanding, as the source of these ends, and treated reason's proper exercise as conditional on its ability to contribute to those other ends, we would thereby treat reason's activity as being for the sake of the ends and activities of this other faculty. And this would be to undermine the idea of reason as “autonomously” giving itself its highest law or most fundamental principle – for it would make, not reason and its ends, but the ends of some other faculty the highest court of appeals for questions about how reason ought to function.

For this reason, we cannot do justice to the teleological unity of our faculties through a focus on *mere* judgment alone.<sup>9</sup> For to do so threatens to transform Kant's picture of the activities of our faculties as unified under the ends of *reason* into a picture in which these activities are unified under the ends of the *understanding*. In short, to see reason's activities as being in the service of the ends of the understanding (like mere judgment) would be to upend the hierarchy of faculties on which the very possibility of a well-ordered system of distinct faculties rests for Kant. So, when we consider the ends of this system, we must view its activities as aiming – not at the aims of the understanding – such as judgment, or even cognition – but rather at the more demanding aims distinctive of reason itself. In this way, contrary to what (at least) some of Longuenesse's comments suggest, if we want to develop a full account of the teleological unity of our faculties, we must turn away from a focus on the idea of

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<sup>9</sup> The same point applies to the emphasis in judgment in (Engstrom 2009; Rödl 2007; Kern 2006) amongst others.

these faculties as oriented towards mere judgment, and ask ourselves what ends reason (as opposed to the understanding) contributes to this system.

## 2. The Ends of Reason and the System of Faculties

Unfortunately, to give a complete account of the characteristic ends and activities of reason as a faculty would take us well beyond the scope of this paper. But I nonetheless want to discuss this issue briefly in order to illustrate how such a “reason-centric” picture of this teleological system of faculties would differ from the picture suggested by the focus of others on judgment as what gives unity to this system.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, a few (hopefully relatively uncontroversial) points about reason’s ends are particularly important. First, reason’s ends extend beyond the ends of the understanding insofar as reason seeks, not just cognition, but what Kant calls *cognition from principles*:

In the first part of our transcendental logic we defined the understanding as the faculty of rules; here we will distinguish reason from understanding by calling reason the **faculty of principles**. (A299/B356)

The faculty of cognition from *a priori* principles can be called pure reason ... (5:167)

That is, reason aims, not merely at the determinate consciousness of objects that is distinctive, for Kant, of cognition, but also at a systematic grasp of how these more determinate cognitions follow from general principles. In this sense, reason will only be satisfied insofar as we have moved from mere cognition to the sort of systematic understanding which allows us to answer “how” and “why” questions with respect to our cognitions and their objects.

It is this sort of systematic understanding that Kant groups under the “highest two grades” of cognition – namely, insight (*Einsehen*) and *comprehension* (*Begreifen*).<sup>11</sup> So it is unsurprising that Kant also describes reason as the faculty for comprehension in this sense:

Concepts of reason serve for **comprehension**, just as concepts of the understanding serve for **understanding** (of perceptions). (A311/B367)

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<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere, I discuss all of this in much more detail. See (Schafer, n.d.).

<sup>11</sup> See, in particular, (9:65). For helpful discussion of this passage, see (Tolley 2017). Roughly speaking, “comprehension”, for Kant, is “insight” which is sufficient for our ends or purposes. Elsewhere I discuss the significance of this end- or purpose-relative conception of comprehension in more detail.



Thus, we can characterize reason as aiming at either: (i) cognition from principles or (ii) comprehension. That is, to use more contemporary language, we can see reason as aiming at the sort of systematic understanding of things that allows us to *make sense* of them.<sup>12</sup>

In thinking about this conception of reason, it is especially important to remember that, for Kant, the sort of cognition that is at issue here can come in at least two forms. That is, such cognition may either be *theoretical* (cognition of what is) or *practical* (cognition of what ought to be). So, this general characterization of reason as the capacity for cognition from principles or comprehension applies *equally* to both theoretical and practical reason, depending on whether we make the reference to “cognition” in this characterization more determinate as “theoretical cognition” or as “practical cognition”.<sup>13</sup>

This is especially important with respect to a third characterization that Kant provides of reason and its ends, which we already touched on above – namely, the idea of reason as fully *autonomous*. For, in fact, the idea of reason as autonomous is closely related, for Kant, to these first two characterizations. This is, of course, a complicated topic. But to give just one example of these connections, remember that, for Kant, practical reason functions autonomously only insofar as its *proper exercise* is determined by practical reason’s own internal principle:

... it is requisite to reason’s lawgiving that it should need to presuppose only *itself*, because a rule is objectively and universally valid only when it holds without the contingent subjective conditions that distinguish one rational being from another. (5:21)

But this internal principle of practical reason (i.e. the moral law) is itself an *absolute practical principle* in Kant’s sense. Thus, whenever practical reason’s cognition of what ought to be is determined solely by its own internal principle, this cognition provides us with *practical cognition from (absolute) principles*.<sup>14</sup> Thus, practical reason functions autonomously only insofar as it provides us with practical cognition from principles – and so, practical reason can be autonomous only insofar as it is also a capacity for practical cognition from principles or the sort of “practical comprehension” that Kant associates with the traditional notion of “practical wisdom”.

Obviously much more could be said about these connections. But I want to set them aside here to return to the main topic of this essay – and, in particular, the upshot of these ideas for the picture we are developing of our rational faculties as a unified teleological system. For if these claims about the ends of reason as a faculty are correct, then the ultimate ends of the full system of rational faculties must lie – not in mere judgment – or *even* in

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<sup>12</sup> For more on this, see (Schafer 2018; 2019b; n.d.).

<sup>13</sup> See (Engstrom 2009; Elizondo 2013; Reath 2013; Merritt 2018; Schafer 2019a)

<sup>14</sup> A similar point can also be made with respect to both theoretical and practical reason’s self-understanding. Compare (Reath 2013).

mere cognition – but rather in something more demanding – namely, in the sort of cognition from principles or comprehension which only the autonomous exercise of reason can provide us with.

This is significant for understanding many elements of this system of faculties. For example, with this in mind we can see that the significance of reason's characteristic activity of mediate inference is not, for Kant, merely that such inferences produce *more* judgments – or even that they produce *more* cognition – but rather that the system of inferentially-related judgments that reason produces through this activity is *constitutive* of genuine comprehension or cognition from principles. Thus, to understand the full teleological point of reason's activities, we need to look beyond judgment and the other aims characteristic of the understanding to the more expansive and demanding ends characteristic of reason itself. And this point applies just as much to the activities of the understanding and the power of judgment as well, provided that we view these other faculties as elements within a unified system of faculties with reason at its head. So, for example, as Kant stresses (in somewhat different ways) in both the first and third *Critiques*, we can only fully understand the nature of our activities of concept formation insofar as we view those activities as oriented towards the sort of systematic comprehension that is distinctive of reason's interests as opposed to those of the understanding.<sup>15</sup>

Kant scholars will, of course, disagree about how the details of such cases are best understood. But putting such disagreements aside, they indicate that Longuenesse's basic insight concerning the teleological unity of our capacities is best developed by focusing on the idea of our rational capacities as forming a system that aims at something more than judgment – namely, at something like the sort of systematic comprehension which (for Kant) can come about only through the autonomous exercise of reason. When viewed in this way, judgment is ultimately of rational significance for Kant because (given the nature of our faculties) we can only achieve this sort of comprehension through forming judgments. Obviously, this makes judgment central to Kant's account. But judgment *per se* is hardly the end of the teleological story for Kant. Rather, when we form judgments in a proper fashion, we are always doing so for the sake of a more general cognitive achievement – e.g. comprehension (in both a theoretical and a practical form).

### 3. The System of Faculties as Necessary Conditions on Reason

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<sup>15</sup> It has been argued by some prominent interpreters (e.g. (Guyer 1987; 2005)) that the third *Critique* relocates the ideal of systematicity from the faculty of reason to the faculty of reflective judgment. But, for reasons that should be obvious, such an approach to these issues threatens to undermine the unity of reason on which the entire critical system rests. Thus, it is fortunate that there is a different, and I think more plausible, way of reading Kant's discussion of the relationship between reflective judgment and systematicity in the third *Critique*. In particular, it seems to me that it is better to see the discussion of the power of judgment in the third *Critique* as making explicit the manner in which all rational faculties are systematically oriented towards the interest of reason in systematic comprehension. If so, the significance of the third *Critique* would be rather the opposite of what Guyer suggests. For, rather than making the idea of theoretical reason less central to Kant's account of our theoretical faculties, Kant's discussion in the third *Critique* might be best read as emphasizing the centrality of reason (both theoretical and practical) to Kant's account of our theoretical faculties.

If this is right, then we arrive at a quite different picture of this system of faculties than the one suggested by Longuenesse's comments above – not a system *for judgment*, that is – but rather a system whose *telos* lies in the sort of cognition from principles or comprehension that reason's autonomous exercise makes possible for Kant. In the remainder of this essay, I want to turn to the implications of this idea for the relationships between the various faculties in this system. That is, I want to consider just how tight the connections between these faculties must be if they are to form a teleological system in this sense. To explore this, I will begin from what one might call a “top-down” perspective on these issues – i.e. a perspective which begins with the nature of reason as characterized above, and then explores what follows from possession of this capacity, especially as it must be realized in sensibly conditioned creatures like us.<sup>16</sup> In considering this, my focus will be on how and why the other basic capacities Kant attributes to us are necessary conditions on possession of a fully realized capacity of reason, at least in creatures like us.

Consider, for example, the distinction that Kant draws between three basic faculties of mind – namely, the faculty of cognition, the faculty of desire, and the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure. To illustrate the systematic unity of these capacities (under reason), I want to briefly describe how the possession of all three follows from the fact that we are creatures with a capacity of reason in the sense defined above.<sup>17</sup> First, comprehension (or cognition from principles) is itself a further perfection of cognition. So in order to possess reason in the sense of the capacity for comprehension, we must possess a *faculty for cognition*. For it is only through the exercise of our cognitive capacities that comprehension in Kant's sense becomes possible. But, second, as I've argued in detail elsewhere, reason can be a source of comprehension only insofar as it functions autonomously – that is, insofar as its activities are governed by reason's own internal principles and ends.<sup>18</sup> In particular, where reason's activities are not grounded in reason's own principles and ends, we can have at most what Kant calls “historical cognition” – but never the sort of “rational cognition” or “cognition from principles” that is characteristic for Kant of genuine “comprehension”. This, according to Kant, is because (in cases of mere “historical cognition”) we “form” ourselves “according to an alien reason” and so, as Kant says, although we “can count everything off on” our fingers, “if you dispute one of [our] definitions” or starting points we “have no idea where to get another one.” (A836/B864) Thus, for Kant, reason can provide us with real comprehension, only insofar as reason's activities are free and autonomous:

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<sup>16</sup> Since sensibility plays a role in some of these characterizations, there is a sense in which it is not a “purely” top-down perspective.

<sup>17</sup> For reasons of space, the arguments of this section will have to be very compressed and so will leave many questions unaddressed. Thus, while I believe that they represent Kant's views about these issues, a reader skeptical of this might reasonably take them to show something weaker – e.g. that the teleological system of faculties Kant attributes to us represents one (but not the only) way of realizing the capacity of reason in the sense defined above.

<sup>18</sup> Thanks to a referee for pushing me to say more here.

... freedom in thinking signifies the subjection of reason to no laws except those which it gives itself; and its opposite is the maxim of a lawless use of reason. ... If reason will not subject itself to the laws it gives itself, it has to bow under the yoke of laws given by another; for without any law, nothing—not even nonsense—can play its game for long. (8:145)

As a result, in order to possess a faculty of reason, this faculty must be capable of certain forms of autonomous self-determination. That is, reason must be capable of a form of activity that is grounded solely in reason's own internal principles and ends. But, in order to possess a capacity of reason that is capable of this form of activity, we must possess the capacity to form representations that function as the grounds of what they represent. For reason can function autonomously only insofar as its activities are grounded in its representation of its own principle of activity and ends. In this way, to possess the faculty of reason we must possess some form of the *faculty of desire* – for this just is the capacity to form such representations.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, as we have already seen, any sensibly conditioned rational capacity must take an “interest” in its own proper exercise for Kant. And taking such an interest involves feeling a sense of satisfaction or pleasure in the proper exercise of these faculties. So, at least in sensibly conditioned creatures, possession of the faculty of reason also requires the possession of a *faculty for feeling pleasure and displeasure* as well. Indeed, this point extends in some form even to non-sensibly-conditioned creatures up to and including God. For while God does not possess needs, and so does not possess interests in Kant's sense of this term, God does take satisfaction in the achievement of his or her ends. Thus, even in the case of non-sensibly-conditioned creatures, possession of the faculty of reason requires possession some form of the faculty for pleasure and displeasure – albeit in a “higher” or “purely intellectual” form.<sup>20</sup>

In this way, the possession of each of the three basic faculties of mind is, indeed, a necessary condition on the possession of reason as defined above:

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<sup>19</sup> Indeed, as Kant stresses, the possession of any “living” capacity requires the possession of some form of the faculty of desire. Thus, Kant's view appears to be that any genuinely self-regulating capacity requires some form of the latter. In this context, the autonomy of reason would represent the highest form that such a capacity can take (in finite beings). As a referee helpfully points out, these claims are complicated by cases like the “favored creatures” that Kant discusses in the *Groundwork*, whose faculty of reason functions merely to make them conscious of their own goodness, without thereby determining their faculty of desire. This is not an easy passage to interpret, for a variety of reasons. But even here, Kant does not claim that it is possible to possess reason *without* possessing a faculty of desire – nor does he claim that the operations of reason are wholly independent of the operations of that latter faculty – rather, he only claims that it is possible for there to be a form of reason does not determine the latter faculty *in the manner* that is characteristic of genuine practical or moral cognition in Kant's sense of these terms. Thus, while this passage raises many questions, I don't think it counts against the interpretative line I'm presenting above.

<sup>20</sup> Thus, Kant sometimes prefers to refer to this sort of satisfaction as a “well-pleasement” as opposed to describing it as a “feeling” of pleasure. (28:1059, 28:1065) For more discussion of this “higher” species of pleasure or satisfaction in Kant, see (DeWitt 2014; forthcoming; Elizondo 2014)

(a) Reason as the Capacity for Comprehension

Requires:

(c) The Faculty of Cognition (as comprehension is a further perfection of cognition)

(d) The Faculty of Desire (as reason can provide us with comprehension only insofar as it functions autonomously)

(e) The Faculty of Feeling Pleasure and Displeasure (as any rational faculty must generate a sense of satisfaction in its own proper exercise)

And, moreover, it is not merely that *possession* of all of these faculties follows from the possession of reason (as realized in sensibly conditioned creatures). Rather, the *ultimate end* of the exercises of these faculties must also be determined by their relationship to reason and its ends. This is most obvious in the case of the faculty of desire, which functions properly for Kant only insofar as it acts in the service of reason's autonomous self-determination in accordance with the moral law. But the same is true of the faculty of cognition – insofar as its activities ultimately serve to increase our (theoretical and practical) comprehension in the manner described above. Finally, the proper exercise of the faculty of pleasure and displeasure is also best understood in reference to the aims of reason – for the proper role of these feelings within this system is to provide us with forms of satisfaction that appropriately correspond to and reinforce the proper exercise of our faculties. More precisely, given that every such faculty has an interest in its own proper exercise, the proper exercise of such a faculty must be accompanied by a sense of satisfaction or pleasure for Kant. In this way, we can see that Kant's claims about the pleasurable character of the free-play of rational faculties in the third *Critique* are, in fact, rooted in very fundamental commitments regarding the nature of such capacities – commitments that are fundamental to the whole critical system, and not just the third *Critique*. For the sort of pleasure at issue in the third *Critique* is best understood as the sensible manifestation of the interest that any rational faculty must have in its own actualization or exercise.<sup>21</sup> Thus, each of these different capacities are not merely a necessary condition on reason, their proper use is organized around the ends which reason provides to the whole system.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. The Relationship between Faculties: Additive or Transformative?

In our discussion so far, we have seen that the idea of our faculties as forming a teleological system requires seeing their ultimate *ends* as forming a unified system of ends. Or, alternatively, it involves seeing their various

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<sup>21</sup> Compare (Allison 2001; Zuckert 2007; Ginsborg 2014).

<sup>22</sup>As I've argued elsewhere, we can see a similar line of thought at work in Kant's division of our faculties into a variety of different theoretical and practical capacities. For example, from the idea of reason as the capacity for comprehension, together with Kant's distinction between theoretical and practical cognition, we can derive the ideas of theoretical and practical reason respectively – as the capacities for theoretical and practical comprehension (or cognition from principles). And, similarly, with this basic division in mind, we can also explore how various further capacities are necessary conditions on these two forms of comprehension. But for reasons of space, I must leave these issues to the side here.

forms of *proper exercise* as forming a teleological system in which the proper exercise of the lower capacities is understood as being in the service of the proper exercise of the higher ones. But these claims, at least on their own, leave open the further question of how we should think about the metaphysical relationships between these various capacities. That is, it leaves open whether this *teleological unity* requires that the *essential nature* of these capacities form an interdependent system of essences. For example, does the fact that these faculties form a teleological system show that it is impossible to possess any of them without possessing all of them? Or are the metaphysical implications of these claims weaker than this?

We have already seen that the answers to these questions from a “top-down” direction are, in principle, relatively clear for Kant. For example, given that we are sensibly conditioned creatures, Kant’s view seems to be that, in order to have a *fully realized faculty of reason*, we must also have all of three of the basic mental faculties discussed above. The more difficult question is whether something similar is true from a “bottom-up” perspective. This question arises in many different contexts within Kant’s philosophy. For example, (i) does the mere possession of a capacity like the understanding require possession of theoretical (or, indeed, practical) reason? Or (ii) does the mere possession of a capacity for something like “instrumental” forms of practical rationality require the possession of pure practical reason as a capacity? Similarly, (iii) does the mere possession of a capacity for what Kant calls “cognitive from comparative principles” require possession of a capacity for “cognitive from absolute principles”? And finally, and most significantly, (iv) does the possession of sensibility as a capacity require possession of any of the higher rational capacities like the understanding?

In considering these questions, it will be useful to distinguish two main ways in which the question of the metaphysical relationship between our faculties can arise for Kant. First, there is the question of what the metaphysical relationship between our *higher* rational faculties – such as reason, the understanding, and the power of judgment – is. And second, there is the question of how *all* of these spontaneous or intellectual capacities relate to our receptive capacities – that is, to sensibility:

**The Question of Intellectual Unity:** Is it possible for us to possess *any* of the higher, intellectual faculties – such as the understanding, the power of judgment, and reason – without possessing *all* of these faculties in their full form?

**The Question of the Unity of the Intellect and Sensibility:** Is it possible for us to possess a faculty for sensibility without possessing the higher intellectual faculties?

Both of these are important questions, and the first of them (to my mind) has received less attention in the literature than it deserves. But for the remainder of this essay, I’m going to focus on the second, which has long been a subject of dispute among Kantians.

These disputes have generally been dominated by two opposed positions. The first of these insists that Kant views sensibility as a metaphysically distinct faculty from the intellect – which can exist in beings who lack any higher intellectual capacities. This reading of Kant seems to be supported by much of what Kant has to say about the mental capacities of beings, like non-human animals, which (for Kant) lack reason or the understanding<sup>23</sup> In particular, Kant generally seems quite comfortable ascribing capacities for sensation, intuition, and imagination to such creatures, even as he denies that they possess higher cognitive capacities like the understanding or reason. For example, consider the following passages:

In regard to the objective content of our cognition in general, we may think the following *degrees*, in accordance with which cognition can, in this respect, be graded:

*The first degree of cognition is: to represent something;*

*The second: to represent something with consciousness, or to perceive (*percipere*);*

*The third: to be acquainted with something (*noscere*), or to represent something in comparison with other things, both as to sameness and as to difference;*

*The fourth: to be acquainted with something with consciousness, i.e., to cognize it (*cognoscere*). **Animals are acquainted with objects too, but they do not cognize them.** (9:65, my emphasis)*

With intuition the representation of a thing is always particular; **an animal can also have intuition, but the animal is not capable of having general concepts, which requires the capacity to think.**

(*Menschenkunde* 206, my emphasis)

Now how can we conceive animals as beings below human beings? [...] [W]e can think of things which are below us, whose representations are different in species and not merely in degree. **We perceive in ourselves a specific mark of the understanding and of reason, namely consciousness, if I take this away there still remains something left yet, namely, sensation, imagination, the former is intuition with presence, the latter without presence of the object** (28:449, compare 21:82, my emphasis)

Of course, questions might be raised about whether each of these passages represent Kant's considered views.<sup>24</sup> But taken at face value, they suggest that Kant thinks of sensibility as (in some sense) a capacity that is metaphysically independent of the intellect. In particular, they *seem* to indicate that Kant believes that our form of sensibility is distinguished from that of animals in virtue of the fact that only our form of sensibility makes us

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<sup>23</sup> See (McLear 2011; Allais 2015; Stephenson 2015; 2017).

<sup>24</sup> In particular, each of these texts come from an at least *somewhat* questionable source. But taken together, and in the absence of any clear countervailing texts that are "more canonical", they do provide a *prima facie* case in favor of attributing certain views to Kant. For more discussion see (Tolley 2017; 2019).

*conscious of objects* in the manner that genuine *cognition* (*Erkenntnis*) requires, while merely animal forms of sensibility only provide animals with *unconscious* “*acquaintance*” (*Kenntnis*) with things. As such, while they do suggest that there are important differences between animal and human sensibility, they also suggest that these two forms of sensibility share a great deal – especially on the level of *unconscious representation or mere acquaintance*.

But there is also an opposed interpretative tradition, which argues that we should not take these passages to show anything so robust. According to this tradition, now often called the “transformative” reading of Kant, Kant does not in these passages mean to attribute anything like a genuine capacity for sensibility (in the sense that applies to creatures like you and me) to creatures who lack an intellect.<sup>25</sup> Rather, the story goes, in such places Kant is using terms like “sensibility” in an “entirely and merely generic” fashion – that is, in a manner that does not imply that there is any (non-trivial) “highest common factor” between our form of sensibility and the form of sensibility we find in animals.<sup>26</sup> Thus, on this view, there is no fundamental sameness of metaphysical kind between these two forms of sensibility – rather, we arrive at a concept of “sensibility” that applies to both humans and animals simply through a process of abstraction operating on two *fundamentally distinct* types of mental capacities.<sup>27</sup> In this way, as Conant in particular makes clear, the “transformative reading” involves a deep form of *disjunctivism* about the relationship between animal and human sensibility – one on which there is no fundamental metaphysical continuity between human and merely animal forms of sensibility. It is in this spirit that, for example, Conant writes that, “our sentient cognitive faculty, as we encounter it in act (say, in an exercise of, say, seeing that such and such is the case) represents a faculty whose form is **utterly distinct** in character from any whose exercise might manifest itself in the sensory life of a nonrational animal.”<sup>28</sup>

As we will see, this represents a fairly radical version of the “transformative” account – so it is important to stress that there are less radical forms such an account can take. Indeed, the reading of Kant I develop below represents one such “moderately transformative” reading. But for present purposes, what it is important about

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<sup>25</sup> The language of “transformation” here is not precisely Kant’s – but it does fit well with Kant’s conception of organized beings (both animal and rational) as possessing what he calls “formative powers”: “An organized being is thus not a mere machine, for that has only a  **motive** power, while the organized being possesses in itself a  **formative** power, and indeed one that it communicates to the matter, which does not have it (it organizes the latter): thus it has a self-propagating formative power, which cannot be explained through the capacity for movement alone (that is, mechanism).” (5:374)

<sup>26</sup> (Conant 2016, 78). Following Aristotle, the “transformative” reading has sometimes been presented by its proponents in terms of the idea that there is a “merely homonymic” similarity between our form of sensibility and the sensibility of animals. But over time the presentation of this view has generally shifted towards the idea of a “merely or entirely generic” similarity between the two. Since this seems to me the more plausible version of this view, I will focus on it here. But my criticisms of it would apply equally to the “merely homonymic” version of the view as well. (I should note that I think that there is still some tendency for proponents of this view to move between these two ways of thinking about it. But I will not press that point here.)

<sup>27</sup> See (Conant 2016; Boyle 2016; Land n.d.).

<sup>28</sup> (Conant 2016, 79) My emphasis. Note thought that Conant allows that these faculties may be quite similar on the “merely physiological” level. The amount of wiggle-room that allows him here will depend a good on one’s views about “physiology”, but here, as is often the case, it is not entirely easy to tell exactly what the implications of the “transformative” reading are meant to be.



this reading, according to its proponents, is that it opens the door to a reading of the relationship between sensibility and the intellect in Kant, on which these are unified in a very deep sense – so that it is impossible to have a genuine capacity for “sensibility” in more than a very weak (and, indeed, rather trivial) sense without also possessing the higher intellectual faculties as well.

That having been said, it is not always easy to know where the boundaries of the “transformative reading” should be drawn. And, as we will see, there is a sense in which the view I defend below can be regarded as a version of it. But, however we conceive of the scope of the family of “transformative” interpretations, it seems to me that defenders of the transformative reading have generally gone farther than they should in rejecting a reading of Kant on which we share *very significant and non-trivial* sensible capacities with mere animals. So, if I will be defending a version of the transformative view here, it is one that is considerably more modest on this point than the others I am aware of.

In this regard, it is particularly important to distinguish the claim (characteristic of the stronger versions of the “transformative” account) that human and animal capacities for sensibility are “*merely* generically identical” from the much weaker and, indeed, uncontroversial claim that human and animal capacities for sensibility are “generically identical” for Kant. No one, least of all Kant, would deny that all forms of sensibility are members of the same genus in some sense. After all, this is a simple consequence of Kant’s view about how general concepts function. Thus, if the “transformative reading” is to be saying anything even vaguely controversial, it must be because of the “*merely*” which qualifies the “generic identity” at issue— e.g. because of the manner in which *this* indicates a form of disjunctivism about the relationship between human and animal sensibility.

The temptation to slide between the controversial claim of “*merely* generic similarity” and the uncontroversial claim of “generic similarity” is often an issue in discussion of these topics. For example, in his recent defense of the “transformative reading”, Thomas Land claims that, “Kant explicitly commits himself to the claim that animals are merely generically identical to humans”.<sup>29</sup> But, in fact, the passage he cites in support of this claim does not claim anything this strong. Rather it reads (in German): “die Thiere ... ungeachtet ihrer spezifischen Verschiedenheit doch der Gattung noch (als lebende Wesen) mit dem Menschen einerlei sind.” (5:464) Thus, in this passage, Kant is *only* claiming that animals *are* generically identical to humans, not that they are *merely* generically identical. But, once again, the former claim is not remotely controversial. No one that I know of reads Kant as denying that human are members of the same genus (i.e. living beings) as non-human animals. The difficult question is rather whether the relationship between humans and animals is exhausted by this “merely generic” relationship or whether there are, in fact, philosophically significant continuities between human and animal sensibility that go beyond it.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> (Land n.d.).

<sup>30</sup> Thanks to a referee for pushing me to say more here.

As this should indicate, there are actually two distinct claims that are generally packaged together under the heading of the second, “transformative reading” of Kant. First, there is the rejection of a “merely additive” conception of the relationship between sensibility and the intellect:

**Transformation, not Addition:** The presence of reason (and the other higher intellectual faculties) does not leave sensibility in human beings “untouched”. Rather, human sensibility is “transformed” in some sense by the presence in human beings of both sensibility and reason.<sup>31</sup>

And second, there is the defense of this claim via an appeal to a quite radical form of *disjunctivism* about the relationship between human and animal sensibility:

**Merely Generic Continuity:** There are no fundamental or metaphysically significant continuities between the human form of sensibility and the form of sensibility we find in animals. The use of “sensibility” to refer to both indicates a *merely* generic similarity between the two.<sup>32</sup>

The first main point about these readings that I want to make here is that while the strong sort of disjunctivism involved in the second of these claims is certainly *one* way one might defend the rejection of a “merely additive” conception of the relationship between sensibility and the intellect – it is hardly the only way in which such a view might be developed. As such, much of the recent discussion of “additive” and “transformative” readings of Kant seems to me to be structured around something of a false dichotomy between (i) views that accept *both* of these claims and (ii) views that accept *neither*.

This seems to me to matter – both from an interpretative and from a philosophical perspective. For while I agree that Kant would reject a “merely additive” conception of the relationship between sensibility and the intellect, it is much less plausible to me that Kant would deny that there are metaphysically significant continuities between animal and human forms of sensibility. Thus, what I want to explore is whether there is a version of the “transformative reading” (in the sense of Transformative, not Additive) that takes a less stringent line on the relationship between human and animal sensibility than most of its proponents have taken in the past (by

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<sup>31</sup> For example, (Land n.d., 1276) writes of “additive theories”: “The additive interpretation assumes that the presence of reason in humans leaves the character of their sensibility untouched. Reason, on this interpretation, is something that is “added on” to a capacity that is in all relevant respects the same as in non-rational animals.”

<sup>32</sup> See again (Conant 2016, 79). The reference to “fundamental or metaphysically significant continuities” here is something of a placeholder for whatever it is that the proponent of the “transformative” reading means to deny about the relationship between human and animal forms of sensibility. Since there is some variation on this point, it is not always easy to properly characterize this family of views on this score.

rejecting the sort of radical disjunctivism involved in *Merely Generic Continuity*).<sup>33</sup> To my mind, such a possibility is important – both on interpretative grounds – and also because of its intrinsic philosophical plausibility.

## 5. A Truly Transformative Reading

As we will see, making sense of such a “moderate transformative reading” requires careful consideration of the *sense* in which our sensible capacities are “transformed” through being placed within a larger system of faculties that includes the intellect. To explore this, it will be helpful to begin by distinguishing two ways of thinking about our sensible capacities, both of which are already implicit in our discussion:

**Sensibility-Weak:** The faculty of sensibility is a capacity to form sensible representations and associate them together in a manner that makes it possible for us to represent things in comparison to one another in the way that (sensible) **acquaintance** (*Kenntnis*) requires.

**Sensibility-Strong:** The faculty of sensibility is a capacity to form sensible representations and *connect* them together *in consciousness* in a manner that makes it possible for us to represent *objects* in comparison to one another *with consciousness* in the way that (sensible) **cognition** (*Erkenntnis*) requires.

For, once we have both of these two conceptions of sensibility on the table, I think it becomes clear that there is little reason to attribute *Merely Generic Continuity* to Kant. After all, *neither* of these concepts of sensibility deserves, I think, to be called *merely* or *entirely* generic. For even Sensibility-Weak points to a robust set of mental capacities that are shared by both human beings and non-human animals. After all, as we saw above, both humans and animals are, for Kant, capable of the forms of representation and association that are required for sensible acquaintance (*Kenntnis*).<sup>34</sup> So it seems clear that Kant acknowledges the existence of continuities between animals and humans that go beyond the radical form of disjunctivism involved in claims of “*merely generic*” similarity, precisely insofar as he attributes a faculty for sensibility in the first, weaker sense to both humans and animals.

Crucially, in the context of this distinction, we can recognize why this is true, while also acknowledging that animals lack *our* form of sensibility in the sense that the second, stronger conception of sensibility picks out. For animals are not capable (for Kant) of bringing objects to consciousness in the manner that genuine cognition

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<sup>33</sup> In work in progress, Colin McLear develops a different, but related, response to this debate.

<sup>34</sup> Again: “Animals are acquainted with objects too, but they do not cognize them.” (9:65) Note that the use of this quote in particular allows us to bracket whether the different grades of representation discussed here are cumulative or progressive. See (Tolley 2017).

requires.<sup>35</sup> In this way, drawing such a distinction opens the door to a view that does justice to what is right in both of the two basic readings we began with. On the one hand, it allows us to say that there are genuine and deep metaphysical continuities between our sensible faculties and the faculties that animals possess – and that there is *a way* of thinking about our sensible capacities on which such capacities can exist in the absence of the intellect. But, at the same time, by focusing on the second conception of sensibility as a faculty for sensible cognition, we can see that there is a sense in which our sensible faculties are indeed “transformed” by their relationship with our higher, intellectual faculties. For it is relatively clear that Kant does not take the move from Sensibility-Weak to Sensibility-Strong to be the product of any process of “mere addition”. Rather, as Transformation Not Addition correctly points out, the transition from a form of sensibility that satisfies *only* Sensibility-Weak to a form of a sensibility that satisfies *both* Sensibility-Weak and Sensibility-Strong plainly requires some sort of transformation of the faculty of sensibility that goes beyond anything “merely additive”.<sup>36</sup>

In particular, as we have discussed above, this transformation must at least involve the following:

**Teleological Transformation:** The presence of reason (and the other higher intellectual faculties) does not leave the *ends* or *standards of proper exercise* of sensibility in human beings “untouched”. Rather, the *ends* (and form of *proper exercise*) of human sensibility is “transformed” by the presence in human beings of both sensibility and reason.

We have seen that *at least* this must be true, for Kant, if sensibility is to be integrated into a teleological system of faculties in the manner that Kant claims is true. For example, Kant insists that the parts of any genuine system must be dependent upon the whole of that system. Thus, if sensibility is to be part of a teleological system that also includes the intellect, at least the *ends* of sensibility must be transformed so that these ends are dependent upon the relationship between sensibility and the intellect within this system. In this sense, when we conceive of sensibility as part of such a system, we must conceive of the ends and proper functioning of sensibility in a manner that “transforms” these ends so as to make them dependent upon sensibility’s relationship with our higher faculties. For this is just what it means to think of sensibility as forming a part of a genuine *teleological system* that includes these other faculties within its scope.

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<sup>35</sup> A similar distinction might be drawn with respect to Kant’s use of “intuition”. For example, Kant sometimes attributes “intuitions” to animals that lack the understanding and so lack any capacity for cognition in the strict sense of this term. But he also sometimes speaks of “intuition” in a manner that seems to imply that “intuitions” have a constitutive connection with the forms of cognition they make possible. For these reasons, to my mind, it is quite plausible that Kant does use “intuition” in both a weaker and more general sense, in which animals can possess intuitions, and in a stronger one, in which only creatures capable of cognition possess intuitions. Compare (Schafer 2017).

<sup>36</sup> On this point, I am again in agreement with the more familiar versions of the “transformative” account.

Moreover, we have already seen that maintaining that this sort of “transformation” occurs does not require us to accept the radical disjunctivism involved in Merely Generic Continuity. A view that combines Teleological Transformation with the rejection of Merely Generic Continuity would, I think, be a *truly transformative* reading of the relationship between sensibility and the intellect. For it would be a reading on which there is something (quite fundamental) in common between the mental capacities of animals and human beings, but on which *this non-trivial common element* is transformed by the presence in human beings of intellectual capacities like reason or the understanding. Thus, this reading would agree with the transformative reading’s rejection of a merely additive account of the relationship between sensibility and the understanding. For, on it, our form of sensibility (and in particular this form of sensibility insofar as it is a potential source of *cognition*) is only intelligible insofar as we recognize that manner in which its operations are informed by its relationship to the understanding.<sup>37</sup> But, at the same time, this reading would allow us to recognize that this is an entirely non-trivial sense in which we share many sensible capacities (e.g. capacities for unconscious acquaintance) with non-rational animals.<sup>38</sup>

As such, it seems to me that such a version of the broad “transformative” strategy comes much closer to Kant’s own discussion than the “transformative readings” that currently dominate the literature. As this indicates, what matters most to me, for present purposes, is making a case for the compatibility of Teleological Transformation with the denial of Merely Generic Continuity. But nonetheless some readers may feel that I have not fully answered the questions that the debate between “transformative” and “additive” accounts raises. In particular, proponents of each of these views may reasonably feel that the real issue between them is not whether Teleological Transformation is true of Kant, but rather *why* and *how* it is true. For isn’t the real issue in such debates whether the “transformation” involved in Teleological Transformation is merely a change in some capacity’s context, or whether it instead involves a shift in what this faculty *as such* does – that is, a change in the faculty’s *essence*?<sup>39</sup>

In other words, suppose we accept, as I have been suggesting we should, that our form of sensibility is “transformed” in the sense described by Teleological Transformation. And suppose we also agree that defending this claim does not require us (or Kant) to accept Merely Generic Continuity. Doesn’t this leave open the question of whether our human form of sensibility is “transformed” in a deeper or more metaphysical sense, as it would be if something like the following were true:

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<sup>37</sup> Compare (Onof and Schulting 2015).

<sup>38</sup> The same basic points also apply to the role of sensibility in the practical sphere. For here too, it seems that practical sensibility and practical reason can only be integrated into a genuine teleological system insofar as the ends of our sensible faculties are transformed so that these ends in the service of the higher ends of practical reason, Compare (DeWitt forthcoming; Cohen 2018; Merritt 2018). For some related discussion, see (Schapiro 2009) and (Schafer 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Thanks to a referee for pushing me to say more here.

**Transformation of Essential Nature:** The presence of reason (and the other higher intellectual faculties) does not leave the *essential nature* and *internal principles* of sensibility in human beings “untouched”. Rather, the *essential nature* and *internal principles* of human sensibility is “transformed” by the presence in human beings of both sensibility and reason.

The question this raises is whether Teleological Transformation also requires this further “level” of the transformative reading. Insofar as Kant’s conception of our faculties is a fundamentally teleological one, it is very tempting to think that it must. That is, it is tempting to think that if the activity which characterizes the ends and proper exercise of human forms of sensibility is different from the activity which characterizes the ends and proper exercise of mere animal sensibility, that difference must amount to a difference in the essential nature (or internal principles) of these two forms of sensibility as well.

As we will see in a moment, there is a sense in which I ultimately agree with these claims. But, for the moment, it is worth stressing that things are more complicated here than this brief line of argument would suggest. For while we might think that the proper ends of a faculty could only be transformed insofar as its internal principle (and so its essential nature) was transformed as well, Kant’s view seems to be that proper ends of a faculty’s use can, in certain circumstances, change without that affecting the essential nature of the capacity as such. So, it is unclear whether Kant’s commitment to Teleological Transformation necessarily carries with it a further commitment to Transformation of Essential Nature.

Indeed, in defending Teleological Transformation, we should be careful to *also* do justice to Kant’s comments about the ways in which our sensible capacities naturally find themselves coming into conflict with our higher intellectual capacities.<sup>40</sup> For Kant often speaks of the relationship between these faculties in ways that emphasize their potential for conflict – as, for example, he does in defining (human) virtue as “autocracy” – that is, the “capacity to master one’s inclinations when they rebel against the law”. (6:383, compare 7:144) As such passages indicate, we must be careful not to attribute to Kant an *overly harmonious* picture of the relationship between our sensible and our intellectual faculties. Indeed, while (as we have seen) these faculties must ultimately form a teleological system for Kant, this system itself is often presented by Kant as a product of the “subjugation” of our lower faculties under our higher rational ones. (7:144, See also Kant’s account of “error” as the product of the “unnoticed influence of sensibility on the intellect” here.) Thus, in characterizing this system of faculties, we must also allow space for the existence of often very deep conflicts between them – something that would be hard to understand if the essence of our form of sensibility was completely transformed so as to make it harmonious with the principles and ends of reason. In short, we need to be careful not to relegate such conflicts to the sidelines in the manner the strongest versions of the “transformative reading” tend to do.

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<sup>40</sup> Thanks to Colin McLear for stressing this to me.

For these reasons, a focus on Teleological Transformation (as opposed to Transformation of Essential Nature) seems to me in many ways truest to the sense in which Kant does (and does not) think of the relationship between reason and sensibility in transformative terms. Indeed, there is some reason to think that the step from Teleological Transformative to Transformation of Essential Nature concerns questions about which Kant should maintain a principled agnosticism, given the limitations on rational psychology arrived at in the Paralogisms. For, as Kant makes clear there, our ability to achieve self-consciousness with respect to the activities and ends of our own mental faculties, while significant, in no way provides us with anything like genuine *theoretical cognition* of the nature of these faculties or of the substances that realize them. Thus, it is not implausible that Kant would resist at least some attempts to “transform” his claims about the teleological structure of the activities of our rational faculties into a more *robust metaphysical account of the essential nature of such capacities*. If this is right, then it gives us further reason to think about Kant’s version of the transformative view as a view about the teleological relations between our faculties and their activities, as opposed to turning this view into a something laden with more robust metaphysical commitments. In this sense, it may well be that Kant has principled reasons for refusing to answer further metaphysical questions about exactly *why and how* Teleological Transformation occurs, at least within the context of theoretical philosophy of the sort we are engaged in here.

That having been said, I ultimately agree that there is *a version* of Transformative of Essential Nature that Kant would accept – although perhaps not the version of this claim that the standard proponents of a transformative reading have in mind. In particular, it seems to me that if we wish to consider these deeper metaphysical issues, we must turn from the issues that have been our focus thus far, and discuss certain issues that have not generally been at the forefront of these debates – such as questions of about the status of natural teleology *in general* for Kant. In particular, it is relatively clear that *any* appeal to natural teleology, and so *any* descriptions of a living thing’s biological capacities, has a different status for Kant than (say) claims about the internal teleology of our own rational faculties. And this, very plausibly, *does* introduce a deep discontinuity for Kant between (i) claims about the mental capacities of non-rational *animals* and (ii) claims about the mental capacities of *rational beings*. But the nature and the source of this discontinuity are both quite different from what is generally supposed in the “transformative” readings discussed above. For instance, this discontinuity between animals and rational beings is grounded, not in Kant’s account of the relationship between sensibility and the intellect *in particular*, but rather in Kant’s *general* views about the status of natural teleology. And this discontinuity is not really a matter of the *content* of the claims we make about the mental capacities of animals. Rather, it relates to the *use* we can properly make of such claims – namely, that we can only use such claims for regulative as opposed to constitutive purposes. Thus, while it is plausible that Kant’s views about natural teleology do introduce a further layer of discontinuity into his account of these issues at this point – it is important to keep this source of discontinuity separate from those we have been discussing.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to stress again that the view I have been presenting of these issues is meant primarily as a development of *both* Longuenesse's reading and the standard "transformative account" – as opposed to a radical alternative to them. With respect to Longuenesse, I have tried to show that her insights are best developed, within the broader context of the full system of rational capacities, by turning away from her focus on judgment to focus instead on the ends characteristic of reason in Kant's sense – namely, comprehension, cognition from principles, and autonomy. Then, with respect to the debate between "additive" and "transformative" readings of Kant, I have attempted to develop what is, in effect, a moderate version of the "transformative" view. By doing so, I have tried to show how we can preserve the deep and genuine insights of the "transformative" approach, while also doing more than is typical to acknowledge the genuine (and often deep) similarities that Kant sees as existing between animal and human sensibility. In both cases, I have focused on the centrality for Kant of the idea of our cognitive or rational capacities as forming a unified teleological system under the ends of reason as the highest of these faculties.



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