Natura Daedala Rerum? On the Justification of Historical Progress in Kant's *Guarantee of Perpetual Peace*[1]

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This article analyses the teleological argument justifying historical progress in Kant's Guarantee of Perpetual Peace. It starts by examining the controversies produced by Kant's claim that the teleology of nature supports the idea of a providential development of humanity towards moral progress and the possibility of achieving a cosmopolitan political constitution. It further illustrates how Kant's teleological argument in *Perpetual Peace* needs to be assessed with reference to two systematically relevant issues: first, the problem of coordination linked to the necessity of realizing the 'highest good' as a historical end of practical reason, and secondly the problem of continuity posed by the temporal limitation of all individual efforts to cultivate moral dispositions. To illustrate the implications of both issues for the teleological argument in *Perpetual Peace*, the article draws attention to some important developments in Kant's analysis of teleology following the *Critique of Judgment*. More specifically, it identifies in the combination of the 'culture of discipline' with the 'culture of skill' a new interpretative key for understanding Kant's conception of historical progress in the Guarantee. Contrary to a number of critiques of Kant's would-be providential understanding of teleology, the article defends an agent-oriented conception of the guarantee where nature is judged reflectively as rational collective agency promoting reason's moral ends through social and political institutions.

I. The 'Guarantee' as theoretical problem

The *First Supplement* to the three definitive articles of Kant's *Perpetual Peace* is opened by a very curious statement. Having presented the political and juridical conditions that would put an end to the anarchy

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of the international order, Kant attempts here to illustrate how such a transformation could be achieved. He does so by considering the progressive move of humanity from a state of conflict between individuals to their peaceful coexistence as part of a natural, teleological process. Perpetual peace, Kant claims, 'is *guaranteed* by no less authority than the great artist Nature herself', adding in brackets a quote from the Roman poet Lucretius: '*natura daedala rerum*'.[2] Further down he adds that when we analyse the purposive function of this authority, 'showing the way towards the objective goal of the human race and predetermining the world's evolution, we call it providence'.[3]

The subsequent justification of this argument looks even more surprising than its generic statement. Kant's explanation of what is here meant by 'providence', in what circumstances and by what means it interferes to alleviate human efforts in promoting peace, amounts to nothing but an entertaining casuistry. 'It is in itself wonderful', he says,

> that moss can still grow in the cold wastes around the Arctic Ocean; the reindeer can scrape it out from beneath the snow, and can thus serve as nourishment or as a draft animal for the Ostiaks and Samoyeds. Similarly, the sandy salt deserts contain the camel, which seems as if it had been created for travelling over them in order that they might not be left unutilised. But evidence of design in nature emerges even more clearly when we realise that the shores of the Arctic Ocean are inhabited not only by fur-bearing animals, but also by seals, walruses and whales, whose flesh and blood provides food and whose fat provides warmth for the native inhabitants.[4]

When not ignored altogether, these lines have often either amused or embarrassed interpreters. When approached from a normative perspective stressing the relevance of his cosmopolitan project for reforming the current global order, the pages of the guarantee tend to be considered as the product of an old-fashioned, optimistic or pre-Darwinian frame of mind.[5] Some think that Kant has introduced here a providential conception of nature that contemporary cosmopolitans would better abandon.[6] Others go as far as claiming that Kant's optimism seems inspired by an idea of nature which bears a striking resemblance to the Christian idea of God.[7] On the other hand, interpreters analysing the development of Kant's entire system react with uneasiness to the elusive and even confusing terms with which the use of teleological principles, persuasively defended by Kant elsewhere, is here introduced and applied.[8] The former group of scholars smile at Kant's attempt to provide a 'guarantee' for perpetual peace, the latter blush at the way he does it.

Indeed, considered in light of the more systematic analysis of teleology that Kant offers in the *Critique of Judgment* the passage quoted above presents a few difficulties. The very same examples of the reindeer, the marine animals, the Ostiaks and Samoyeds mentioned in the *First Supplement* of *Perpetual Peace* are used in the third *Critique* to deny the possibility of inferring a natural teleological order from the mere appearance of nature's utility to human survival in remote areas. After all, Kant stresses, we fail to grasp what brings them there at all, and to infer the necessity of a certain process from 'the idea of advantage for certain miserable creatures' appears as 'a very bold and arbitrary judgment'.[9]

Not only is the presence of external teleology rejected as scientifically unfounded but Kant stresses here that 'even merely to demand such predisposition and to expect such an end of nature would seem to us presumptuous and ill-considered'.[10] Is there a shift from the considerations regarding external teleology in the *Critique of Judgment* to its apparent acceptance in the later essay on peace, considered from a practical perspective?[11]

The following pages attempt to illustrate the relevance of the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace by clarifying the Critical use of teleological principles upon which it is grounded. They explore some difficulties encountered by Kant's theory of progress in the essay on peace and then analyse these controversies with reference to two important questions: the problem of coordination linked to the necessity of realizing the highest good as a historical end of practical reason and the problem of continuity linked to the finite character of any individual effort to cultivate moral dispositions. They focus on the treatment that both issues receive in the *Critique of Judgment* and draw upon its findings to provide an appropriate practical/political reading of the *Guarantee of perpetual peace*.

The crucial role of the third *Critique* for understanding some major shifts in Kant's conception of teleology when compared to his earlier works has been widely acknowledged.[12] However, scholars have so far been unable to appreciate in full the implications of this development for Kant's subsequent political writings. In this article, rather than trying to provide a complete account of Kant's analysis of teleology, I shall limit myself to stressing the relevance of two key concepts of the third *Critique* – the 'culture of skill' and the 'culture of discipline' – for a more careful practical/political reading of the Guarantee. I shall conclude by showing the role of Kant's teleological conception of

history for the realization of cosmopolitan right, and by articulating a new interpretation of the concept of 'nature' upon which his reflections on progress may be grounded. A more nuanced reading of the *Guarantee* in light of Kant's analysis of teleology in the *Critique of Judgment* will hopefully show that his idea of progress maintains relevance if we understand 'nature' in a 'reflective' way, as rational, collective agency embedded in cultural and political institutions promoting humanity's moral ends. Even though such an interpretation unavoidably leaves several Kantian passages unaccounted for, I shall argue that it is consistent with relevant developments of the Critical system and that it lends support to a teleological conception of historical progress which can be articulated even in secular terms.

In discussing these issues I shall not try to update Kant's larger idea of progress so as to make it more appealing to our post-Darwinian understanding of nature, evolution and teleology. Kant was at most sceptical on how the evolution of organisms could be scientifically explained, and he did not even try to solve the problem from a theoretical perspective. In the very section on the guarantee of perpetual peace that we are examining, after having introduced the concept of 'providence', he emphasizes that 'we cannot actually observe such an agency in the artifices of nature, nor can we *infer* its existence from them'.[13] The real problem posed by the guarantee of perpetual peace is not, as sometimes misleadingly suggested, that here Kant has exceeded the limits of Critical theory by accepting a teleological ordering of nature which ultimately commits him to an optimistic view of history and to the theory of an intelligent design in the world.[14] The real issue is to understand why a 'guarantee' of perpetual peace is required at all and, if so, whether Kant's thesis on human progress may be coherently disentangled from an a-Critical assumption of providence and still ultimately defended. To understand this point we need to focus on the interest of the *Guarantee of Perpetual Peace* above all from a 'practical' perspective. As we shall see below, it is the cultural process through which our destructive inclinations are disciplined and our skills are cultivated that allows us to perceive nature, by analogy, as a teleological whole serving human moral imperatives.

II. The 'Guarantee' as practical interest

Kant's hostility to the attempts at inferring from a merely apparent teleological process in nature the existence of an intelligent designer of the

universe dates back to the pre-Critical writings. In an early essay on *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God* he warns readers not to incur Voltaire's 'legitimate mockery' of a would-be purposive activity of nature: 'Why do we have noses? No doubt so that we can wear spectacles.'[15] The passage from the contingent observation of seemingly non-mechanical processes in nature to the necessity of a purposive force working to the advantage of human beings, if familiar to eighteenth century philosophers inspired by the Wolffian interpretation of Leibniz's theodicy, was one that Kant abhorred.[16] It signified renouncing any scientific empirical fatigue for the easy comfort of endlessly presupposing that which ought to emerge at the final stage of a process of research, thus committing what Cicero had called '*ignava ratio*', the fallacy of lazy reason.[17]

How is it possible then to explain Kant's emphasis in the *Guarantee of Perpetual Peace* that while the idea of an external teleology of nature 'is indeed far-fetched in theory', it 'does possess dogmatic validity and has a real foundation in practice'?[18] At first sight, this may look like an inversion of the charge of Kant's famous essay title: natural teleology *may not* be true in theory, but it *does* apply to practice. On reading these statements one finds it difficult to resist Hegel's criticism that it is precisely in such paragraphs that the fundamental defect of the Kantian system emerges, 'the inconsistency of unifying at one moment what a moment before had been explained to be independent and therefore incapable of unification'.[19] How does the presupposition of a harmonious unity between theory and practice coexist with the declaration of its impossibility?

One would be tempted to resolve the issue by emphasizing the character of moral imperatives in Kant's ethics and the unconditional obligation of agents to enter into relations of right with one another.[20] As Kant clarifies in *Perpetual Peace* and elsewhere, the practical validity of a teleological order is linked to the concept of perpetual peace, 'which makes it our duty to promote it by using the natural mechanism'.[21] This explanation however seems to create more problems than it resolves. Even if the promotion of cosmopolitan ends and the realization of perpetual peace depends on human beings acknowledging certain principles of action and realizing them in practice, what need is there for a guarantee? As one author efficiently puts it, 'ought implies can, not shall'.[22] Moreover, as Kant emphasizes in *Perpetual Peace*, the problem of establishing a rightful political order requires only strategic rationality, it may even be solved by a 'race of devils' provided that they have

intelligence. If the independent pursuit of private goals is enough to support the creation of common institutions allowing their realization, it is clearly not 'can', not the possibility of peace that constitutes a problem. From this point of view the issue of the guarantee does look rather superfluous: 'shall' is indeed much more than is required by 'ought'.

Politics, however, has a more complex task than simply that of framing institutions compatible with calculative principles. It must help transform the enlightened self-interests of individuals into genuine moral principles; it must promote not just 'peace' but rather 'perpetual' peace. As Kant puts it, 'we cannot expect the moral attitudes of people to produce a good political constitution; on the contrary, it is only through the latter that they can be expected to attain a good level of moral culture'.[23] The role of institutions is not exhausted in serving the principles of prudence; it is universal moral ends that ought to inspire the politicians' activity. By increasing compliance with the general will of a sovereign body, politics contributes to the development of impartial dispositions: to be sure, not by distributively modifying the intentions of individual moral agents, but by collectively guaranteeing their external conditions of possibility.

It is precisely from the point of view of this emancipatory task of politics, from the point of view of what Kant elsewhere calls the 'moral politician', that the question of the 'guarantee' of human progress becomes central. A transformation of political institutions as a function of an effective and uninterrupted development of morality requires ensuring that what human beings have collectively achieved throughout history is not undermined, and that there is a set of cultural, social and political resources upon which future generations may draw in their incessant attempts to realize a just cosmopolitan order.[24] The practical imperative of developing humanity's moral disposition requires both that human efforts are coordinated in the present and that they are continued in the future. Coordination and continuity are necessary for moral progress, moral progress requires the idea of progress, and the idea of progress requires justification. The First Supplement of *Perpetual Peace* tries to provide such justification.

We seem to have succeeded in clarifying how the practical necessity of realizing the moral ends of reason requires that at least the possibility of such future development be guaranteed. This however does not explain why Kant identifies such a guarantee with nature's teleological activity. Merely separating the practical interest of reason in progress from the theoretical ambiguity of its justification does not resolve a problem that

only their unification poses. What need is there to recur to the idea of a 'providential' intervention of nature to argue for the necessity of progress? What exactly is meant by 'nature' here? If the question of the guarantee of perpetual peace is raised by a systematic requirement of Kant's theory – the historical realization of reason's ends – it is to the core of the system that we must return to illuminate this apparently obscure inference.

III. Teleology and the Highest Good

Clarifying the systematic link between teleology, nature and freedom requires taking a critical distance from two frequently made assumptions regarding Kant's moral theory: (i) its solipsism, (ii) its formalism.[25] Both lead to a picture of Kantian ethics as an incurably individualistic one, based on an atomistic understanding of the moral agent who, in his unconditional obedience to the categorical imperative, ought to abstract from any ends other than the form of the will. Solipsism and formalism are intertwined, in the sense that the latter determines the former: pure conformity of the will to the moral law requires abstracting from all external objects and excluding all reference to the outcome of moral decisions. This in turn rules out the possibility of acknowledging the impact of other people both from the point of view of the motivation of action (in deciding what ought to be done) and from the point of view of its consequences (in considering how my actions affect other subjects). Formalism suppresses the first, solipsism ignores the second.

Yet, Kant's ethic is neither formalist nor solipsist. It is inherently teleological and comprehensively relational. The human will is structurally goal-oriented; human action always involves others as well as oneself. The teleological and relational dimensions of Kant's moral philosophy emerge clearly in the very definition of the supreme principle of morality: 'so act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means only'.[26] The requirement to treat humanity always also as an end is not limited to the *negative* duty of never acting against humanity. It entails also taking *positive* responsibility for its development. The duty to promote humanity in one's person is not exhausted in avoiding its destruction but requires also that it be cultivated. As Kant puts it: 'there are in humanity predispositions to greater perfection . . . to neglect these might admittedly be consistent with the

preservation of humanity as an end in itself, but not with the furtherance of this end'.[27]

It is precisely the *positive* duty of actively promoting the moral perfection of human beings that introduces the teleological dimension of Kant's ethics.[28] Moral perfection constitutes the supreme end of reason and is represented in the concept of the highest good (*summum bonum*) as the synthesis of virtue – acting in accordance with the moral law – and happiness – the natural satisfaction derived from the result of such actions. As a matter of duties towards humanity in oneself, the moral imperative imposes the promotion of virtuous attitudes, when it is directed to the humanity of others it also requires the promotion of their happiness.[29] Kant emphasizes the distinction between not contributing to one's unhappiness and actively promoting its opposite by saying that:

> humanity might indeed subsist if no one contributed to the happiness of others . . . but there is still only a negative and not a positive agreement with *humanity as an end in itself* unless every one also tries, as far as he can, to further the ends of others. For the ends of any subject who is an end in itself must as far as possible be also my *ends* if that representation is to have its *full* effect on me.[30]

Now this idea of duties owed to one another on the basis of the reciprocal recognition of humanity as an end in itself introduces what Kant calls 'a very fruitful conception', the idea of a kingdom of ends, created by the 'union of various rational beings through common laws' and including both 'rational beings as ends in themselves' and also the 'ends of his own which each may set to himself'.[31] It amounts to the idea of a moral social order constructed by the cumulative and interdependent efforts of all its members to promote the highest good in the world.

The notion of a systematic whole constituted by the collective attempt to harmonize the rational ends of all its members and orientated to the moral transformation of the empirical world already appears in the first *Critique*. Here it is defined as the idea of a 'moral world' conceived as an intelligible yet objective one, which ought to influence the phenomenal world so as to make it conform to the demands of reason. As Kant clarifies, 'happiness, in exact proportion with the morality of rational beings, through which they are worthy of it, alone constitutes the highest good of a world into which we must without exception transport ourselves in accordance with the precepts of pure

but practical reason'.[32] And as he insists in the *Groundwork*, the kingdom of ends is a 'practical idea for the sake of bringing about, in conformity to this very idea, that which does not exist, but which can become real by means of our conduct'.[33]

But what does the collective obligation to progressively realize the highest good in the world involve? This historical task of practical reason requires first of all that the actions prescribed unconditionally by its idea be coordinated among all moral agents since their reciprocal virtue and happiness are interdependent. Secondly, it requires that such actions are continued in a way that progressively contributes to promoting the moral perfection of the species, thereby realizing the vocation (*Bestimmung*) of human beings.[34] It is precisely the demands of *coordination* and *continuation*, linked to the collective practical necessity of a historical actualization of the kingdom of ends that introduce the teleological rationale of Kant's system and ultimately clarify the problematic of the 'guarantee'.

IV. The practical interest realized in nature

The relational and historical characterization of the duty to realize the highest good in the world leads to one of the most problematic issues in Kant's system: the assumption of natural teleology. The dilemma appears in all the major writings of Kant: it constitutes the systematic background of *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*; it is mentioned in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is developed in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and it returns in the *Critique of Judgment*, as well as in successive political writings. Kant's main concern is unchanged in all these works and may be roughly summarized as follows. Reason prescribes unconditionally that the necessary object of its practical principles – the highest good – be realized in the historical world by the concerted efforts of all rational agents. The fact that the actions prescribed by the categorical imperative ought to happen in the empirical world implies that this is also possible (*denn da sie gebietet daß solche geschehen sollen, so müssen sie auch geschehen können*).[35] Ought implies can. Yet while human beings would act in accordance with duty if each of them could be considered a perfect moral agent, the phenomenal conditions in which the synthesis between virtue and happiness would succeed present a number of difficulties.

I have summarized these difficulties in terms of coordination and continuity. The first is linked to the relational dimension involved in the

realization of the highest good: while each individual is committed to its achievement as a single rational agent, he may never be sure that his own natural inclinations, vices and temptations or those of others will not be an obstacle to it. Secondly, even if all rational agents did succeed in contingently promoting the highest good in the empirical world, their concerted efforts are inevitably limited by the duration of their lives. Finitude is an inextricable condition of human beings, and finitude is in direct tension with infinite progress toward moral perfection. This is what I have called the problem of continuity.

Kant refers more clearly to the first question in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to the second problem in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and they are also present in the essay *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*. With regard to coordination he clarifies that the possibility of realizing the highest good in the world depends on the condition that 'everyone acts as he should'. But since

> the obligation from the moral law remains valid for each particular use of freedom, *even if others do not conduct themselves in accord with this law*, how their consequences will be related to happiness is determined neither by the nature of the things in the world, nor by the causality of actions themselves and their relation to morality . . .[36]

On the other hand, the non-infinite duration of human life raises the second problem, that of a temporal obstacle in realizing the highest good and promoting moral perfection. As Kant puts it, 'any practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as the result of the determination of the will, does not depend upon the moral dispositions of the will, but upon knowledge of the laws of nature and the physical ability to use them for one's purposes'.[37] Only a rational agent disposing of infinite time to improve his moral capacities and realize the highest good in the world would be able to subject nature to the demands of reason: 'endless progress is possible only on the presupposition of the *existence* and personality of the same rational being continuing *endlessly*'.[38] The possibility of achieving moral perfection seems precluded to natural individuals by their limited appearance on earth; the capacity of conforming fully to the moral law is 'a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment (*Zeitpunkt*) of his existence'.[39]

Does 'ought' then really imply 'can'? Almost. To justify the claim Kant needs a postulate of the systematic unity between nature and

freedom which may *guarantee* the progressive realization of the highest good by answering the questions of coordination and continuity. The problem of coordination is resolved in the first *Critique* by conceptualizing a teleological order of nature, both theoretical and practical, linked to the idea of a supreme will, necessary to give an 'appropriate effect' to moral actions. How else, asks Kant, 'could we find complete unity of purposes under different wills'? The idea of a kingdom of ends inevitably leads to a teleological order of nature guaranteed by the assumption of an idea, that of God, under which alone it is possible to think of the physical and moral world as finding systematic unity and causal effectiveness.[40]

If the postulate of God guarantees the harmony of the kingdom of ends with that of nature, thus responding to the problem of coordination, the second one, what I have called 'continuity', is resolved in the second *Critique* by postulating the immortality of the soul. As Kant clarifies here, the realization of the *summum bonum* requires a perfect accordance of the will with the moral law but is only possible on the assumption of an infinite progress toward moral perfection. Yet, since reason unconditionally commands the realization of the highest good in the world, it is necessary to assume that human beings continue in endless progress toward it. Thus the *summum bonum* is possible practically only on the presupposition of the immortality of the soul, 'so that this, as inseparably connected with the moral law, is a postulate of pure practical reason'.[41]

Now it is interesting to notice how the problems of coordination and continuity developed in the first and in the second *Critique* emerge already in the earlier essay entitled *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*. Here Kant alludes to both issues in terms that appear much more continuous with the observations on natural teleology found in the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace. On the one hand, the problem of coordination is approached through the hypothesis of an unsociable sociability of human beings which drives them into civil society and ultimately renders necessary a cosmopolitan political system.[42] Nature 'intends' that the full development of human faculties is accomplished in human society and indeed in a society which has 'the most precise specification and preservation of the limits of this freedom in order that it can coexist with that of any others'.[43] On the other hand, the problem of continuity is approached by arguing that since individual human life is necessarily limited from a temporal perspective and since 'every individual would have to live for a vast length of time if he were

to learn how to make complete use of all his natural capacities', the subject of natural teleology cannot be the individual agent but refers to the whole human species.[44]

Kant therefore identifies a possible solution to the problem of coordination by postulating the practical necessity of a cosmopolitan order where political institutions guarantee the development of the freedom of each member compatibly with that of any other. He also clarifies why the possibility of a continuous promotion of a similar political order cannot be a task of single individuals but belongs to the whole human species. Only by considering progressive historical development from the point of view of the species can moral learning be seen as a cumulative effort through which responsibilities are transferred from one generation to the next. However, Kant needs to also explain how such a learning process might be promoted and what guarantees that future generations might indeed learn from the errors of past ones or benefit from their success. It is precisely here that the idea of natural teleology intervenes to compensate for the unreliability of human teleology. Since the philosopher 'cannot assume that mankind follows any rational *purpose* of its own in its collective actions', Kant claims, the only way is 'to attempt to discover *a purpose in nature*'.[45] Natural teleology intervenes to guarantee the possibility of harmonizing the kingdom of nature with the kingdom of ends (the problem of coordination) by guaranteeing that the development of the human species corresponds to what Kant calls nature's 'original intention' (the problem of continuity).[46]

Is there a new development in Kant's return to these issues a decade later in Kant's essay on peace? I will argue that there is. The issue of the guarantee, implicitly present in a number of key writings preceding the essay on peace, seems to have posed a serious dilemma. If we follow the essay on history and argue that what guarantees the possibility of moral progress in the world is the way in which nature intervenes teleologically to transform the human species, we end up undermining the spontaneity of the categorical imperative and depriving human beings of moral responsibility. Moreover, postulating the teleological unity of nature for the sake of reason's practical interest runs the risk of bridging the gap between nature and freedom in a way that threatens to undermine Kant's theoretical findings with regard to the indemonstrability of a natural providential order. If, on the other hand, we follow the first two *Critiques*, insist on the merely practical nature of certain metaphysical assumptions and argue that the possibility of realizing the highest good

in the world is ultimately guaranteed only by the reciprocal recognition of agents' moral obligations, the postulates of God and the immortality of the soul appear rather superfluous.

Indeed, having recognized the practical necessity of the categorical imperative, what need is there for a guarantee? And why should anyone take seriously Kant's arguments in favour of it? The fact that you believe that 'ought implies can' does not necessarily mean that 'ought' really implies 'can' in ways that are necessary to render the guarantee persuasive from a theoretical perspective. One could argue here that the point is not theoretical and that the necessity in question has a practical nature. But if Kant intended to resolve the question of the guarantee by recurring to subjective faith in the wisdom of providence, he could have easily done so without troubling himself (and us) with all the curious examples of the Samoyed and the reindeer that we find at the beginning of the First Supplement of *Perpetual Peace*. Clearly there is something more to the affirmation of the idea of a 'purpose' in nature, but it is something that runs the risk of generating tensions with regard to the passage (*Übergang*) from practical to theoretical philosophy.

This issue, as it is widely acknowledged, constitutes the heart of the *Critique of Judgment*. In what follows I shall focus precisely on the third *Critique* and argue that, given the justification of teleology provided in that work, it is possible to interpret Kant's conception of nature in a way that does not merely refer to the evolution of biological beings but includes the development of the human species from a moral perspective. Even though the text remains open to several interpretations, I will try to show that the third *Critique* introduces a significant shift in Kant's conceptualization of progress in human history and provides support for a secular interpretation of the guarantee.[47] Without neglecting the continuities between the First Supplement of *Perpetual Peace* and some of the observations in the essay on universal history with regard to the 'purpose' of nature, it is possible to show how Kant's latter works point to a significant development towards a much more agent-orientated guarantee of the realization of the highest good in the world.

V. A reflective interpretation of the guarantee

Analysing Kant's Guarantee in light of the observations on teleology that we find in the *Critique of Judgment* is of the highest importance for grasping the practical perspective from which the idea of nature should be approached when assessing *Perpetual Peace*. Given that the latter

essay appeared several years after the publication of the third *Critique* and that Kant never returned to a systematic treatment of the concept of teleology after its publication, the developments of his last *Critique* are crucial for understanding the discussion of the idea of nature that we find in the Guarantee.

Now the first remarkable development for the conceptualization of the links between the theoretical study of nature and reason's practical interest in natural teleology in the *Critique of Judgment*, when compared to earlier works, concerns Kant's analysis of physico-theology. This is defined in the third *Critique* as 'the attempt of reason to infer from the ends of nature (which can be cognized only empirically) to the supreme cause of nature and its properties'.[48] It is interesting to notice how, after several oscillations, the first *Critique* concludes by endorsing physico-theology and affirming the possibility of conceptualizing a similar supreme cause from both a theoretical and a practical perspective: 'all research into nature is thereby directed toward the form of a system of ends, and becomes in its fullest extension physico-theology'.[49] Until the publication of the third *Critique* the concept of physico-theology provides a unifying ground for solving the problems of coordination and continuity that we find in the essay on universal history and in the first two *Critiques*. The practical necessity of moral imperatives extends the cognitive capacity of reason by ultimately revealing the necessity of a supreme author of the world. It therefore also guarantees both the possibility of realizing the highest good and the unification of *all* ends of nature into a whole coherent system.[50] In the third *Critique*, however, the rejection of physico-theology could not be more explicit: 'physico-theology, no matter how far it might be pushed, can reveal to us nothing about a final end of creation; . . . it cannot determine this concept [of intelligent cause] any further in either a theoretical or a practical respect'.[51] Whatever practical grounds we may have for postulating the existence of a higher intelligence, Kant claims, it is plainly impossible to infer from these postulates an effective ordering of the natural world following teleological principles.

The clear rejection of physico-theology in the third *Critique* allows us to understand a second very important development in Kant's analysis of natural teleology, if we compare it to the essay on universal history. In the 1784 essay, unlike in the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant assumes without further discussion that all natural organisms are teleologically orientated and does not even raise the possibility of adopting a mechanical perspective in their investigation. As he puts it:

> all the natural capacities of a creature are destined sooner or later to be developed completely and in conformity with their end. This can be verified in all animals by external and internal anatomical examination. An organ that is not meant for use or an arrangement which does not fulfill its purpose is a contradiction in the teleology of nature.[52]

Moreover, unlike the third *Critique*, the essay on history does not at all focus on the specificities of the human ability to transform nature and put it at the service of determinate ends, when compared to other animals.

Emphasizing some important developments in the later work with regard to the practical foundation of teleological principles provides significant support for an interpretation of the guarantee that emphasizes Kant's changed understanding of 'nature'. In fact the third *Critique* is unambiguous about the idea that the concept of teleology is of no use for asserting objective causal connections between natural beings when there is no evidence of such teleological causes from the point of view of scientific observation. Kant's concern with the possible 'spill-over' effects of the postulates of practical reason on the scientific analysis of nature seems to have led him to a much clearer systematic understanding of the legitimate use of teleological concepts, now considered valid only from a practical perspective. The distinction between faith and knowledge, and the exclusion of the application of teleological principles to both theology and natural science provide an unequivocal ground for rejecting the existence of a unifying teleological cause operating in nature. Indeed, as Kant puts it,

> if one brings the concept of God into natural science and its context in order to make purposiveness in nature explicable, and subsequently uses this purposiveness in turn to prove that there is a God, then there is nothing of substance in either of the sciences, and a deceptive fallacy casts each into uncertainty by letting them cross each other's borders.[53]

Teleological concepts constitute a part of the critique of a special faculty, the capacity of reflective judgment, in its fruitful investigation of the possible unification of the multiplicity of empirical laws into a systematic whole. Far from excluding the possibility of a purely mechanical analysis of organic life, Kant advocates the use of teleological principles only as heuristic devices that it is necessary to assume for the purpose of systematic unity in science.[54]

But even more interesting than the reflective status of teleological judgment when applied to the understanding of nature are the rational sources upon which the hypothetical use of teleological principles relies. Kant's later writings such as the essay 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' and, more explicitly, the third *Critique*, argue that the possibility of a conformity to ends, far from being reified or dogmatically applied to nature, is only justified in analogy with the way in which human reason operates in the practical sphere.[55]

All this, we should remember, retains validity in the essay on perpetual peace, which was published after Kant's argument 'from analogy' had been consolidated in the third *Critique*. The idea of an end, understood as that which contains the condition of realization of a specific object, may be understood by reflecting on the concept of cause that guides the practical actions of human beings, on their capacity to set ends and select adequate means for their realization. Even though the concept of an end of nature cannot be ascribed to organisms, the teleological principle that we use to investigate them is thought of by analogy with the kind of causality that reason deploys in the sphere of morality and in that of artistic production.[56] 'We bring in a teleological ground', Kant argues, 'when we affirm a causal relationship between objects which we only find by analogy to our own acting according to purposes in the practical realm'.[57] The question of a general purposiveness of nature, of 'why' anything exists at all, is *as such* impossible to answer.[58]

This theoretical scepticism provides sufficient ground for a new interpretation of the solution of the problems of coordination and continuity in realizing the highest good in the world compared to the answers given before the publication of the third *Critique*. The reflective foundation of the concept of 'an end of nature' in the teleological structure of human will seems to resolve the question of the guarantee of perpetual peace with a development that has been little noticed. In the *Critique of Judgment* the question of *what nature has done for human beings* is answered by looking at *what human beings do with nature* – it becomes a matter of history more than providence. Kant argues here that nature may be considered teleologically orientated only when we employ a concept of end that human beings uniquely display in the domain of practical action or in that of creative artistic production. If we abstract from such human capacity to set moral ends – a capacity that distinguishes persons from all other organisms in nature – we would hardly be able to find any trace of such teleological

orientation or any evidence of historical progress. In fact, Kant argues, if we consider the development of human beings purely as natural beings we would be seriously disappointed in our search for a teleological order at work. Nature, he emphasizes, has not taken man for her special favourite; 'it has rather spared him just as little as every other animal in her destructive effects, whether pestilence, hunger, danger of flood, cold, attacks by other animals great and small, etc'.[59] Yet, from the point of view of the unconditioned capacity to set purposes, from the point of view of a self-understanding of human beings as ends in themselves, nature might still be considered 'teleologically subordinated'. How is this possible?

In order to answer the question, the third *Critique* develops the analysis of human beings from the point of view of nature (providence) in the direction of an analysis of nature from the point of view of human beings (history). When we ask why anything exists at all from a theoretical perspective we are struck by the absence of any kind of teleological disposition which would justify placing human beings at the centre of the universe. However, if we consider the way in which objects in nature are used by human beings in attempting to realize their own purposes, the entire world can be perceived as teleologically orientated. What are all natural beings 'good for', Kant asks? 'For the human being, for the diverse uses which his understanding teaches him to make of all these creatures.' The human being is 'the ultimate end of the creation here on earth' because he is 'the only being who forms a concept of ends for himself and who by means of his reason can make a system of ends out of an aggregate of purposively formed things'.[60]

These reflections, and the context in which we find them, provide significant support for a different interpretation of the Gurantee of Perpetual Peace from the ones stressing Kant's providential understanding of nature.[61] When the third *Critique* mentions the examples of the Ostiaks and Samoyeds, of the inhabitants of the Arctic Ocean and of the Bedouins in the desert, which we also find in the Guarantee, it emphasizes how nature, taken as such, is far from working at their service. The Greenlander, the Lapp, the Yakut, would have never been able to take advantage of resources they found in nature, if they had not undergone a long historical process of apprenticeship in the selection of means appropriate to ends, at first blindly and 'as if' nature had improved their adaptive capacities, then always more consciously. The emphasis in this case is placed not so much on how human beings are helped by nature but on how the latter is transformed in the course of a historical devel-

opment during which they mature a technical ability to use nature purposefully in promoting interdependent practical ends. 'The human being, through the freedom of his causality, finds things in nature completely advantageous' and 'knows how to bring things into correspondence with his own arbitrary inspiration, to which he was by no means predestined by nature'.[62] Yet the process in which selfish inclinations of human beings are disciplined in the course of historical development, the multiplication of human needs, the division of labour and the political and cultural institutions created in order to facilitate life in common ultimately prepare for the emergence of purer moral motives.

Such an interpretation of historical development is consistent with the kind of fictional evidence Kant adduces in the essay *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History* to illustrate humanity's possible progress towards moral perfection. In the initial stages of their development, Kant claims, human beings were guided purely by instincts. However, the emergence of more complex desires than purely animal ones, their ability to make projects for the future, the exercise of imagination and the extension of knowledge culminate in a process through which agents acquire awareness of their capacity to promote ends and start perceiving nature as teleologically subordinated. When the human being, Kant argues,

> first said to the sheep *'the fleece which you wear was given to you by nature not for your own use but for mine'* and took it from the sheep to wear it himself, he became aware of a prerogative which *by his nature* he enjoyed over all the animals; and he now no longer regarded them as fellow creatures but as means and instruments to be used at will for the attainment of whatever ends he pleased.[63]

In the third *Critique* Kant makes explicit the rational sources upon which the assumption of natural teleology draws. 'As the sole being on earth who has reason, and thus a capacity to set voluntary ends for himself' the human being is certainly 'the titular lord of nature, and if nature is regarded as a teleological system, then it is his vocation to be the ultimate end of nature'. The analysis of nature as a teleologically subordinated system is however not unconditionally admitted. It rather depends on human beings' intelligence and will 'to give to nature and to himself a relation to an end that can be sufficient for itself and independently of nature'.[64] While it is impossible to conclude that anything

works objectively to the advantage of practical reason, the historical processes through which moral development takes place and the specific demands morality makes in the physical world allow us to consider the latter, from a practical perspective, as conforming to human purposes.

This remarkable shift from an analysis of the history of human beings from the standpoint of natural teleology to the analysis of natural teleology from the standpoint of human history sheds a different light on the conceptualization of a 'guarantee' for the realization of the highest good in the world. On the one hand, the postulate of the systematic unity of nature and freedom in a superior moral author of the world is analysed in the *Critique of Judgment* through the reflective application of the teleological principle of judgement to the historical evolution of humankind. On the other hand, the postulate of the immortality of the soul which emerged from the practical demand of an endless progress toward moral perfection is integrated into something that Kant had already mentioned in his essay on universal history, without developing it further in the two previous *Critiques*: the conceptualization of the human species as the agent of moral progress. Having clarified the special standing of human beings vis-à-vis other organized biological entities by referring to their unique capacity to pursue moral ends, postulating a teleological order ceases to threaten Kant's theoretical findings but without undermining the evidence of progress when considered from a collective moral perspective.

The application of teleological judgement to our analysis of the historical evolution of human beings allows us to better understand also how the *Critique of Judgment* contributes to reconsidering the problems of *coordination* and *continuity* in light of reason's practical supremacy. In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant seems to have identified in the concept of culture a new vehicle for understanding how such requirements can be promoted by the human species in the course of its historical development. If the reflective application of teleological principles to nature finds justification only by reference to the way in which human beings themselves act according to ends, an answer to the question of coordination and continuity can only be given by considering 'the aptitude and skill for which he [the human being] can use nature . . . This production and aptitude of a rational being for any ends in general (thus those of his freedom) is culture'.[65]

Now the argument showing how culture facilitates the realization of higher moral ends and justifies applying teleological principles to the analysis of human development is reminiscent of some of the points

Kant makes in the essay on universal history to illustrate humanity's progress towards a more civilized age. However, the third *Critique* traces a clear distinction between 'culture of skill' and 'culture of discipline' and therefore is better able to illustrate the specific mechanisms through which the demands of coordination and continuity may be promoted by the human species throughout history. The culture of skill is nothing but the subjective attitude to promote individual goals and tends to culminate in the achievement of the formal condition under which human beings can accommodate reciprocal claims affecting each other's well-being: it inevitably leads to politics and the establishment of Right. The division of labour, the emergence of natural and social inequalities and the interdependence of human needs necessitate establishing political mechanisms through which 'lawful authority in a whole, which we call a *civil community,* is opposed to the abuse of their conflicting freedoms'. Yet such a process of entering into rightful political relations with each other can only be considered complete once it is globally extended. Thus, 'if men were clever enough to find it out and wise enough to submit themselves voluntarily to its constraint', the effective coordination of competing claims could be ultimately achieved only in 'a *cosmopolitan* whole', in a 'system of all states that are in danger of acting injuriously upon each other'.[66]

A similar argument, as we have seen, appears also in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan* Purpose, with reference to the unsociable sociability of human beings that forces them to enter into a civil political constitution. However, in that earlier essay natural teleology constituted an unproblematic assumption supplied to strengthen the evidence of nature's original intention to promote human well-being. By contrast, the distinction between determinate and reflective judgment upon which Kant constantly draws attention in the third *Critique* sets clear limits to any speculation about the possibility of inferring from the hypothetical assumption of natural teleology the existence of a supreme intelligence directing nature toward specific purposes.

On the other hand, with regard to the second problem, that of the continuation of moral perfection, it is the 'culture of discipline' that provides evidence of the possible domination of animal instincts and immoral attitudes through a progressive aesthetic and civic education. As Kant puts it,

> the beautiful arts and the sciences which, by their universally-communicable pleasure, and by the elegance and refinement of society, make man more

> civilised, if not morally better, win us in large measure from the tyranny of sense propensions, and thus prepare men for a lordship, in which Reason alone shall have authority.[67]

The process of cultural education guaranteeing the achievement of moral progress represents a development for which it may be difficult to find evidence throughout the life spans of single individuals and perhaps even in the duration of one whole generation. Here again, compatibly with the reflections we find in the essay on universal history, the kind of aesthetic and social emancipation Kant has in mind is not directed to individual human beings but to a different historical subject: the human species. After several generations training to discipline their passions and cultivate their spirit by means of artistic and scientific production, human beings are put in a position to capitalize on the errors of their predecessors and bring to completion what was initially thought of as an improbable process of enlightenment. There is no denying 'the evil showered upon us by the refinement of taste' and by 'indulgence for science as nourishment for vanity', Kant argues echoing the Rousseauian *Discourses on Inequality among Human Beings*. However, such inclinations found in our animal nature are countered by 'our education for a higher vocation (the inclination of enjoyment)' and by 'making room for the development of humanity'.[68] As Kant puts it elsewhere, the tension between individual human corruption and the process of cultural and historical civilization arises only in so far as human beings are considered part of a physical species from a descriptive perspective (as in Rousseau's *Discourses on Inequality*). When we raise the question of their development from the point of view of their moral destination, when we ask 'what course culture should take' (as in the *Social Contract* and in *Emile*) that tension only persists until 'art, when it reaches perfection, once more becomes nature'.[69] Cultural progress results from the historical development of social institutions in harmony with a teleological conception of human beings as ends in themselves. However, in the third *Critique* the role ascribed to an abstract collective entity (the human species) as an agent of historical progress contributes to solving the problem of continuity without relying on an a-Critical understanding of physical teleology.

VI. On the guarantee of historical progress

Having illustrated the shift that the *Critique of Judgment* produces for the analysis of the postulates of practical reason with regard to natural teleology and the realization of the highest good in the world, one further question remains to be clarified. Why does Kant continue to refer to the product of a political, cultural and collective effort of moral emancipation as that which nature has made to prepare human beings for their supreme moral destination? Given what has been argued so far, it is possible to see that Kant considers the teleological development of nature from the point of view of the historical progress of the human species. His remarks about culture suggest that the improvement of human capacities over time is due to the development of new skills in the human species, to people's progressive subjection to the coercive power of political institutions and to their scientific innovations and advancements in art. This development has important heuristic implications for the way in which we analyse societal change and also for the conception of nature that we place at the basis of these developments. When assessing moral emancipation, Kant forces us to shift away from an exclusive focus on the life trajectories of single individuals and invites us to observe collective regularities as manifest in the historical development of the species. As one interpreter puts it,

> when we set out to study human beings our object of study must be collective . . . it must be *historical*, encompassing the process by which people acquire new capacities, assimilate them into their life activities, and transmit them to their descendants. Thus not only is the entire race essentially historical but the study of this species must also be fundamentally historical.[70]

These observations help us to see that a conception of nature similar to the one that justifies the postulate of progress at the end of the third *Critique*, and which is also at work in the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace, could also be interpreted as *human nature*, and to the extent to which this is considered 'conditionally', with regard to the human capacity of posing and pursuing strategic and moral ends, it might also mean *historical agency*. It is a concept of nature more akin to what Hegel would have later called 'second nature', the process of transformation of a mere biological entity – humans as natural beings – into a collective subject progressively transforming reality by seeking to realize freedom in the world.

Such an interpretation makes it easier to understand why in some of Kant's subsequent essays, for example in *The Contest of Faculties*, the very question of the guarantee is framed in terms of a 'rough indication' or 'a historical sign' that could prove the 'existence of a *tendency* within the human race as a *whole*, considered not as a series of individuals' but 'as a body distributed over the earth in states and national groups'.[71] Kant gives up speaking of ambiguous natural processes, as in the apparently confusing examples of *Perpetual Peace*, and argues that 'we are dealing with freely acting human beings to whom one can *dictate* in advance what they *ought* to do, but of whom one cannot *predict* what they actually *will* do'.[72] Yet, to the extent to which a guarantee is needed from a practical perspective, Kant focuses rather explicitly not on natural processes but on a historical and political event, that of the French Revolution, which seems to have advanced the human race in both the cultures of skill and of discipline. Even though he does not explicitly use the terms in this essay, his analysis of the 'moral cause' at work in the attitude towards such events is consistent with the answers to the problems of coordination and continuity that have been given in the third *Critique*.

Indeed the moral cause at work here is composed of two elements, each of which seems to provide a possible answer to the issue of the guarantee by implicitly referring to the culture of skill and to that of discipline. The first component is political: the achievement of a republican constitution by a sovereign body and the pacific nature of such a constitution prove that 'there is the aim, which is also a duty' to submit to the conditions through which war is avoided and cosmopolitan right is progressively realized. On the other hand, the second component of the moral cause at work is aesthetic: the disinterested sympathy and impartial enthusiasm with which the public of spectators participates in the events of the French Revolution give some indication of the culture of discipline extending to citizens of other states and motivating them to endorse similar future events.[73] In both cases the teleological force driving human beings towards historical progress is not of a natural but of a moral, historical kind.

These observations allow us to clarify some of the textual tensions inherent in the essay on peace when referring to 'nature' both as a facilitator and as an obstacle to the promotion of the demands of morality. So, for example, when Kant analyses the issue of conflict between politics and morality, the mechanism of nature, far from acting in favour of human beings, sets a limit to the realization of the cosmopolitan

ideal.[74] The task of finding a compromise between the demands of freedom and the limits of nature is discharged instead by the 'moral politician' who is able to 'make it his principle that, if any faults which could not have been prevented are discovered in the political constitution or in the relations between states, it is a duty . . . to see to it that they are corrected as soon as possible'.[75] Moral politics is here inspired not by nature but by freedom, and human agency is exercised compatibly with the requirements of prudence but ultimately responding to the imperatives of morality. The realization of the highest good in the world may be considered possible not just because of the secret work of an unknown providential force but also through the active engagement of both citizens (as part of an enlightened public) and politicians (as morally inspired legislators).

One final thought follows. In the writings after *Perpetual Peace*, while assessing the historical evidence of humanity's progress toward moral perfection Kant introduces the event of the French Revolution only as a 'negative guarantee', a proof that at least the 'human race will not be disturbed in its progress'.[76] By the same token, the concluding section on cosmopolitanism in the Doctrine of Right reproposes the issue of the guarantee by basically proving the possibility of realizing cosmopolitan right through a denial of its impossibility.[77] If someone cannot prove that 'a thing exists', Kant argues, he can at least try to 'prove that it does not exist'. Failing both, it is legitimate to ask whether it is in one's 'interest to assume one or the other possibility as hypothesis, either theoretical or from practical considerations'.[78] In the practical case, Kant clarifies, the aim in question would concern the attempt to achieve a moral end of reason. And even though 'no-one is duty-bound to make an assumption that the end in question can be realised' for 'no-one can be obliged to accept a given belief', the guarantee of perpetual peace cannot be ruled out given our unconditional obligation to realize the highest good. As Kant puts it 'we can have a duty to act in accordance with the idea of such an end, even if there is not the slightest theoretical probability of its realisation, provided that there is no means of demonstrating that it cannot be realised either'.[79] As generations replace one another in trying to realize the highest good as an unconditional obligation of practical reason, their reciprocal development of social and political institutions progressively facilitates the sensible realization of freedom in the world.

A positive guarantee, constructed on a rigid dualism between nature and humans and resting on the assumption of a benevolent disposition

of the former towards the latter, would ultimately undermine human's potential to transform the empirical world. However, if nature is understood in a dynamic way, as subject to ongoing modification by human agents intervening to improve the socio-political conditions in which subsequent generations will find themselves acting, the possibility of moral progress could not be ruled out, provided that everyone continues acting in ways that strive to bring it about.

VI. Conclusion

Kant was not an incurable, and perhaps somewhat naive, optimist. Clearly he did not subscribe to a suspect prophetic account of history in which individuals are despotically guided by deterministic forces beyond their understanding and ultimately against their will. Precisely because the question of the guarantee of human progress in history cannot be resolved metaphysically, precisely because history is not just the work of nature but also of freedom, there can be no guarantee in a positive sense.

Clearly Kant was not a simpleminded pessimist either. To say that future human progress ultimately depends on what individuals do, politically and collectively, to promote the quality of their relations is not the same as saying that they will never succeed. Having clarified the point of view from which teleology shapes human interactions and the idea of progress acquires normative standing, optimism and pessimism become uninteresting questions, which in any case it is impossible to answer. As Kant emphasizes in discussing the necessity of cosmopolitan right, 'it is no longer a question of whether peace is really possible or not, or whether we are not mistaken in our theoretical judgment if we assume that it is'. The point is instead that 'we must simply act as if it could really come about and turn our efforts towards realizing it and towards establishing that constitution which seems more suitable for this purpose'.[80]

Ultimately, Kant's emphasis on the relevance of political practice for the teleological development of the human species dissolves the question of the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace. As long as people are rationally engaged in shaping social institutions aiming to realize the highest good in the world – progress will be; to the extent that they have historically done so – progress has already occurred.

Notes

[1] Earlier versions of this article were presented at the UK Kant Society Graduate Conference at Wolfson College, Oxford and at the Research Seminar in Political Theory at the Free University of Berlin. I am grateful to participants at these events, as well as to Silvia De Bianchi, Renato Caputo, Gerhard Goehler, Filippo Gonnelli, Mario Reale, Paola Rodano, Cinzia Sciuto and Jonathan White for several helpful suggestions. I am particularly indebted to Filippo Gonnelli for many inspiring conversations on teleology in Kant, as well as to Katrin Flikschuh, Howard Williams and four anonymous reviewers of this journal for their invaluable written comments on earlier drafts. Finally, I would like to thank the Irmgard Coninx Stiftung for a six months fellowship at the Wissenschaftzentrum in Berlin, which enabled me to write the article.

[2] 'Nature, the contriver of things'. See Immanuel Kant, 'Perpetual peace: a philosophical sketch', in Hans Reiss (ed.), *Kant's Political Writings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 108; VIII: 360.

[3] Ibid. For a more detailed discussion of the different uses of the terms 'Nature' and 'Providence' in Kant's philosophy of history, see Pauline Kleingeld, 'Nature or providence? On the theoretical and moral importance of Kant's philosophy of history', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 75 (2001), 201–19.

[4] Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, p. 110; VIII: 363.

[5] Pauline Kleingeld, who is ultimately sympathetic to Kant's philosophy of history, argues that 'Kant's pre-Darwinistic teleological model is outdated' and that 'the assumption that human behavior is gradually becoming more moral has lost the empirical plausibility Kant still thought it had': see her 'Kant, history, and the ideas of moral development', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 16 (1999), 59–80, esp. p. 60 and 75–6, and also *Fortschritt Und Vernunft: Zur Geschichtsphilosophie Kants* (Wuerzburg: Koenigshausen, 1995), pp. 110–34.

[6] See for example, Martha Nussbaum, 'Kant and stoic cosmopolitanism', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 5 (1997), esp. pp. 15–17.

[7] See, for example, Howard Williams, *Essays on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 2–3.

[8] Commentators on this paragraph often rely on Kant's 1784 essay 'Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose' and fail to see the difference between its perspective and that of the third *Critique* as well as of the political writings after the French revolution. See, for example, Karl Otto Apel, 'Kant's "Toward Perpetual Peace" as historical prognosis from the point of view of moral duty', in James Bohmann and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (eds), *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 86–102; Kleingeld, 'Nature or providence?', esp. pp. 201–11.

[9] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, tr. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 241; V: 369.

[10] Ibid.

[11] On the analogy of examples in the *Critique of Judgment* and in *Perpetual Peace* see Alexis Philonenko, 'Histoire et guerre chez Kant', in *Kant's Practical Philosophy Reconsidered*, ed. Yirminiahu Yovel (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), pp. 168–82, and Thomas Mertens, 'Zweckmäßigkeit Der Natur Und Politische Philosophie Bei Kant', *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, 49 (1995), pp. 220–40. Both authors however use the analogy to argue Kant's ultimate adherence to theism from a practical perspective, an outcome that even if textually grounded is, as I will try to show, unnecessary to his justification of progress.

[12] Paul Guyer for example has considered 'a fundamental revolution in Kant's conception of the tasks of philosophy' the reasons underlying the publication of the *Critique of Judgment*, see Paul Guyer, 'Bridging the gulf: Kant's project in the third *Critique*', in Graham Bird (ed.), *A Companion to Kant* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 423. For a more detailed comparison of the systematic relationship of the third *Critique* with Kant's previous works see also his *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 275–372.

[13] *Perpetual Peace*, p. 109; VIII: 361.

[14] The point is well taken in Paul Guyer, 'Nature, morality and the possibility of peace', in Hoke Robinson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), pp. 51–68 and in Filippo Gonnelli, *La filosofia politica di Kant* (Rome: Laterza, 1991), pp. 65–109.

[15] Immanuel Kant, *'The only possible argument in support of a demonstration of the existence of God'*, in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, trans. and ed. David Walford, in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 172; II: 131.

[16] On the links between natural teleology and the argument for the existence of God before Kant, with particular reference to Leibniz and Wolff, see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 37–92 and 134–59, and *Kant's Life and Thought* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1981). See also Colas Duflo, *La Finalité Dans La Nature. De Descartes À Kant* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996).

[17] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 614; III: 504.

[18] Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, p. 109; VIII: 361. On the difference between 'external' and 'internal' teleology, see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, sections 63–8; V: 366–85.

[19] Georg W. F. Hegel, *Logic. Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, tr. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), section 60, p. 94.

[20] See for example the discussion in Katrin Flikschuh, 'Reason and nature: Kant's teleological argument in *Perpetual Peace*', in *A Companion to Kant*, pp. 383–96. Flikschuh however does not focus in any detail on the developments of Kant's analysis of teleology in the third *Critique*.

[21] Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, p. 109; VIII: 361.

[22] See Henry Allison, 'The gulf between nature and freedom and nature's guarantee of Perpetual Peace', in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress*, vol. I, 1, pp. 37–49, at p. 46. See also Bernd Ludwig, 'Will Die Natur Unwidersprechlich Die Republik? Einige Reflexionen Anläßlich Einer Rätselhaften Textpassage in Kants Friedensschrift', *Kant Studien*, 88 (1997), pp. 218–28.

[23] Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, p. 109; VIII: 366.

[24] As Kant clarifies elsewhere: 'I base my argument upon my inborn duty of influencing posterity in such a way that it will make constant progress (and I must thus assume that progress is possible) and that this duty may be rightfully handed down from one member of the series to the next.' Immanuel Kant, 'On the common saying: this may be true in theory, but it does not apply in practice', in *Political Writings*, p. 89; VIII: 309.

[25] The thesis of Kant's formalism and solipsism is precisely what has inspired the communitarian critique of Kant's ethics. For one influential account see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 233. For one critical exploration of Kant's ethics of the community, covering also *Religion within the Boundaries of Reason Alone*, see Jennifer Moore, 'Kant's ethical community', *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 26 (1992), 51–71.

[26] Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 80; IV: 430.

[27] Ibid.

[28] This move from promoting humanity as an end, to the collective duty of promoting the capacity to have ends (what I have here called moral perfection) is admittedly very quick. I have only introduced it as a step towards understanding the subsequent concept of a kingdom of ends upon which the teleological assumption of an order of nature relies. For a more detailed account of this passage see Paul Guyer, 'Ends of reason and ends of nature: the place of teleology in Kant's ethics', *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 36 (2002), pp. 161–86.

[29] Happiness is a complex issue in Kant and has given rise to several interpretations. It is often discussed how its constituting a part of the highest good, understood as the supreme end of practical reason, may affect the autonomy of the moral law. See the classic interpretation of Lewis White Beck in *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 242 ff. However I focus here on the promotion of the happiness of other people as a duty towards their humanity, thus leaving aside the question of the personal satisfaction in virtuous action. On this interpretation, happiness (provided that it is that of others and not identified

with egoistic satisfaction) is relevant for the motivation of moral action but does not affect the status of autonomy. This approach, as I try to show below, allows us to resolve the question of the 'guarantee' without necessarily endorsing the ethico-theological postulates of Kant's later philosophy. On the different interpretations of Kant's concept of the highest good – individual and collective – see Andrews Reath, 'Two conceptions of the highest good in Kant', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 26 (1988), 593–619 and Yirminiahu Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 49–80.

30 Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 81; IV: 430.

31 Ibid., p. 83; IV: 433.

32 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 681–82; III: 527–28.

33 Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 86; IV: 437.

34 See on this issue Reinhardt Brandt, 'The vocation of the human being', in Brian Jacobs and Patrick Cain (eds), *Essays on Kant's Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 85–104.

35 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 678; III: 524.

36 Ibid. My italics.

37 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, p. 231; V: 113.

38 Ibid., p. 238; V: 122.

39 Ibid.

40 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 682; III: 529–30.

41 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 238; V: 122. Many interpreters consider the question of the immortality of the soul to arise from an internal necessity of the individual and his hope to be rewarded for virtuous actions. Under this interpretation there would be a shift in the analysis of the *summum bonum* between the first and the second *Critique*, the first framing the question in terms of a collective historical obligation, the second in terms of individual expectation. See for example Pauline Kleingeld, '*What do the virtuous hope for? Re-reading Kant's doctrine of the highest good*', in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress*, pp. 91–112. If the interpretation of the problem of the highest good that I offer above is correct there is however no inconsistency between the two Critiques. Kant is always interested in the realization of the highest good as a collective historical problem but simply adds to the 'coordination' concern of the first *Critique* the 'continuity' concern of the second.

42 Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose', in H. Reiss (ed.), *Political Writings*, pp. 47–50; VIII: 27–8. I have discussed these aspects in greater detail in L. Ypi, 'Sovereignty, cosmopolitanism and the ethics of European foreign policy', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 7 (2008), 349–64, esp. pp. 355–60.

43 Kant, '*Idea for a universal history*', p. 47; VIII: 22.

44 Ibid, p. 42; VIII: 19–20.

45 Ibid.

[46] Ibid. For a further discussion of how Kant's analysis of these issues is linked to the postulates of practical reason see David Lindstedt, 'Kant: progress in universal history as a postulate of practical reason', *Kant Studien*, 90 (1999), 129–47, who nevertheless fails to consider how the *Critique of Judgment* poses the question of natural teleology in terms that are slightly different from those of the essay on universal history.

[47] For the idea that Kant's third *Critique* constitutes a turning point in Kant's justification of teleology see also Paul Guyer, *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. pp. 314–42.

[48] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 303; V: 437,

[49] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 682–3; A 816; B 844.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 304; V: 437.

[52] Kant, *Idea for a Universal History*, p. 42, VIII: 18.

[53] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 253; V: 381.

[54] For a more specific analysis of Kant's conception of the organic life, with reference to pre- and post-Darwinian biology see Daniel Kolb, 'Kant, teleology, and evolution', *Synthese*, 91 (1992), 9–28.

[55] See, for example, Immanuel Kant, 'On the use of teleological principles in philosophy, (1788) in Guenter Zoeller and Robert B. Louden (eds), *Anthropology, History, and Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 216; VIII: 181.

[56] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 68, V: 181.

[57] Ibid, p. 234; V: 360.

[58] Ibid, p. 301–2; V; 434–5.

[59] Ibid, p. 298; V: 430.

[60] Ibid, p. 294–5; V: 426.

[61] The section of the *Critique of Judgment* in which we find this analysis makes precisely the same examples of the *Guarantee* but in a much clearer systematic perspective.

[62] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 240; V: 369.

[63] Immanuel Kant, 'Conjectures on the beginning of human history', in *Political Writings*, p. 225; VIII: 114, second emphasis added.

[64] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 298; V: 431.

[65] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 297; V; 430. Another alternative is to consider 'the beneficence of nature itself' (i.e. the promotion of happiness) as guaranteeing the possibility of promoting a system of ends. Yet Kant discards this argument by saying not only that 'it is far from being the case that nature has made the human being its special favourite and favoured him with beneficence above other animals' but also that even if this were the case 'conflicts in the natural predisposition of the human being would still prevent him from realizing that end' (ibid).

[66] Ibid., pp. 299–300; V: 431–2. There are striking similarities between this passage and the one in *Perpetual peace* in which Kant discusses the question

of the guarantee, not least the overlapping discussions on the effects of war for the development of politics. This seems to confirm the interpretation that Kant increasingly perceived the solution to the systematic problem of the harmony between nature and freedom to be found in political and cultural emancipation.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid, p. 300; V: 433.

69 Kant, 'Conjectures on the beginning of human history', cit. p. 228.

70 Allen Wood, 'Kant's historical materialism', in Jane Kneller and Sidney Axinn (eds), *Autonomy and Community. Readings in Contemporary Kantian Social Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), pp. 15–38. Curiously though, Wood's observations, although fundamentally correct, are mostly focused on Kant's earlier writings on universal history rather than on the third *Critique,* where the evidence for the 'materialistic' interpretation of Kant's philosophy of history is much stronger.

71 Kant, *The Contest of Faculties*, in *Political Writings*, cit. p. 181; VII: 84.

72 Ibid, p. 180; VII: 85.

73 Kant, *The Contest of Faculties*, p. 183; VII: 85. One of the few articles in English that rightly analyses the question of the guarantee of historical progress in terms of a 'fact of politics' seems to miss the importance of the French Revolution as internal political transformation and focuses only on the second element, that of the aesthetic participation of the external public. See Larry Krassnof, 'The fact of politics: history and teleology in Kant', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2 (1994), 22–40. There are however several good non-English studies of the issue, see Gonnelli, *La filosofia politica di Kant*, Pasquale Salvucci, *L'uomo di Kant* (Urbino: Argalia, 1963), and Eric Weil *Problèmes Kantiens* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1970).

74 'If, of course there is neither freedom nor any moral law based on freedom, but only a state in which everything that happens or can happen simply obeys the mechanical workings of nature . . . the concept of right would then be only an empty idea.' See Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, p. 117; VIII: 372.

75 Ibid.

76 Kant, *The Contest of Faculties*, p. 183; VII: 85. For a more elaborate account on the influence of the French Revolution on Kant's political philosophy, see Williams, *Kant's Political Philosophy* and Gonnelli, *La filosofia politica di Kant*.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 173–4; VI: 354.

80 Ibid.