Kantian Review (2026), **31**, 51–70
doi:10.1017/S1369415426101216

KANTIAN REVIEW
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

ARTICLE

What Must I Do to Achieve Perpetual Peace?

Sebastian Orlander

Independent Scholar, Luxembourg
Email: sebastianorlander@gmail.com

Abstract

Kant's concept of perpetual peace, outlined in *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795), has been influential in shaping ideas for lasting global peace. This paper examines how perpetual peace fits into Kant's broader philosophy, beyond its legal aspects. It contrasts Kant's highest good with perpetual peace as the highest political good, critiques readings that conflate ethical and political goods, and offers an alternative interpretation based on Kant's teleology. The paper concludes by addressing potential objections to this approach, aiming to present a more comprehensive understanding of perpetual peace within Kant's legal and moral philosophy.

Keywords: perpetual peace; morality; teleology; international law; institutions

Kant's notion of perpetual peace, first articulated in *Toward Perpetual Peace*[1] (TPP) in 1795, has attracted much attention as a guiding idea for interactions between states with a view to establishing lasting peace in the world. However, certain systematic questions still abound with regard to how this notion fits into Kant's practical philosophy more generally. On the one hand, the definitive articles for perpetual peace do aim at establishing a legal-juridical condition that would obtain among states voluntarily entering into association with each other, and so the notion fits into Kant's legal thinking. On the other hand, some aspects of perpetual peace make reference to Kant's writings on history, anthropology, and teleology. Finally, in the Conclusion to the Doctrine of Right, perpetual peace is called both the 'final end' of Kant's legal philosophy as well as the highest political good, bringing the text close to issues in moral philosophy proper. Indeed, in Section III of the Doctrine of Right, Kant calls perpetual peace the highest political good as well,[2] positioning the idea in some sense as the telos of his political thinking, which at first glance contradicts the common understanding of Kant's moral philosophy as the formalist, anti-teleological ethics *par excellence*.

In this paper, I want to consider how the notion of perpetual peace might find a place systematically that is broader than the narrow legal concern of establishing a legal-juridical condition. The reason is to highlight the aspects of Kant's thought that may have been overlooked in other accounts, and so to redress deficiencies in current interpretations of Kant's arguments around perpetual peace. To do this, I will first consider Kant's notion of the highest good, in order to set up a basic notion of his

© The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Kantian Review.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

moral thinking that we can contrast with the notion of perpetual peace as the highest political good. Second, I will consider a variety of interpretations of perpetual peace in relation to Kant's views on teleology. Third, I will argue that Kant's views on teleology present an alternative that reconciles some of the competing desiderata from the interpretations considered. In particular, the metaphysics in Kant's teleology implies a theory of international relations that is more ambitious than a mere solution to a coordination problem, as it lays out a view of the place of human freedom in a world determined by naturalistic causality. To do this, I will focus on a reading of one of the preliminary articles in TPP to suggest a more expansive understanding of perpetual peace as the highest political good. In conclusion, I will consider possible objections and offer replies.

1. Initial problem

The notion of perpetual peace is given a short characterization in the Doctrine of Right of the *Metaphysics of Morals* (MM) (1797) in the Conclusion to the Part on Public Right. To summarize, the prohibition on war comes with the idea of pursuing the establishment of perpetual peace, even if this may not be really possible. As long as it is not seen as impossible, we should consider ourselves under the obligation to establish constitutions most conducive to it. The final paragraph begins thus:

> It can be said that establishing universal and lasting peace constitutes not merely a part of the doctrine of right but rather the entire final end of the doctrine of right within the limits of mere reason. (6: 355)

Kant is thus identifying the state of perpetual peace as the purpose or aim of the Doctrine of Right *as a whole* and as something for which we, as philosophers, require a metaphysics to have any grasp of how we ought more precisely to determine it for the sake of its pursuit. Notably, we should not attempt to establish it through a revolution, but rather through a process of gradual reform:

> But if it is attempted and carried out by gradual reform in accordance with firm principles, it can lead to continual approximation to the highest political good, perpetual peace. (6: 355)

In one paragraph, Kant has thus identified perpetual peace as both the 'final end' of the Doctrine of Right and the highest political good. These terms bear closer scrutiny, as they reveal intersections with both Kant's moral philosophy and Kant's writings on teleology.

In essence, the problem identified seems to point to wider issues in Kant's system. While the identification here (if real, rather than apparent) could seem innocuous, the implications are wide-ranging given how metaphysically weighty the notion of the highest good is in Kant's moral philosophy, insofar as its metaphysical presuppositions are concerned. Further, given the indications that TPP offers a teleological argument for how the framework expressed in the essay would be instituted, if DR makes this identification explicit, it suggests that DR could be read

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

within these broader considerations in favour of a more teleological reading of Kant's political philosophy.[3]

Before discussing the idea of perpetual peace further, I will first summarize relevant points on the idea of the highest good from *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (CPrR), as well as the relevant points on the notion of final purpose (*Endzweck*) in Critique of the Power of Judgement (CJ).

2. Highest good: preliminaries[4]

Kant discusses the idea of the highest good first in the Canon of Pure Reason in the CPR, and then elaborates on it more precisely in the Dialectic of pure practical reason in the CPrR. In the Canon, Kant reflects on the ultimate end[5] of pure reason and finds its expression in three questions: 'What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?' (A805/B833). In answering the third question, he develops the idea of the highest good, which here is the metaphysical conception of the world as ordered by moral laws in conjunction with the causal efficacy that we attribute to natural laws. As the object of our hope, our reason indeed conceives of an idealized world where the two different types of legislation at the disposal of reason are in some sense perfectly harmonized.[6] The highest good thus gives us a mould for what the world would be if happiness were determined in proportion to virtue, and, at least in the CPR, also an ideal to aspire to that is motivationally active in our pursuits.[7] The idea here is also that the highest good, when conceived of as an intelligible world, shows us that this world can also be brought about in nature, even though this goal might be quite difficult to reach, or even impossible in any finite term.

This line of thought is further taken up in the CPrR, with some important changes. Importantly, Kant introduces a further set of distinctions: (a) the original and the derivative highest good, and (b) the supreme and complete good.

Regarding (a), the distinction in fact occurs at three levels. Firstly, we distinguish the intelligible world, where virtue and happiness in every finite rational agent are perfectly distributed, and the ground of this world. Secondly, since this world is considered to be metaphysically possible through determinations of actions by the moral law, and since this does not include metaphysical impossibilities, the world we are considering can be realized or at least ever more closely approximated in the world of appearance. Thirdly, since we sometimes fail to act for the sake of morality and sometimes, even if we act morally, we fail to bring about the idealized world, the possibility of the moral world is grounded in a highest original good, i.e. God.[8] Considering now the distinction between the supreme and the complete good, we can distinguish the supreme good as virtue and the complete good as virtue combined with happiness.[9]

With regard to the highest good, the distinction can be summed up, in part, with reference to the opening of *Groundwork* I: 'It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a **good will**' (4: 393). Thus, happiness is only a good insofar as one does not violate the moral law. Happiness however, as the end of finite beings like ourselves, is not optional, although it is dependent upon particular people's choices, but can only be a part of the highest good if conditioned by the supreme good, i.e. virtue.[10] In a sense then, happiness is only good if one deserves it,[11] and the highest ethical good,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

while springing from virtue as its pure part, since it requires only the determination of the pure will according to its principle, is only complete when one's happiness comes as its concomitant.

Part of the difficulty when applying these different notions of the highest good to the notion of perpetual peace, as it fulfils different roles practically and systematically in Kant's political and legal philosophy, is to see how *all* of these senses can come to bear in the notion. One could isolate one particular sense of the highest good, e.g. the highest good *in the world* as laid out in the CPR, as the interpretative key through which to understand the end state of 'achieved' perpetual peace that the framework aims at. However, given the difficulties in expecting humans to be motivated to move into this state, the framework of the highest good *in the person* seems to be equally applicable as an interpretative key for the notion of perpetual peace, even as the problem has been reconfigured from its original position as a problem in moral psychology to a problem in legal-political institution-building. What this paper aims to do is to pull together various strands of this idea, where other interpretations only engage with this aspect of Kant's philosophy in a partial way, if at all.

3. Interpretations

In TPP, Kant lays out both preliminary and definitive articles towards achieving perpetual peace as a legal-political reality. Again, in chapter III of the Doctrine of Right, Kant calls perpetual peace the highest political good, positioning the idea in some sense as the telos of his political thinking. In isolation, this can appear strange, given that Kant's practical philosophy is very often formulated in specifically formal, anti-teleological terms. Thus, morality is determined by a particular form of determining one's will (the Categorical Imperative), and principles can only be instituted as law if they follow a strict principle governing external behaviour (in conformity with the Universal Principle of Right). What are the connections, or even similarities, between Kant's moral and political philosophy with respect to the determination of perpetual peace as the highest good?

The notion of perpetual peace as the highest political good is articulated in the conclusion of the Doctrine of Right:

> It can be said that establishing universal and lasting peace constitutes not merely a part of the doctrine of right but rather the *entire final end* of the doctrine of right within the limits of mere reason; for the condition of peace is alone that condition in which what is mine and what is yours for a multitude of human beings is secured under laws living in proximity to one another, hence those who are united under a constitution . . . if it is attempted and *carried out by gradual reform* in accordance with firm principles, it can lead to *continual approximation* to the highest political good, perpetual peace. (6:355, italics mine)

Not only do we conclude with an identification of the highest good with perpetual peace, but also it is identified as such because it is the '*entire* final end' (6: 355, my emphasis) of what Kant believes needs to be treated in a doctrine of justice.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The position defended in this paper is that there is indeed a connection between the ends and the formal principles underlying the system Kant puts forward, which in the end is encapsulated in a sort of providentialism.[12] For those that accept some continuity or harmony between teleology and legal principles, three lines of interpretation are available: (a) draw on the formal elements of Kant's theoretical philosophy to reconcile any seeming disparity, (b) treat perpetual peace as a technical goal to be achieved by using recognizably teleological aspects of human nature towards institutionalizing a legal-juridical order, or (c) explain perpetual peace as the highest political good with recourse to higher-order teleological notions. For the purposes of classification, I shall refer to (a) as *formalist*, (b) as *technicist*, and (c) as *substantivist.*

3.1. Formalism

I will call any view of the role of teleology in Kant's political philosophy 'formalist' that emphasizes Kant's rationalism, i.e. his focus on rational and, more importantly, formal principles in determining those normative principles that should structure political society.[13] Any formalist would thus take further resources from Kant's practical philosophy to recast what appear to be substantive claims as purely formal claims or principles.

Sorin Baiasu (2013) lays out a formalist account against other interpretations that exaggerate the similarities between perpetual peace, the highest political good, and the highest ethical good. First, a problem arises when we take the highest political good to involve two components, the supreme and the complete good, as in the case of the highest ethical good. Perpetual peace could very easily be treated as the supreme good, and thus the normative goal for our action, even though it might be in fact impossible to realize this, which in turn would generate a command that would be impossible to obey since it could not be fulfilled. Second, it is unclear whether interpreting perpetual peace as the highest political good also involves postulates like immortality or the existence of God, as in the ethical case, in order to guarantee the possibility of realizing perpetual peace. Third, if we understand perpetual peace as the result of deliberate action, the legal-juridical order that perpetual peace is to be characteristic of depends on the ethical motivation of the people bringing about this condition, which should not be necessary and which Kant denies explicitly in TPP (Baiasu: *passim* and esp. p. 16)

Baiasu resolves the tension in the text of the Doctrine of Right by understanding perpetual peace as an ideal to be striven for, but which functions as the *supreme* good, rather than as part of the *complete* good, which latter would still require a guarantee that perpetual peace is achievable. Systematically then, there is no place for a *complete* good in politics, as the Doctrine of Right is only concerned with the establishment of a condition, or state, of peace, structured according to juridical norms (2013: 25–6).

In his discussion of the guarantee of perpetual peace, Luigi Caranti (2013, 2022) can also be classed as a formalist, to the extent that he interprets the guarantee as an empirical claim about the tendency for human societies to approach the state of perpetual peace. While Caranti does not engage directly with the question of perpetual peace as the highest political good, his discussion of the guarantee of perpetual peace is instructive. Kant presents the guarantee as an empirical claim

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

about the ordinary course of events, where humanity will, over time, institute this condition, as nature has implanted certain tendencies in humanity that, while causing war and conflict in the short term, will eventually impel us to seek peace. Obviously, certain problems come up with such a proposal, epistemic, moral, and anthropological. Caranti (2022) resolves the epistemic difficulties by showing that (1) the relatively weak claim that Kant makes gives us good grounds for believing that we can and will succeed in approximating the condition of perpetual peace and that (2) these grounds are straightforwardly derivable from empirical-historical generalizations about human behaviour:

> There may be strictly speaking no *guarantee* that perpetual peace will ever be reached, but there is a guarantee that the world, at least the world as we know it now, is objectively 'biased' in favor of an infinite approximation toward that outcome. (2022: 29)

The apparent moral difficulty concerns the problem of mooted motivation, that we may perhaps lack the motivation to actually pursue perpetual peace if it will happen regardless of our action. Again, this can be dispelled fairly easily: 'Even if perpetual peace will happen anyway, there is still a duty on our part to realize those institutional reforms that will speed up the process' (Caranti 2022: 29). Finally, the anthropological worry is dispelled by pointing out that the radical evil in humanity would still not be able to contradict what is recognizable through the use of understanding, i.e. that peace serves the interests of individuals and groups better in the long run than war.

One problem that may arise out of this interpretation is that Kant may, in fact, intend a much stronger claim than the fairly weak empirical claim that Caranti puts forward. The guarantee is supposed to offer us assurance that we can (a) act in accordance with moral principles and (b) expect our endeavours (including realizing perpetual peace) to be realized in the world. Thus, Kant's claim demands more of perpetual peace than that it will, at some indeterminate point in the future, be realized.

3.2. Technicism

I will call any view *technicist* that interprets Kant's teleology with regard to human nature in terms of the question of how teleological principles are to be used for applying legal principles. This view sits between formalism and substantivism to the extent that it reinterprets Kant's appeal to teleological principles as part of an understanding of the historical-empirical process of the development of legal institutions as natural processes that find their fullest expression in a legal framework whose validity is to be seen in ultimately formal terms.

Katrin Flikschuh (2006) considers the teleological aspects of Kant's arguments from the standpoint of how a legislator would institute the required framework for perpetual peace rather than a more metaphysically substantive understanding of how natural teleology produces that order. In effect, natural teleology here functions more like a resource in the toolkit of a wise legislator, coaxing, or even influencing imperfect agents to observe *at least* the legal-juridical norms under the principle of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

universal right. Her interpretation can proceed like this because the more substantive language (regarding teleology and metaphysics) is either dismissed or treated as obscure (pp. 386, 389).

Additionally, Flikschuh characterizes Kant's invocation of nature as a providential guide as immodest: 'Given the immodesty of invoking the idea of providence in the context of a nonreligious inquiry, we should continue to use the term "nature" – presumably "mechanical nature"' (2006: 389). The inquiry may perhaps be nonreligious, but that does not make it any less serious, particularly since the matter worked towards is an object of sincere hope. However, on top of Kant's references to providence, Kant even manages to cite the Gospel of Matthew twice in the Appendix relating to the place of morality in politics (8: 370, 378),[14] neither reference seeming to indicate a dismissal of the object of this hope.

More seriously, Flikschuh's interpretation relies on an account of natural teleology in Kant as justifying our obligation to institute legal frameworks that can realize a condition of *Right*. Since we have a retrospective account for how this happens, we also have some prospective account and subsequent justification for putting into place certain sorts of laws rather than others (2006: 387–93). The problem with this view is that Kant offers very little as to how we should proceed in institutionalizing legal frameworks. Furthermore, the retrospective view does not offer a clear prototype to emulate, as Kant views law as the failure of unilateral imposition or as a risk-mitigation strategy in commercial relationships.

A later paper (Flikschuh 2007) takes up the same topic with regard to the argument in *Theory and Practice* III to show that Kant's views were evolving over time, starting with more teleologically laden language, ending with the mature, formal framework of the DR.[15] In summary, Flikschuh claims that 'from the search for moral intention in nature, Kant gradually moves to the employment of a law of nature as supplying a sensible schema for the construction of the non-sensible law of Right' (p. 241). The main thrust of the argument remains the same: nature provides a certain mould that we as free moral agents need to formalize if we are to put laws of Right into place towards building the institutional frame for justice. While it appears to offer an interpretation of Kant, who progressively becomes more formal-rational in his approach, including his emphasis on free human agency, it does not seem persuasive when considering that Flikschuh can only cite two late works (the DR and the CF) to show this progression (where TPP still assigns a substantial role to natural teleology in the establishment of peace). Further, the methodology in the DR does not straightforwardly offer schemata of natural laws to formalize the laws that will institute justice in society, and so the interpretative problem persists.[16]

In 'Kant's *Political Zweckmässigkeit*' (2015), Dilek Hüseyinzadegan takes Kant's use of some metaphors drawn from political life in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* as indicative that the notion of teleology not only applies to organizing scientific disciplines, like biology, but also applies to characterizing human social life. Kant's use of different analogies, contrasting a just state as a living organism with a despotic state as a handmill, and his understanding of teleology can be readily applied to political notions, including perpetual peace. Hüseyinzadegan writes:[17]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> I argue that [the principle of political *Zweckmässigkeit*] is a complementary principle of politics, which together with the principle of right, constitutes the whole range of his political thought. (2015: 422)

Hüseyinzadegan turns then to the First Supplement of TPP and the chapter 'Cosmopolitan Right' in the Doctrine of Right to argue that these passages show that Kant uses purposiveness as the material principle guiding how we are supposed to implement the formal principle of right so as to make perpetual peace empirically possible:

> [T]he principle of political *Zweckmässigkeit*, as the material principle of politics, 'necessitates only if the empirical conditions of the proposed end, namely of its being realized, are presupposed . . .' (TPP, 8: 377). Thus ideals of political thought have both practical necessity, insofar as they are deduced from the principle of right, as well as a natural necessity, insofar as their feasibility is deduced from the principle of political *Zweckmässigkeit*. (Hüseyinzadegan 2015: 437 ff)

Two problems present themselves here. First, the form/matter distinction here is misleading, given that political purposiveness is still only represented in reflection as a form of causality, namely, that of an analogically regarded agential causality. This is intelligible only if nature is the 'agent' in this process, which Hüseyinzadegan does not seem to subscribe to. Second, as Baiasu (2013) has argued, there is neither need to include further moral qualifications in what motives are operative in the pursuit of perpetual peace, nor any need to appeal to nature's indirect role in bringing about perpetual peace or how it will be institutionalized, since perpetual peace should be possible merely from practical freedom, and so considerations of how causation may figure into perpetual peace are *only* of technical interest in how peace can be institutionalized.

3.3. Substantivism

The substantivist view broadens the interpretative scope of Kant's legal and political philosophy to accommodate some of the historical, anthropological, and teleological views that Kant articulates in other writings. In some sense, a substantivist treats Kant's political philosophy as significantly shaped by his teleological, even metaphysical, views.

Robert Taylor (2010) offers one such account that tries to find the continuity between the various segments of Kant's practical philosophy. He highlights that some of the differences and discontinuities between different parts of Kant's philosophy, particularly Kant's ethics and politics, can be reconciled by further considerations of Kant's philosophy of religion. While the ethical highest good offers the standard for human action, perpetual peace is a concrete proposal that can be measured in terms of continuous improvement and reform. Perhaps we cannot discount a gradual approach towards the highest good, but it is certainly more difficult to measure given the noumenal qualities involved (cf. 8: 386). Perpetual peace as the object of our strivings, while also being in some sense under the guidance of a providential

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

teleology, is outside of our control. The main warning Kant thus offers is that we not be too quick to interpret certain signs of external progress as signs of moral progress. External progress may be necessary, but it is not sufficient for real moral progress. However, Taylor views Kant as arguing for 'the fundamental similarity of perpetual peace to the highest good, a relationship so close that the former is contained by and serves as a precondition of the latter' (p. 10).

Another prominent example can be found in Lea Ypi's writings, which very explicitly tries to draw out the systematic coherence of Kant's views, including drawing on lines of argument from the CPR and the CJ to bring these to bear on his practical philosophy. The most important role that teleology plays here is to give a goal towards which humanity as a collective will develop. Thus, the progress of human political collectives is the product of a 'rational, collective agency embedded in cultural and political institutions promoting humanity's moral ends' (Ypi 2010: 121). Ypi acknowledges that this proposal cannot account for all of the elements of Kant's philosophy, but that the virtue of this interpretation rests in integrating Kant's political proposals with the results of the critical philosophy and thus giving a teleological understanding of historical progress rather than a mere technic of nature for producing political culture:

> 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. (Ypi 2010: 123, my emphasis)

Ypi sees Kant in TPP as solving two problems of unsocial sociability in relation to the highest good. First, coordination is the demand that everyone be able to realize the highest good in this world, thus *coordinating* a perfect virtue with the corresponding distribution of happiness. Second, continuity is the demand that it be in some sense possible, even though we are temporally limited in the development of our moral disposition. Where the CPrR gives metaphysical postulates to guarantee this, Ypi argues Kant's later political thought focuses on realizing the highest good through historical progress.[18]

While this account has its strength in giving a clear role for natural teleology to influence our behaviour, Ypi arguably misrecognizes what the 'final end of the world' (CJ, 5: 434) is. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Kant points out that nature's purpose, considered reflectively, is to bring about a species that is capable of morality, through the culture of skill and, more importantly, discipline. Thus, the purpose of the world would be realized if, in the end, only one human being were able to instantiate the highest good, i.e. to live perfectly according to the moral law and to have happiness awarded in perfect proportion to that virtue. Even when the moral politician steps in to legislate in favour of morality and against the state's (or whichever group's) self-interest, the moral politician has a different goal than Ypi's interpretation gives us:

> [Regarding the activity of the moral politician,] [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

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> 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. (2010: 123)

The main problem then of Ypi's interpretation is that it gives a collectivist moral purpose to the natural teleology of progress, when Kant's theory should rather be interpreted as a natural teleology that gives way to the possibility of morality in the free individual.[19] In this sense, TPP invokes the idea of the great 'providence' of nature whereby war will even disperse humanity across the globe until the point where it makes peace a necessity, i.e. until it leaves no other practicable option except the moral one, which then has to be achieved cooperatively. Finally, Seán Molloy's *Kant's International Relations* (2017) offers another substantivist account. Despite its failures,[20] he clearly recognizes the way in which Kant's teleological views, particularly in the CJ, are of central importance to understanding the later political writings. Given the narrower focus on international relations theory, what Kant would cover under the 'right of nations' in DR and in TPP, it actually helps to emphasize the teleological elements of Kant's view of perpetual peace as the highest political good:

> The political theoretical significance of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is that it is (at least in part) an attempt to argue the possibility of there being a positive telos for the human race: that a reformed human species may be thought of as the end of nature. Kant's sacrifice of knowledge enables not only faith in God and humanity but also hope in the future. (Molloy 2017: 51)

This overstates part of the project. Kant did not sacrifice his concern for what we can know, even in the realm of aesthetics and teleology,[21] and neither did he argue for the possibility of these moral-anthropological claims. Rather, Kant consistently argues that we are rationally permitted to take these as real,[22] even if we must treat them as merely possible from the reflective standpoint of theoretical reason.

While Molloy does not analyse the notion of perpetual peace and the *Rechtslehre* using the notion of highest good, he also clearly recognizes the key difference between morality and law: 'The pure moral philosophy is not identical to the philosophy of right, and in this margin of difference Kant develops an important distinction between external and internal duties' (Molloy 2017: 84). Given this wide gulf, it is thus possible to see that perpetual peace, while correctly considered as the highest political good, could not be a complete good, given the vital importance that motivation plays in Kant's moral thought, even if it is ultimately optional from the standpoint of the realizability of perpetual peace.

Finally, Molloy highlights how Kant's theory of perpetual peace in some sense does require a kind of faith that such a state will be achieved through providential workings, rather than our own doing:

> It is for this reason that Kant advocates that providence and not nature is ultimately the foundation of perpetual peace … with the ultimate effect being the supersession of the political by the moral as a consequence of the effects of both natural and rational processes playing themselves out according to their own internal logic. (2017: 161)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Thus, Molloy presents a straightforward reading of Kant as giving a metaphysical view of humanity's state in the world and what good it should strive towards. The main flaw with Molloy's reading is that it perhaps goes too far to read in particular theological commitments that Kant simply may not have had. Even if we take it that 'Kant's efforts are perhaps better understood as an attempt to translate previous concepts into forms compatible with his philosophy' (p. 162), Kant is still much more willing to treat purposes in nature as real, and so taking it as true that nature is 'providentially' impelling us towards a particular state of social organization can be justified even without actually ascribing a 'final end' to it.

4. Vindicating providence

The previously discussed interpretations all attempt to both understand Kant's arguments in TPP and to align them with other aspects of Kant's writings, either with his moral philosophy or with his theoretical philosophy (insofar as Kant's moral philosophy generally is related to the metaphysics of transcendental idealism and insofar as TPP offers particular difficulties relating to Kant's views on history and teleology). Every interpretation discussed so far emphasizes some aspect of Kant's system at the expense of another, either highlighting Kant's formal treatment of moral principles or offering a problematic view of Kant's teleological views.

By contrast, I will look at his notion of teleology in terms of an interlocking system of free and natural laws. While counterintuitive, this does present a way in which to avoid some of the problems that Baiasu (2013) points to in identifying the two notions of the highest good (the supreme and the complete good) too superficially, and it allows for a characterization of perpetual peace as a notion of a complete good as well as the supreme good, albeit in an attenuated form.[23]

Contra Baiasu (2013), and the formalist view as a whole, I believe perpetual peace includes aspects of both the supreme and complete good, even without assimilating the latter into the notion of the highest 'ethical' good. I will cite here two textual reasons. The first relates to the preliminary articles of perpetual peace. Without certain material assurances barring certain motives for waging war, or certain ways of conducting hostile yet covert activity against other states, it would hardly seem that one has entered a condition of peace, but rather only a truce, a cease-fire in a perpetual state of war. Thus, it seems that perpetual peace requires certain conditions to be met that Kant himself admits can only be progressively fulfilled.

The second reason is tied to the first two definitive articles, that 'the civil constitution of all states shall be republican' and 'the law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free states'. It seems that people have to exit the state of nature 'locally', and then states would have to enter into a civil condition between themselves once relations and interactions require (and permit) it. This is covered by the establishment of a rightful juridical condition. For example, suppose a small group of people tried to regulate their coexistence in such a way that hostile relations would cease. This could not be done by the strongest party, coercing the submission of everyone else to its own private will. Such a condition might be the cessation of the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

state of nature and the establishment of 'a' civil condition, but it fails as the establishment of a 'rightful condition'. While Kant accepts that an unjust condition can be reformed towards a rightful one, the same cannot happen in the international situation. We cannot hope to establish a civil condition between states by compelling the submission of the majority of states to one state and then reforming towards a juridical condition; we can only establish a rightful condition based on voluntary organization at its foundation. Then, once established, there is nothing more to look for in the notion of perpetual peace by way of completing it.

Yet there still remains a problem with accounting for the specific purpose of the preliminary articles. Keeping the empirical part of the preliminary articles in mind, we can see that Kant is at least in part mindful of certain conditions working in tandem with the formal/legal framework that is supposed to constitute the condition of perpetual peace. Even looking to Kant's comments on the preliminary articles, he comments that while all six of the preliminary articles are prohibitions (*leges prohibtivae*), only articles 1, 5, and 6 are strict, whereas 2, 3, and 4 take into consideration the circumstances under which they are applied, and thus have latitude with respect to their being undertaken for the sake of the final end of perpetual peace, all of which is characteristic of Kant's discussion of duties of virtue. If Kant thus includes at least some prescriptions that are only to be implemented gradually over time, it is arguable that perpetual peace as the highest political good mirrors the highest ethical good, in that it includes a material component in addition to the formal framework of right. Preliminary article 4 is explicitly economic, and it is possible that there are further ones that a more developed political economy might specify.[24]

Thus, if there are any material principles that are active in contributing to the establishment of perpetual peace, they would have to be usefully concrete (while also preventing counterproductive outcomes to otherwise permissible actions). Where the definitive articles give the form of a cosmopolitan condition of right, the preliminary articles prohibit those actions that could only be undertaken with the end of perpetuating war, and prohibiting these would advance states *materially* in terms of increasing the chance of realizing a peaceful condition.

Specifying the concrete matter needed to institute perpetual peace would be a very different exercise from formulating a system of international peace in outline. To follow Pinheiro-Walla (2017), some of the 'material lack' can be filled out by taking into account empirically contingent limitations and restrictions on how, e.g. a universal juridical condition would be established worldwide. Thus, we can look to the moments where Kant is applying a 'methodologically realist' position in response to some issues of implementation. In this sense, as Ripstein (2016: 190 ff.) points out, Kant also still retains elements of *ius in bello* insofar as some of the prohibitions in the preliminary articles are supposed to prevent undermining any possible future peace.

Additionally, we need to keep in mind that humans are driven by natural processes. To take Kant's main culprit, unsocial sociability (*Idea* [1784], 8: 20–2) can be counted on to explain some behaviour, whether for seemingly certain good or ill. How this could be 'used' as a technical tool for optimising the institution of legal norms is unclear. Even if policies could be formulated that did take our unsocial sociability into account in order to produce peace as the desired outcome, we would still have to hope that nature is sufficiently attuned to our political and ethical choices that peace can

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ultimately be achieved. In this sense, however, we are treading more deeply into the metaphysics of morals that Kant laid out over the span of the critical period, from the GMM perhaps even beyond to the CF and the *Anthropology*.

In conclusion, I believe Kant's view of perpetual peace as the highest good is that it is the highest political good as the final end of justice, that it can be instituted by beings with mere instrumental reason, but only perfected through the work of moral politicians, and that it is ordered towards the realization of the highest good as the final end of the world. The highest political good also includes notions of completeness to the degree that the ends limited or prohibited in the preliminary articles show us to what extent we are actually secure in establishing the cosmopolitan condition laid out in the definitive articles.

The last part is perhaps the most striking for its metaphysical ambition, but given the sequence that I have laid out, it follows straightforwardly from the teleology of the CJ. Particularly in §§82–84 regarding the 'ultimate' and 'final' end of nature (or the world), Kant sees nature bringing about a Culture of Skill and a Culture of Discipline in humanity for the sake of preparing the way for a being that can determine its will in accordance with the laws of freedom.

5. Objections

Turning now to objections to these considerations, while some of the preliminary articles do present features comparable to duties of virtue in latitude and application with regard to a final end, the dissimilarities are still pressing and need to be addressed.

First, does this account really clarify what Kant means by calling perpetual peace the final end of the Doctrine of Right? Is it a mistake on the part of Kant to call it an end, or are there other ways of interpreting perpetual peace as an end? One possibility here is that Kant is invoking a distinction from §§82–84 in CJ between ultimate and final end. Unfortunately, *letzter Zweck* in the Doctrine of Right is translated as 'final end', rather than the term used in the Guyer/Matthews translation of CJ, which puts *letzter Zweck* as 'ultimate end'. Thus, if we read perpetual peace as the ultimate end of the Doctrine of Right, understood as a systematic whole of mutually interacting laws, then we can also read perpetual peace as a complete good, since it contains the unconditioned condition of any international state of affairs that could be considered just, while also treating the condition itself as the highest possible good.

Tied to the progress question, if nature only really produces the outward conditions and our own moral intentions are radically opaque to ourselves, how can we have any assurance that establishing external legality could give way to internal morality? To some extent, this is an acceptable, unresolvable problem for a Kantian theory.[25] Since we should take the move to the ethical commonwealth to be a real transition, there may be an in-principle problem in distinguishing a state and society that is bound together by mere legality from one animated by true morality. Furthermore, we should be able to have practical assurance that, by acting 'as if' this end is realizable, we are in fact bringing about this goal in the phenomenal world (even if not in a complete sense).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Secondly, are the features of the preliminary articles really reminiscent of the duties of virtue? Can't they be explained through Kant's invocation of the notion of a permissive law, which then would reintegrate that into the formal account of the Doctrine of Right? According to Hruschka (2004), Kant revised the notion of permissive law in the MM, where those features of the permissive laws that bring it closer to duties of virtue disappear. Now, there are two possibilities given this revision: either they are not permissive laws, but somehow otherwise still have these features of latitude in their application, or they are permissive laws, which then have to be reinterpreted as not having the form of latitude that Kant ascribes to them in TPP. Only the former would be consistent with the reading proposed here and would be required insofar as those principles are supposed to contribute to perpetual peace as a complete whole.

Further, if nature is indeed always guiding us and producing a system that institutes legality and prepares us for morality, what work is there left for us to do? Even if we do not necessarily need a moral motive to accomplish this, it seems that the work of the legislator is superfluous if the state that nature will produce for humans is going to be one that accomplishes all of the goals of peaceable sociality.[26] One possible response may be to note that this is the only way for humans to enter, through freedom, into a rightful condition in the international setting. Assuming that states could be forced to enter into a rightful condition between them,[27] and accepting Kant's arguments that the best we can hope to be achieved is a looser voluntary federation,[28] we could consider that nature is the only thing that is powerful enough to establish perpetual peace. However, nature does not operate by laws of freedom and so would still require humans, however late in the process, to make an affirmative decision in favour of establishing peace.

Finally, does this account not fall prey to a variation of an objection from Baiasu (2013)? This account would not require that people adopt moral ends in order to institute perpetual peace, but it would require more than simply establishing a juridical condition obtaining between states, since states would have to adopt a number of prescriptions that carry with them the particular end of promoting the cessation of violence, even though such actions or institutions, like incurring debt, are not strictly prohibited. Here, I would say that this can be mitigated by considering that these prescriptions are inserted into the legal framework, taking the whole of the legal-political framework as a system of interacting laws. If we assume that we are right to take the legal framework as also amenable to a teleological description, with perpetual peace as its ultimate end, then a number of further determinations would have to be made with respect to actually institutionalizing a juridical condition. This institutionalization may or may not occur due to morally motivated actions, which is ultimately an empirical-historical matter to be determined in the course of history. In fact, Kant's gloss on the moral politician, noting that they will 'make it a duty ... to be concerned about how [unpreventable defects in the constitution of a state] can be improved as soon as possible ... even at the cost of sacrifices to their self-seeking' (8: 372) shows that such a figure may be indispensable in critical times where choices could be made to make substantial progress towards peace, even at the cost of one's self-interest.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

6. Conclusion

Kant's view of nature as a providential guarantor of perpetual peace need not worry us that Kant is making dogmatic metaphysical claims, nor does he opt for explanations of his theory that run counter to the limitations that he himself places on his teleology. Obviously, Kant's moral theory has enough resources to allow us to speak *as if* nature were teleologically structured, without this committing us to a real causality of purposes. Indeed, the form of the natural law is intelligible as a *type*[29] of the moral law, such that a legal arrangement that underwrites perpetual peace will at least have the correct external form in terms of behaviour.

Nature thus produces in a real sense external behaviour that can be measured against the moral law. The reality of acting according to the principle of evil (cf. *Rel*, 6: 41–4) can thus always endanger this order and can interrupt the 'regular' progress of history. Thus, we should also never be satisfied with applying a conception of progress to historical processes, since we can never really know the inner reality of what is motivating these processes or whether it will be a lasting achievement. In this sense, perpetual peace does offer us a complete good, insofar as a perfected global legal-juridical condition (i.e. 'perfected' with respect to the question of perpetual peace) is at least a specifiable goal that can in-principle be achieved. While a full development of these ideas remains beyond the scope of this paper, it can be stated clearly that Kant offers the arguments in TPP within the context of the attitude of practical faith and the kind of hope that is offered as early as CPR, which of course has to involve the participation of human beings in real, natural processes, but which we in some sense cannot have incontrovertible, conclusive evidence for. Kant's teleological views in CJ thus complement and complete these views, which then find their application in TPP, even if this can only be suggested here.

Finally, to answer the question at the beginning of this paper, 'what must I do to achieve perpetual peace?', Kant in some sense already offers an answer in the Guarantee: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of pure practical reason and its *justice*, and your end (the blessing of perpetual peace) will come to you of itself' (8: 378). While the allusion to the Sermon on the Mount may be intended ironically, Kant very much does hold it as a matter of practical faith that if we sincerely commit ourselves to fulfilling our duty, the proposed end will be realized. As a matter of practical faith, then, we can be assured that the goal not only will be realized, but that it will actually be better realized through a serious commitment to legal principles than through other means.

Acknowledgements. I want to acknowledge here my indebtedness to Sorin Baiasu, who has seen this material in various stages during my time as a doctoral candidate and after, Garrath Williams and Andrea Esser, who read this paper and contributed many helpful comments, as well as audiences at the ECPR Kantian Standing Group meeting in 2018 and the Amsterdam Kant Conference in 2024 for their questions and input. Finally, I want to acknowledge the anonymous reviewers and editors who helped sharpen the expression and argumentation in this paper.

Notes

1 In this piece, I will use the following translations and abbreviations for Kant's works: *Toward Perpetual Peace* = TPP, *Metaphysics of Morals* = MM, *Critique of Practical Reason* = CPrR, 'An answer to the question: What is enlightenment?' = WE, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* = GMM (all of the preceding

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in Kant 1996a); *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* = Anth (tr. R. Louden in Kant 2007); *Conflict of the Faculties* = CF (tr. R. Anchor and M. J. Gregor in Kant 1996b); *Critique of the Power of Judgement* = CJ (Kant 2000); *Critique of Pure Reason* = CPR (Kant 1998); 'Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan aim' = Idea (tr. A. W. Wood in Kant 2007); *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* = Rel (tr. George di Giovanni in Kant 1996b), Pagination is as standard, by volume and page, from the Akademie edition.

2 'But if it is attempted and carried out by gradual reform in accordance with firm principles, it can lead to continual approximation to the highest political good, perpetual peace.' (6: 355)

3 Indeed, one locus classicus on this question is the exchange between Ludwig (1997) and Brandt (1997), and very much involves the thorny question of whether 'nature irresistibly desires a republic?'. This is particularly pressing, as Brandt lays it out, in understanding the problem posed by the 'nation of devils', viz., that they, in principle, should be able to arrive at a state with laws even if they were only moved by self-interested motivation. Indeed, Kant's solution, echoing contemporaries, is to point to how the reciprocal interaction of selfishly motivated agents in the aggregate could still produce a state with justice, as if guided by a mere natural mechanism. If Kant thus identifies perpetual peace as the highest *political* good, then there might be some cause to think that Kant holds out some hope that something like the highest good *in the world* may be produced incrementally over time, even if the moral revolution of the heart would be left out.

4 The following recapitulates preliminaries that Taylor (2010) already highlights as well. However, he does not note the distinction between the 'ultimate' and 'final' ends regarding the highest good that are crucial for my account here.

5 Kant distinguishes between *letzter Zweck* (here, ultimate end) and *Endzweck* (final end) in CJ (§§83–84, 5: 429–36) when discussing purposes in the world, where the former has a temporal sense of being 'last in a series (of purposes)' in that humanity is last in the sequence of natural history, and the latter indicates humanity as the overall purpose of the world, but also the final purpose of nature, in the form of a being that is both natural but can also determine its will in accordance with morality. One should note that this is all within the context of reflective judgement, and so the end in question is only ever considered insofar as it is subjectively fit for conceiving of an end to the world on analogy with moral end-setting (which rules out happiness as an appropriate end).

6 It is also in this sense that we can speak of Kant not only as a transcendental or metaphysical idealist, but also in some sense as a practical idealist in the sense in which our contemporary vernacular designates a particular sort of political actor: even though the world is unjust, we are rationally justified in hoping for a world where justice were produced as if by a natural causality, and in taking it that we ought to pursue such a world as a matter of moral necessity.

7 Schönecker (2005: 122–3) point out instructively that Kant has not yet arrived at a clear statement of the moral law (or laws in this context) as categorically binding and motivating. While he is not working with a non-critical conception of moral laws, Kant does seem to accept that, in general, humans have been motivated to act morally for the sake of a possible reward (conceivably in this world where nature and morality are reconciled). Even though he rejects a simple equivalence between morally motivated action and acting from divine necessity, he does not yet argue that the moral law can be motivating by itself as action 'for the sake of the moral law'.

8 This is also the sense in which God functions as a practical postulate (CPrR, 5: 124 ff.)

9 It is puzzling that this does not show up in the CPR, given that Kant is already working with this moral-metaphysical question. Given that there were some real developments between 1781 and 1788, it is possible that Kant had not yet fully considered the problems associated with moral motivation that would come to characterize his mature views on moral philosophy. Obviously, Kant chose to retain the 1781 text of the Canon as the view there is perhaps consistent with his later view, even if incomplete.

10 Kant's anti-eudaimonism is by all accounts measured: '. . . as far as our nature as sensible beings is concerned, all that counts is our happiness . . . but happiness is not the only thing that counts . . . he [the human] is nevertheless not so completely an animal as to be indifferent to all that reason says on its own and to use reason merely as a tool for the satisfaction of his needs as a sensible being' (CPrR, 5: 61). The general proviso repeats itself, even to the point where Kant points out that a morality where no possibility for satisfaction or reward with happiness would not meet a natural need, 'which would otherwise be a hindrance to moral resolve' (Rel, 6: 5).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

11 Garrath Williams helpfully points out that Kant himself does not articulate any concrete theory of desert, so much as just assumes that virtue is 'worthiness to be happy'. I take it that perhaps we should treat this as simply what the ordinary moral understanding already furnishes us, and so Kant takes it that we need not delve much deeper into it.

12 Kant's position is not an apocalyptic providentialism, as the *Conflict of the Faculties* lays bare with the arguments against *chiliasm*. Nevertheless, a kind of providentialism, based on reflective judgment's capacity for understanding teleological causes in nature as not excluding our own free causality as bringing about progress in the world, can be attributed to Kant, which is the claim of this paper.

13 Ripstein (2009) perhaps gives the most comprehensive argument for this view.

14 Perhaps as an ironic twist, he recasts his philosophy of 'pure practical reason' as the promised 'Kingdom of God' from Matthew 6:33. Even if Kant is not engaging in mere pious preaching, his rhetoric does contain religious overtones that would have been hard to ignore, particularly given the long tradition of writings for peace in Europe since Erasmus (cf. Corradetti 2020).

15 Furthermore, drawing on Merle (2004), it is unclear whether Flikschuh's reading really does Kant any favours. Merle points out that Kant seems to have two incompatible conceptions of law throughout his corpus, with a liberal (and teleological!) conception of empirical free will coexisting with a universal law of equality in most of Kant's writings, and an attempted indirect derivation of law from the Categorical Imperative in the Doctrine of Right. It seems at least that the attempted formal derivation of law in the Doctrine of Right is a very particular concern in the late work, with understanding how laws can and should be formulated, where the more inclusive (and more metaphysically controversial) position is the continuously affirmed position, and which is conceived of as including formally specified frameworks of law.

16 I want to thankfully acknowledge the comments from one of the anonymous reviewers to refine the treatment of Flikschuh's arguments and considerations.

17 This is the programmatic statement. The linchpin of the argument that purposiveness matters finds its support in the *Critique of Judgement*. The distinction that is relevant here is between internal and external/relative purposiveness in §63, which Kant claims can be applied to biological organisms. He introduces an important analogy here for comprehending how this kind of explanation is supposed to be conceived by referring to the organization of a body politic. To quote Kant directly here:

> Thus, in the case of a recently undertaken fundamental transformation of a great people into a state, the word organization has frequently been quite appropriately used for the institution of the magistracies, etc., and even of the entire body politic. For in such a whole, each member should certainly be not merely a means, but at the same time also an end, and, insofar as it contributes to the possibility of the whole, its position and function should also be determined by the idea of the whole. (CJ, 5: 375)

This, of course, echoes an earlier passage in the third *Critique* in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, about comparing the monarchical state to a body, or the despotic state to a handmill (5: 352). It is further supplemented by Kant's considerations in the closing sections of the Critique of Teleological Judgement, with his considerations on culture and history, and thus the implementation of morality through a culture of discipline, which itself is a further refinement of the considerations Kant had articulated earlier in *Idea for a Universal History* and *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*.

18 For a similar view, cf. Howard Williams (1983). Williams' interpretation draws on Kant's *Religion* as well, although Williams at times confuses the idea of perpetual peace, which is in principle achievable only through legislation of external behaviour, with the idea of the ethical commonwealth, which brings forward a society where its members are not only bound by external laws but are also motivated to pursue the highest good.

19 This matter is tricky, since we can adduce passages in favour of a more collectivist interpretation from Kant's political and historical writings, and more individualist passages from his moral philosophy. Following Bader (2015: 202–4), I believe that the individualist emphasis of Kant's moral philosophy is more plausible as an interpretation here, since achieving the highest ethical good in a person (harmony of virtue and proportional happiness) is a possible end for any one person, whereas the highest ethical good of a world (harmony of virtue and proportional happiness of everyone) is properly only an end that could possibly be realized by God.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

20 Cf. Williams (2018) for an insightful discussion. Molloy's interpretation suffers particularly from imposing a Schmittian hermeneutic of unmasking the theological foundations of Kant's moral philosophy. While this is highly uncharitable, it does lead Molloy to recognize teleological elements that more traditional interpretations are wont to overlook.

21 As Hannah Ginsborg (2014: 3) puts it: '. . . we can attempt to interpret the *Critique of Judgement* as contributing to the understanding of judgement not just in the special sense of discerning aesthetic value or suitability for a purpose, but in the sense relevant to the fundamental question of how cognition is possible.'

22 This would go far beyond the scope of this paper, but it bears noticing that Kant's own view of teleology in the Critique of Teleological Judgement is a *realist* view of natural purposes, rather than an *idealist* view that attempts to reduce purposes to some other type of causality. The complexity of Kant's view rests in maintaining that natural purposes are valid only in reflection, given our rational constitution, and while always indispensable to natural sciences, are never permissible for determinative (dogmatic) judgements, since purposes properly only refer to supersensible realities (cf. CJ, §78, 5: 410–15).

23 In this sense, Flikschuh does treat teleology more substantively, even if only as a technique for the realization of something that, as such, needs only formal specification to be entirely understood.

24 One thing in particular, related to the issue of public debt, is monetary policy and the problems related to debasement of coinage. Kant has relatively little to say, but given the wide circulation of currency with various value, some of which were debased for various reasons (be it to pay off debts, finance state expenditure, etc.), their impact on economies even in the early modern period could be considerable in undermining the functioning of economic activity or exacerbating political relations between states (cf. Kindleberger 1991). Kant has only relatively little to say on this beyond the fact that economic activity should be to a large extent free of interference, in line with the external freedoms belonging to all, while being consistent with principles of right (cf. Kleingeld 2011). One could point to the third definitive article, i.e. 'Cosmopolitan right shall be limited to conditions of universal *hospitality*' (8: 357) as also involving latitude because of the economic focus, along with the vagueness inherent in some of the terms and conditions that need to be spelled out (for how long, in which places, with what purposes may strangers expect to be received as guests?). However, while some of these empirical aspects are un- or under-determined, the right to hospitality is itself on much stronger ground than, say, the right of a state to exercise its economic power to incur debt for policy purposes. While a state has an option to decide in favour of one fiscal policy or another, in line with general principles of prudence as well as permissible general goals, the right to hospitality in the third article seems much stricter, as Kant asserts that it is simply a question of '*right*' that must be respected. That this also serves the purpose *not* to make commerce impossible seems rather to indicate that legal principles that undermine the possibility of entering into a peaceable *commercium* are counterpurposive to perpetual peace and thus fail in this way. I want to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for reflecting on the distinction between the preliminary articles and the third article of perpetual peace.

25 In fact, it is a species of the general 'realizability problem' that attaches to adopting the end of realizing the highest good (cf. Willaschek 2016).

26 This is, of course, not to say that there isn't any room for the state to institute laws using 'the mechanism of nature . . . as a means to make room for its end, the rule of right' (8: 366–7). The problem is rather that nature, over time, hands this off to the state such that 'right should eventually gain supremacy', and that this is a necessary process where nature will 'compel' humanity to make laws sooner or later, since living in the state of nature is, in fact, intolerable for humans in the long run.

27 Which is perfectly valid on a Kantian understanding of our obligation to enter into a rightful condition. Cf. Hodgson (2012) for an interpretation of Kant's defence of the world state.

28 Cf. Kleingeld (2004).

29 In the CPrR, the *Typik* of the Moral Law (5: 69–71) occupies the same place systematically as the Schema does in the CPR. The main difference between the two lies in the absence of a real application of the imagination to the moral law, since the moral law is valid apart from our form of intuition. Thus, understanding furnishes it with the form of the natural law so as to make it concrete in understanding

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

it in the world. Even though this does not touch on moral motivation, it does provide us with a form for morality that is valid and intelligible in the phenomenal world.

References

Bader, R.M. (2015) 'Kant's theory of the highest good'. In J. Aufderheide and R.M. Bader (eds.), *The Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 183–213.

Baiasu, S. (2013) 'Kant's highest political good'. In M. Valentin and M. Shunzo (eds.) *Applied Ethics: Perspectives from Romania* (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University Press), 15–35.

Brandt, R. (1997) 'Antwort auf Bernd Ludwig: Will die Natur unwiderstehlich die Republik?'. *Kant-Studien*, 88(2), 218–28.

Caranti, L. (2022) *The Kantian Federation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (2013) 'What's wrong with a guarantee of perpetual peace?'. In S. Bacin et al. (eds.), *Kant und die Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Absicht. Akten des XI. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses* (Berlin: De Gruyter), 611–22.

Corradetti, C. (2020) *Kant, Global Politics and Cosmopolitan Law: The World Republic as a Regulative Idea of Reason*. London: Routledge.

Flikschuh, K. (2006) 'Reason and nature: Kant's teleological argument in *Perpetual Peace*'. In G. Bird (ed.), *A Companion to Kant* (Oxford: Blackwell), 383–96.

—— (2007) 'Duty, nature, right: Kant's response to Mendelssohn in *Theory and Practice* III'. *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 4(2), 223–41.

Ginsborg, H. (2014) *The Normativity of Nature: Essays on Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hodgson, L.-P. (2012) 'Realizing external freedom: the Kantian argument for a world state'. In E. Ellis (ed.), *Kant's Political Theory: Interpretations and Applications* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press), 101–34.

Hruschka, J. (2004) 'The permissive law of practical reason in Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*'. *Law and Philosophy*, 23(1), 45–72.

Huseyinzadegan, D. (2015) 'Kant's Political *Zweckmässigkeit*'. *Kantian Review*, 20(3), 421–44.

Kant, I. (1996a) *Practical Philosophy*. Trans. and ed. M.J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1996b) *Religion and Rational Theology*. Trans. and ed. A.W. Wood and G. di Giovanni. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

—— (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A.W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (2000) *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Ed. P. Guyer, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (2007) *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Ed. G. Zöller and R.B. Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kindleberger, C.P. (1991) 'The economic crisis of 1619 to 1623'. *The Journal of Economic History*, 51(1), 149–75.

Kleingeld, P. (2004) 'Approaching perpetual peace: Kant's defence of a league of states and his ideal of a world federation'. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 12(3), 304–25.

—— (2011) *Kant and Cosmopolitanism: The Philosophical Ideal of World Citizenship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ludwig, B. (1997) 'Will die Natur unwiderstehlich die Republik? Einige Reflexionen anläßlich einer rätselhaften Textpassage in Kants Friedensschrift'. *Kant-Studien*, 88(2), 218–28.

Merle, J-C. (2004) 'Die zwei Kantischen Begriffe des Rechts'. *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik*, 12, 331–46.

Molloy, S. (2017) *Kant's International Relations: The Political Theology of Perpetual Peace*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Ripstein, A. (2009) *Force and Freedom*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

—— (2016) 'Just war, regular war, and perpetual peace'. *Kant Studien*, 107(1), 179–95.

Schönecker, D. (2005) *Kants Begriff transzendentaler und praktischer Freiheit. Eine entwicklungsgeschichtliche Studie*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Taylor, R.S. (2010) 'Kant's political religion: the transparency of perpetual peace and the highest good'. *Review of Politics*, 72(1), 1–24.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Walla, A.P. (2017) 'Global government or global governance? Realism and idealism in Kant's legal theory'. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 13(3), 312–25.
Willaschek, M. (2016) 'Must we believe in the realizability of our ends? On a premise of Kant's argument for the postulates of pure practical reason'. In T. Höwing (ed.), *The Highest Good in Kant's Philosophy* (Berlin: De Gruyter), 223–43.
Williams, H. (1983) *Kant's Political Philosophy*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
—— (2018) '[Review of] Sean Molloy, *Kant's International Relations*. *Kantian Review*, 23(4), 689–93.
Ypi, L. (2010) '*Natura daedala rerum*? On the justification of historical progress in Kant's Guarantee of Perpetual Peace'. *Kantian Review*, 14(2), 118–48.

Cite this article: Orlander, S. (2026). What Must I Do to Achieve Perpetual Peace? *Kantian Review* **31**, 51–70.
https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101216 Published online by Cambridge University Press