Deduction? It is arguably not, in which case the B-Deduction has addressed the issue of a circle between the unity of apperception and the imagination's synthesis from the A-Deduction by showing how the imagination is subordinated to the understanding.

Séguy-Duclot thinks not, and his excursus into the third *Critique* creates an opportunity for interesting novel interpretations of key sections of the Analytic of the Judgement of Taste (pp. 243–61). His overall verdict about the Deduction is that, in systematic terms, it avoids circularity but at the cost of a restricted ambition, which does not explore the sources of knowledge lying outside consciousness (pp. 272–3).

Whether one agrees with this overall verdict, there is no doubt that this book presents Kantian scholars with a novel interpretative approach which is solidly grounded in a careful analysis of especially the A-Deduction. Though on a first reading the structure of the book itself appears somewhat fragmented with lots of reprises, the overall systematicity of Séguy-Duclot's interpretation is impressive, as several problems concerning the details of the Deduction are related to the issues he identifies in the overall structure of the Deduction.

Christian Onof[1] and Dennis Schulting[2]
[1]Birkbeck College and Imperial College London, London, UK
[2]Independent scholar
Email: christian.onof@bbk.ac.uk

References

Allison, H. E. (2004) *Kant's Transcendental Idealism. An Interpretation and Defense*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Brouillet, R. (1975) 'Dieter Henrich et «The proof-structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction». Réflexions critiques'. *Dialogue*, 14(4), 639–48.

Evans, J. C. (1990) 'Two-steps-in-one-proof: The structure of the Transcendental Deduction of the categories'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 28(4), 553–70.

Henrich, D. (1969) 'The proof-structure of Kant's Transcendental Deduction'. *Review of Metaphysics* 22(4), 640–59.

Jens Timmermann, *Kant's Will at the Crossroads: An Essay on the Failings of Practical Rationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. pp. xvi + 188. ISBN 978019289 6032 (hbk) $80.00

Kant's Will at the Crossroads is a fantastic book, elegantly written and a pleasure to read, that advances a single clear argument defending a bold thesis about the nature of practical failure (both prudential and moral). Along the way, the book engages with countless related issues, always with clarity and concision and never as mere tangents. Timmermann makes use of the full range of Kant's works, including lectures and notes, and engages with the best secondary literature on Kant from both the relatively distant past and current, ongoing discussions. Some responses to others' views are offered in the body of the text, especially where Timmermann takes on major themes in current interpretations of Kant, but narrower or more technical discussions

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415424000293 Published online by Cambridge University Press

are reserved for excellent footnotes. The book is the fruit of years of careful and open-minded study, and in at least a couple of instances, Timmermann defends new views that substantively revise earlier positions he held.

Timmermann's focus is practical failure, that is, circumstances under which people do what's not best for them to do, and he aptly describes his 'hybrid account of rational failure' as 'the mirror image of the view held by many distinguished Kantians' (p. 128). The distinguished Kantians who come in for criticism are a diverse set not often seen as sharing the same reading of Kant's philosophy; they include Christine Korsgaard (*passim*), Allen Wood (p. 53n28), Beatrice Longuenesse (p. 59n39), Andrews Reath (*passim*), and Stephen Engstrom (p. 93). Timmermann's inversion of what we might call a standard view can best be put in terms of what he calls 'intellectualism' about choice, namely, the broadly Socratic view that 'judgment about what to do directly determines action' such that 'there can be no action contrary to one's own better judgment' (p. 1). His inversion is really a double inversion, since Timmermann discusses rational failure in terms of both moral and nonmoral choice. Briefly, while the standard view has a broadly non-intellectualist account of nonmoral failure in that nonmoral choice is taken to be 'governed' by a hypothetical imperative (or hypothetical imperatives) that one can in principle fail to obey, moral choice is typically seen as intellectualist in the sense that, as Timmermann paraphrases Korsgaard,

> Her conception of practical normativity appears to be cognitive, rather than ethical. It comes down to correct practical deliberation [. . .]. We act morally if we think about practical matters in the right kind of way. If not, failure is due to an imperfection of reasoning – as Korsgaard puts it: we "skip reflection or stop too soon" – making moral failure intellectual. (p. 92)

Timmermann exactly reverses this standard view, insisting that nonmoral choice is always governed by one's best judgements about what promotes happiness, while moral failure always occurs *against* one's best judgement. Timmermann is intellectualist about nonmoral choice and anti-intellectualist about moral choice: 'the problems we face in the spheres of prudence and skill are fundamentally cognitive rather than practical' (p. 129), and 'moral failure is not caused by some cognitive defect or flawed piece of reasoning' but 'consists in the conscious, knowing, voluntary choice not to will the moral end' (p. 7, cf. p. 121).

Along the way to establishing this thesis, Timmermann advances a number of bold interpretive claims about Kant. After an introductory chapter that beautifully introduces the central thesis of the book, Chapter 2 – 'Happiness' – turns to nonmoral willing by discussing the nature of happiness, which Timmermann defines, against, for example, Reath 1989, as 'hedonistic,' defined in quantitative terms as 'subjective maximizing' of overall '*quantity* of pleasure' (pp. 14, 16, 27, passim), where all pleasures are taken as essentially commensurable (pp. 26–7). Chapter 3 – 'The Law and the Good' – takes up the concept of the 'good' in relation to a specific challenge raised by Hermann Andreas Pistorius in one of the first reviews (in 1786) of Kant's *Groundwork*. Pistorius argued 'for the priority of not the moral principle but the good' (p. 31), and Timmermann uses a detailed Kantian response to Pistorius to argue not only for the priority of the (moral) law over the good but for an anti-hedonic,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415424000293 Published online by Cambridge University Press

anti-instrumentalist conception of the good according to which 'the good is exclusively associated with reason' and even – ultimately – with *pure* reason, but also a conception according to which 'we do not always act under the guise of the good' (p. 45). This claim paves the way for Timmermann's anti-intellectualist account of moral failure, but Chapter 4 – 'Instrumental Imperatives' – turns back to the non-moral case. The highlight of this chapter is Timmermann's argument that there is no single rational principle called the hypothetical imperative (p. 53) and the related claim that 'hypothetical imperatives [. . .] derive whatever authority they have from *theoretical* reason' (p. 51), such that what a hypothetical imperative *is* is simply a theoretical claim about how to satisfy desires that one has: 'instrumental reason is inert' and 'merely transmits an extraneous motivational force' from inclination (pp. 69–70).[1]

Chapter 5, which could be an excellent short stand-alone resource, elegantly describes 'The Emergence of Practical Reason' with a developmental story that starts with 'the stirrings of inclination' (p. 75) and ends with 'moral judgment' and 'moral motivation' (p. 83). Timmermann wisely avoids entering the thickets of controversy about maxim-testing in moral judgement and about the precise nature of moral respect. His purposes lie at a more general level, primarily showing, first, that all human motivation begins with inclination and, second, how moral motivation enters the scene once human beings employ practical reason in order to best accomplish their nonmoral goals. Importantly, Timmermann (rightly) rejects views that see the '"transferal" into the world of pure reason' as either 'voluntary' or a 'rational requirement' (p. 81). Instead, 'The transition to full-blown [that is, pure] practical rationality happens, in a sense, naturally. It is part and parcel of who we are' (p. 82). Timmermann sometimes slips into seeing a more intrinsic connection between practical rationality in general and the pure (moral) practical rationality that characterises *human* agency (e.g. p. 151), but in general, he rightly highlights that the move from instrumental to moral rationality is a natural and thereby unavoidable feature of human willing, and once we make the move, 'we cannot get out again' (p. 82).

Chapter 6 – 'Incentives, Maxims, and Freedom' – takes on 'non-prudential intellectualism', arguing that various contemporary Kantian views (such as Korsgaard's) are ultimately intellectualist, showing the roots of this approach in Allison's version of the 'Incorporation Thesis' (a version Timmermann rejects), and then refuting the view. Chapter 7 sums up the overall argument of the book, arguing for intellectualism with respect to prudential choice and anti-intellectualism with respect to moral choice. A final chapter – 'Conclusions and Implications' – and an appendix on 'Kant's Practical Dualisms' both do much more than merely conclude the book. Here, Timmermann shows implications of his overall view for a wide range of issues, including 'normative silencing' (pp. 132–4), moral and even hedonic hope (pp. 134–6), human frailty (pp. 137–42), practical 'reasons' (pp. 143–5), constitutivism (pp. 146–52), and various Kantian dualisms, which Timmermann claims 'it may be time to reassert' (p. 153).

The book is a masterpiece of focused argument for a clear and ultimately simple (in the best sense) interpretation of Kant, even if its simplicity requires overturning what many will see as 'accomplishments' of Kant scholarship over the past fifty years. I do not have nearly the space to engage with the myriad important positions

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415424000293 Published online by Cambridge University Press

defended in the book, but I want to raise at least a few sticking points where I need to hear more and at least one alternative way of seeing Kant's account.

For one thing, I wish that Timmermann had said more about the sense in which our nonmoral incentives are nonetheless 'good', as implied by Kant's inclusion of them under what Kant calls the 'predisposition to good' in *Religion* (6:26). I also wish he had said more (see p. 126n39) about the derivation of the formula of humanity in the *Groundwork* and especially how moralistically he reads the 'rational nature' that everyone subjectively represents to themselves as an end in itself (4:429). I read 'rational nature' here to refer to humans' general capacity to set ends (see Frierson 2007), but I think Timmermann may need to read it as referring to the good will. I wish Timmermann had done more with Kant's discussions of the impure higher faculty of desire in his lectures on metaphysics; Timmermann suggests, for instance, that Kant has no generic concept of practical reasons in general, while I would see Kant's notion of 'motives' (taken from rationalists, but endorsed by Kant) as just such a concept (e.g. 28:254–8). I also wish that Timmermann had been more careful to distinguish between real/objective goods and *unconditional* goods (e.g. pp. 125–6). His conflation between objective goods and unconditional goods sometimes made me feel like Timmermann was talking past his interlocutors rather than to them.

Most importantly, I wish that Timmermann had engaged more broadly with Kant's concept of character, a concept that Kant applies to both moral and nonmoral motivation. With respect to nonmoral motivation in particular, Timmermann's insistence that 'there is nothing to be said in favor of acting on instrumental rules' (p. 148) does not do justice to Kant's insistence that the 'man of character' – who consistently acts according to rules – 'is a great man even if not good' (25:1387; cf. 7:293). Kant repeatedly offers the example of the emperor Sulla, who is 'an object of admiration because we generally admire strength of soul' even though 'the violence of his strict maxims provokes disgust' (7:293), as an example of how the mere disposition to act on principles, even if those principles are not moral, is worthy of admiration. Conversely, those who 'shift hither and yon like a swarm of gnats' (7:292), not sticking to firm principles, have a failing that, it seems to me, is properly understood as a volitional failure rather than merely a cognitive one, a failure that manifests even for nonmoral willing.

Finally, following from these points about character, I want to suggest an alternative hybrid view to Timmermann's. Like Timmermann, I think that there are different kinds of failure involved in human willing, but mine is a different hybrid view. On the one hand, consistent with Timmermann's account of moral failure, there are failures of character, contexts where one's immediate inclinations drive one's choice of principle in a given context, or even (in affects) where inclinations directly override one's principles and cause behaviour. For Kant, human willing is principled willing, and we can and should (in a normative sense of should) act on the basis of principles to which we lastingly commit ourselves, rather than letting our principles shift hither and thither based on the strengths of our inclinations. Because these principles are dictates of practical reason (in the broad sense that includes the understanding), failing to act from character is a sort of rational failure, albeit a *practical* rational failure, a failure to give practical reason its due role in our lives. Unlike Timmermann, however, I see this sort of failure of character as possible in both prudential and moral realms. The person with evil character is 'admirable' precisely because they have overcome a

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415424000293 Published online by Cambridge University Press

failing of character to which we are often susceptible; still, Sulla is not morally good. The individual with gout discussed in the *Groundwork* lacks character in this sense and fails to let himself be governed by his overall commitment to rational principles, instead letting inclinations of the moment govern practical choices. In the prudential realm, this failure is a kind of foolishness that is not reducible merely to cognitive failure. What is wrong with the gout sufferer is not that he has the wrong beliefs about what will make him happy but that he lets inclinations of the moment drive his reasoning, rather than letting principles to which he is rationally committed control inclinations of the moment. In the moral realm, by contrast, this sort of moral failure is a specific kind of evil, namely, frailty.

There is, however, a different sort of failure, a properly moral failure, which consists of choosing wrongly with respect to the fundamental maxim by which one governs one's life. Timmermann and I would, I think, agree that the choice of this fundamental maxim is one that cannot be explained in intellectualist terms. That Jens chooses good and Patrick chooses evil is not because Jens understands the moral law while Patrick does not; ultimately, the difference is inexplicable except by appeal to the very choice that it is meant to explain. Jens chooses good because, believing that some action will make him happy but be morally wrong, and that virtue is the supreme good, he affirms the superiority of virtue over happiness. Patrick chooses evil because, believing that some action will make him happy but be morally wrong, and that virtue is the supreme good, he chooses to prioritise happiness. However, while Jens denies that there can ever be a 'covering law' by virtue of which we can understand hedonic ends as 'good' relative to morality (p. 117), I take the choice of fundamental maxim precisely to be a choice *of* such a covering law. Thus, in choosing to pursue what makes him happy whether or not it is morally good, Patrick thereby makes happiness – which is already conditionally 'good' by virtue of being consonant with his predisposition to good – the supreme good towards which he orders his rational principles. Timmermann wants to say that because Patrick's (evil) maxim takes as good what is only conditionally good, it does not really take *anything* to be good. On my reading, Kant's claim is rather that by subordinating the moral law to his nonmoral incentives, Patrick takes happiness to be not only good (which it is) but also supremely good.

To reiterate, my questions and alternatives are not criticisms of the book but rather examples of the sort of fruitful reflection sparked in one reader by Timmermann's clear, focused, and innovative reading of Kant. This is a book not to be missed.

Patrick Frierson
Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington, USA
Email: frierspr@whitman.edu

Note

1 An interesting related point, which Timmermann highlights, is that there is no *rational* ideal of happiness; happiness is, as Timmermann (p. 16,19) and Kant (4:418) put it, an 'ideal of [. . .] the imagination'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415424000293 Published online by Cambridge University Press

References

Frierson, P. (2007) 'Review of *The Value of Humanity in Kant's Moral Theory*'. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*. https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/the-value-of-humanity-in-kant-s-moral-theory/.

Reath, A. (1989) 'Hedonism, happiness, and Kant's principle of happiness'. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 70(1), 42–72.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415424000293 Published online by Cambridge University Press