

TAKING REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES TO BE TRUE

by Gabriele Gava*

Abstract. *Kant identifies regulative principles of cognition both in the Critique of pure reason and the Critique of the power of judgment. While it seems that assuming a principle regulatively implies forming an attitude such that we take a certain proposition to be true, it is not clear what the nature of this attitude is. In this paper, I approach this problem by focusing on the third Critique and on our assumption of the principle of purposiveness in exercises of the reflective power of judgment directed at extending our empirical cognition of nature. I argue that Kant's account of this assumption suggests that a new form of taking-to-be-true should be added to his classification in the Canon of the first Critique. I call this form practical opinion, which is a taking-to-be-true that is based on practical considerations, but is below the level of subjective sufficiency. Furthermore, I argue that identifying this form has consequences for the story we tell regarding the evolution of Kant's notion of belief. While Kant recognizes moral belief as the only type of belief in the third Critique, this does not mean that moral belief is the only form of taking-to-be-true justified on practical grounds.*

Keywords. *Regulative principles; Practical opinion; Belief; Fürwahrhalten; Meinung; Glaube*

Famously, Kant identifies regulative principles that play an important role for cognition both in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique* and in the third *Critique*¹. In the former, these regulative principles are the principles

* Università di Torino

¹ Kant's works are cited throughout the text according to the *Akademie-Ausgabe* – I. Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, (ed. by) Bd. 1-22 Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Bd. 23 Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, from Bd. 24 Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Berlin, 1900ff – with an indication

of the homogeneity, specification and continuity of the forms of nature – and the related idea of the systematicity of nature – and the transcendental ideas of God, the soul and the world. In the *Critique of the power of judgment*, the principle that displays an essential regulative function is the principle of the reflective power of judgment, namely, the principle of purposiveness. Kant argues that when we use these principles as guidance in our research into nature, we assume that nature is in a certain way – systematically organized, created by a wise and benevolent intellect, etc. At least *prima facie*, this suggests that making regulative use of these principles requires taking some propositions to be true, as for examples the following ones: «Nature is organized in a system of genera and species that matches how we hierarchically organize concepts»; «All the faculties of the subject are expressions of a unique substantial soul»; «A supreme intelligence has created nature in a way that is knowable to us». It is a matter of debate what the nature of this assumption for Kant is².

For example, Thomas Wartenberg³ and James O'Shea⁴ have argued that assuming the principles of homogeneity, specification and continuity means having a form of knowledge about nature, even if this knowledge is indeterminate: we know that nature is systematic, but not how and to what extent it is such. By contrast, Andrew

of the standard abbreviation, the volume and page number, with the exception of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (KrV, A and B). English translations are from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, ed. by P. Guyer and A. Wood.

² A different but related issue is what the status of these propositions is. Are they propositions that we know are false, propositions that we know are true, or propositions that can be true or false, as far as we know? See: G. Gava, *Kant on the Status of Ideas and Principles of Reason*, «Open Philosophy», V (1), 2022, pp. 296-307.

³ T.E. Wartenberg, *Order Through Reason. Kant's Transcendental Justification of Science*, «Kant-Studien», LXX (1-4), 1979, pp. 409-424; Id., *Reason and the Practice of Science*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. by P. Guyer, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 228-248.

⁴ J.R. O'Shea, *The Needs of Understanding: Kant on Empirical Laws and Regulative Ideals*, «International Journal of Philosophical Studies», V (2), 1997, pp. 216-54.

Chignell has maintained that the attitude that is at stake is one of belief (*Glaube*)⁵. In Kant's taxonomy of takings-to-be-true (*Fürwahrhalten*), belief is a taking-to-be-true that is based on practical considerations and is not a candidate for knowledge. More specifically, the form of belief that is legitimate in the case of regulative principles is doctrinal belief, which can be described as a taking-to-be-true which is based on practical considerations, where the goal of our practice is specifically epistemic, as for example the pursuit of empirical cognition of nature⁶. Another view is defended by Marcus Willaschek⁷, who argues that the attitude that we have toward regulative principles is much weaker. It takes the form of a hypothesis. This means that we entertain the idea that the world is in a certain way because this permits us to formulate and test more specific research hypotheses. In doing so, we do not commit ourselves to the truth of the regulative principles and so our attitude cannot be one of belief or knowledge, which requires a strong commitment. Still, in entertaining the regulative principles, we commit ourselves at least to the possibility that propositions like those listed above are true. Moreover, insofar as our testing the more specific hypotheses derived from the principles is a way to indirectly supporting the principles themselves, the hypothetical assumption of the principles appears to involve some sort of positive attitude toward those propositions.

⁵ A. Chignell, *Belief in Kant*, «Philosophical Review», CXVI (3), 2007, pp. 323-360.

⁶ Other interpreters that read the assumption of the regulative ideas in the first *Critique* as a case of belief or insists on the importance of the notion of doctrinal belief are: F. Rauscher, *The Appendix to the Dialectic and the Canon of Pure Reason: The Positive Role of Reason*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. by P. Guyer, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 290-309; M. Pickering, *Kant's Theoretical Reasons for Belief in Things in Themselves*, «Kant-Studien», CVII (4), 2016, pp. 589-616; I. Proops, *The Fiery Test of Critique: A Reading of Kant's Dialectic*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021; G. Gava, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and the Method of Metaphysics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023, Ch. 4.

⁷ M. Willaschek, *Kant on the Sources of Metaphysics: The Dialectic of Pure Reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 114-115.

There might be reasons to question that assuming regulative principles implies a commitment or any sort of positive attitude toward certain propositions at all. For instance, according to Kant, the idea of the world represents a totality of appearances that stay in a conditioning relationship. According to a plausible reading of Kant's solution to the antinomies, the latter establishes that assuming that such totalities are given is not only unjustified, but wrong. In this sense, the proposition asserting «there must be a totality of appearances that are conditions for a given conditioned appearance» would be false. And yet, this proposition might still be used regulatively to further our research into nature. This means that assuming ideas regulatively would not imply any taking-to-be-true⁸.

Other interpreters identify regulative principles with their normative function. They maintain that assuming these principles does not amount to making a theoretical claim about the world. Rather, it amounts to providing a domain or horizon within which we can develop our specific empirical cognition of nature (and of our own empirical nature). Speaking of the regulative use of ideas in particular, Katharina Kraus submits that: «An idea of reason, I shall argue, must be presupposed to set a stage, as it were, within which a certain kind of cognition is first intelligible and the constitutive principles of the understanding can first be operative in determining the corresponding kind of appearance»⁹. Extending the claim to regulative principles in general, we could stress that assuming these principles does not mean assuming that certain propositions about the world are true. Instead, it means using a representation to generate rules for how we should proceed in our cognition of nature¹⁰.

⁸ Versions of this 'fictionalist' reading of regulative principles are defended in: H. Vaihinger, *Commentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Stuttgart-Berlin-Leipzig, 1881, vol. 2, Part III; M. Grier, *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, Ch. 8.

⁹ K.T. Kraus, *Kant on Self-Knowledge and Self-Formation: The Nature of Inner Experience*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 172.

¹⁰ See also: Ead., *Kant's Ideas of Reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2025. For other normative readings see: M. Massimi, *Points of View: Kant on Perspectival Knowledge*, «Synthese», CXCVIII (S13), 2021, pp. 3279-3296; L.

These accounts of the attitude that is at stake when we assume regulative principles have generally focused on the first *Critique*¹¹. In this paper, I will approach this issue by considering passages in the *Critique of the power of judgment*. While Kant does not generally make explicit whether the assumption of the principle of purposiveness involves a specific taking-to-be-true, he claims that moral conviction results from an exercise of the reflective power of judgment¹². This is relevant because it legitimates a question regarding what kind of taking-to-be-true results from other exercises of the same faculty, as for example those that are directed at the empirical cognition of nature. When we employ the faculty in these cases, we assume the principle of purposiveness. Therefore, it is natural to ask what the attitude that we have toward it is.

I suggest that the link that Kant draws between exercises of the reflective power of judgment and the forms of taking-to-be-true creates conceptual space for identifying a new such form in Kant. I call this form practical opinion. This is a taking-to-be-true that is based on practical considerations (as moral belief is), but is below the level of conviction or subjective sufficiency (unlike moral belief). This has consequences for the story we tell regarding the evolution of Kant's account of belief. While some interpreters have argued that Kant

Spagnesi, *A Rule-based Account of the Regulative Use of Reason in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, «European Journal of Philosophy», XXXI (3), 2023, pp. 673-688.

¹¹ One can explain this preference because each of the readings presented above can find passages that support them. Those who claim that the proper attitude toward the principles of homogeneity, specification and continuity is knowledge build on Kant's claim that they have objective but indeterminate validity. Those who claim that the attitude toward regulative ideas is belief refers to Kant's treatment of doctrinal belief in the Canon. Kant's talk of the hypothetical use of reason is used by interpreters linking regulative principles to hypotheses. The discussion of the regulative use of the idea of the world in the Antinomy serves the purposes of fictionalists. Finally, normative interpretations can rely on Kant's claim that regulative ideas function in a way analogous to a schema.

¹² I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in AA 05, § 90, p. 463; Eng. trans. by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 327.

progressively limits the scope of belief and only uses it for moral belief in the third *Critique*, this does not mean that moral belief ends up being the only form of taking-to-be-true justified on practical grounds. In fact, the assumption of the principle of purposiveness in our pursuit of empirical cognition of nature presents many characteristics of taking-to-be-true based on practical grounds, but, as I will argue, it is below the level of conviction or subjective sufficiency.

I start in Section 1 by analysing interpretations of the evolution of Kant's account of belief according to which the only form of belief that Kant recognizes in the third *Critique* is moral belief. In Section 2, I provide a sketch of Kant's classification of the objects of taking-to-be-true in this latter work and claim that it cannot be used as evidence that moral belief is the only case of belief according to the third *Critique*. Section 3 analyzes some passages where Kant links moral belief to an exercise of the reflective power of judgments. These passages are interesting because they establish a connection between Kant's classification of the forms of taking-to-be-true and the distinction between the reflective and the determining power of judgment. In turn, they also provide evidence that Kant restricts the scope of belief in the third *Critique*. In Section 4, I describe a tension in Kant's early account of belief and suggest that he uses two incompatible senses of the subjective sufficiency of a taking-to-be-true. The restriction of the scope of belief in the third *Critique* solves this problem. Section 5 argues that the assumption of the principle of purposiveness in exercises of the reflective power of judgment directed at empirical cognition presents essential characteristics of takings-to-be-true based on practical considerations. I make this point by analysing Kant's discussion of the need of the understanding. Finally, in Section 6, I describe the taking-to-be-true in question as a case of practical opinion and clarify in which sense it is a taking-to-be-true that is below the level of conviction or subjective sufficiency.

1. *Kant and the restriction of the scope of belief*

In the Canon of pure reason of the first *Critique*, Kant describes belief as a taking-to-be-true that is objectively insufficient and

subjectively sufficient¹³. We can spell out what this means by saying that belief is objectively insufficient because it is not based on truth-conducive grounds that are sufficient to establish that a certain proposition is true¹⁴. It is subjectively sufficient because it is a firm taking-to-be-true. Our degree of confidence that a certain proposition is true is very high, and justifiably so¹⁵. Kant distinguishes between three types of belief: pragmatic, doctrinal, and moral belief. In all these cases, our taking a certain proposition to be true is based on practical grounds, which can be spelled out by referring to the ends we pursue in our action. The proposition we take to be true describes a state of affairs which is a condition for realizing an end we pursue, where we cannot decide whether the state of affairs is given or not on theoretical grounds. In the case of both pragmatic and doctrinal belief, the end we pursue is contingent, as it is contingent that we are not in a position to know whether the state of affairs in question is given. By contrast, moral belief is based on a necessary end of reason. Moreover, the fact that we cannot determine whether the state of affairs which is the object of our belief is given is not contingent, but necessary.

The cases of moral belief that Kant considers are the beliefs in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, which are conditions for the realization of the highest good. As an example of

¹³ For some readings see: L. Stevenson, *Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge*, «Kantian Review», VII, 2003, pp. 72-101; A. Chignell, *Belief in Kant*; L. Pasternack, *Kant on Opinion: Assent, Hypothesis, and the Norms of General Applied Logic*, «Kant-Studien», CV (1), 2014, pp. 41-82; G. Gava, *Kant and Crusius on Belief and Practical Justification*, «Kantian Review», 24 (1), 2019, pp. 53-75. For studies of taking-to-be-true in general, see: A. Chignell, *Kant's Concepts of Justification*, «Noûs», XLI (1), 2007, pp. 33-63; L. Mileti Nardo, *Forme della certezza: Genesi e implicazioni del Fürwahrhalten in Kant*, Pisa, ETS, 2021.

¹⁴ While this description of objective sufficiency leans toward infallibilist accounts of objective grounds, there are interpreters who defend a fallibilist reading of these grounds. See: A. Chignell, *Kantian Fallibilism: Knowledge, Certainty, Doubt*, «Midwest Studies in Philosophy», XLV, 2021, pp. 99-128.

¹⁵ I here follow Pasternack's take on subjective sufficiency in: L. Pasternack, *Kant on Opinion*.

pragmatic belief, Kant provides the case of a physicians who forms the belief that his patient has consumption even if he has not conclusive evidence that the patient suffers from it, given that acting on that assumption is his only chance of curing the patient. Examples of doctrinal beliefs are the belief that there are inhabitants in other planets and that God exists and is the ground of the purposeful organization of nature. While it is more difficult to provide a unitary account of doctrinal belief¹⁶, at least in some cases what distinguishes doctrinal beliefs from pragmatic beliefs is that the end we pursue is epistemic. So, for instance, we can assume that God exists and is the ground of the purposeful organization of nature if this is a way to furthering our pursuit of empirical cognition of that nature¹⁷.

In the October of 1786 Kant intervened in the so-called pantheism controversy with his essay *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?* (hereafter *Orientation essay*) where he presents a version of his moral argument for the belief in God. In the February of 1787, Thomas Wizenmann published a criticism of Kant's text where he attacks Kant's approach by objecting that inferring the existence of an object starting from a need is always illegitimate¹⁸. Kant directly answers this criticism in a footnote of the *Critique of practical reason*. He makes a distinction between cases in which the need to postulate an object is based on inclinations and cases in which this need is grounded in an unconditional imperative, as the moral law is. Since the moral law binds a priori every rational being, we are

¹⁶ See for instance Kant's description of the assumption that there are inhabitants in other planets: I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in AA 03-04, A825/B853; Eng. trans. by P. Guyer and A.W. Wood, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 687.

¹⁷ KrV, A826/B854; Eng. trans. p. 688.

¹⁸ T. Wizenmann, *An den Herrn Professor Kant von dem Verfasser der Resultate Jacobischer und Mendelssohnscher Philosophie*, «Deutsches Museum», I, pp. 116-156; see F.C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1987, Ch. 4; B. Chance, L. Pasternack, *Rational Faith and the Pantheism Controversy: Kant's 'Orientation Essay' and the Evolution of His Moral Argument*, in *Kant and His German Contemporaries*, ed. by D.O. Dahlstrom, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 195-214.

justified in assuming that the condition for realizing an end that directly arises from that law are given¹⁹.

In his answer to Wizenmann, Kant appears to restrict the scope of his notion of belief to only include moral belief. Accordingly, scholars have insisted that according to Kant's mature account of belief, the one that one can find in the *Critique of the power of judgment*, it is only when a taking-to-be-true is based on a binding obligation that it can be considered belief. In this sense, belief and moral belief are coextensive. Lawrence Pasternack writes: «We can thus see that Kant explicitly excludes various propositional attitudes from his more mature doctrine of belief. [...] What we are left with, according to the Third *Critique*, are not merely propositions within the practical sphere, but just those practical propositions which not only lack objective sufficiency, but are not even possible candidates for objective sufficiency (5:472). Belief now pertains solely to objects 'inaccessible for theoretical cognition' (5:471) and only those 'necessary to presuppose as a condition for the possibility of the highest moral final end' (5:471)»²⁰. In a similar vein, Luca Fonnesu submits that in the *Critique of the power of judgment* «[o]nly the ideas of reason are *Glaubenssachen*. Objects of real, probable or even only possible knowledge (inhabitants of other planets, historical and geographical facts) are now either facts or matters of opinion. The space of *Glaube* is now limited by Kant to the question of faith in the proper, moral and religious sense»²¹.

While some interpreters have resisted the claim that Kant limits the scope of belief after the *Critique of pure reason*²², I will here

¹⁹ I. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, in AA 05, p. 143n; Eng. trans. by M. Gregor, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 255.

²⁰ L. Pasternack, *The Development and Scope of Kantian Belief: The Highest Good, The Practical Postulates and The Fact of Reason*, «Kant-Studien», CII (3), 2011, pp. 290-315, pp. 302-303.

²¹ L. Fonnesu, *Kant on Private Faith and Public Knowledge*, «Rivista di filosofia», CVI, 2015, pp 361-390, p. 377.

²² A. Chignell, *Kant on Theoretical (or 'Doctrinal') Belief and the Status of Metaphysics*, «Studi Kantiani», XXXVII, pp. 105-126.

pursue another possibility. Even though the passages that are normally used to maintain that Kant restricts the scope of belief in the third *Critique* are not conclusive (see the next section), the claim can be supported on the basis of other passages, which I analyse in Section 3. However, even if moral belief becomes the only type of taking-to-be-true based on practical considerations that is subjectively sufficient and capable of conviction, this does not mean that there is no space for other forms of takings-to-be-true based on practical considerations, which are below the level of conviction.

2. Kant's discussion of the objects of taking-to-be-true in the third Critique

In the *Critique of the power of judgment*, Kant provides a classification of cognizable things (*erkennbare Dinge*) that somehow matches his classification of the forms of taking-to-be-true in the *Critique of pure reason*, where Kant distinguishes between opinion (*Meinung*), belief (*Glaube*) and knowledge (*Wissen*)²³. The main difference is that this new classification does not classify the forms themselves, but rather what can be the objects of these forms. He distinguishes between matters of fact (*Tatsachen*), matters of opinion (*Sachen der Meinung*) and matters of belief (*Glaubensachen*)²⁴. Importantly, it would be wrong to think that the set of matters of fact is the set of all objects on which we can only have knowledge and that the set of matters of opinion contains all objects on which we can have opinions. This makes at least possible to think that the set of matters of belief does not contain all objects on which we can have beliefs. In turn, this is relevant for determining whether this classification can be used as evidence that belief is just moral belief in the third *Critique*.

Matters of fact constitute the set of objects on which we can attain knowledge. Kant recognizes various types of objects of knowledge that would fall under this category: objects of a priori theoretical knowledge in mathematics and natural science, objects

²³ KrV, A822/B850; Eng. trans. p. 686.

²⁴ KU, AA 05, § 91, p. 467; Eng. trans. p. 331.

of a posteriori theoretical knowledge obtained through either empirical evidence or testimony, objects of a priori practical knowledge, which concerns our duties and our freedom²⁵. Of course, it is not the case that we necessarily have knowledge on all these objects. We can be ignorant of truths regarding them. Alternatively, the grounds that we have regarding some of them might only legitimate an opinion. This is certainly often the case for objects of cognition in which our grounds are empirical or testimonial, but on which we could possibly obtain knowledge.

Kant introduces a different approach when he characterizes matters of opinion. These are not all objects on which we can have an opinion. Rather, matters of opinion constitute the set of objects on which we can attain an opinion but cannot obtain knowledge. The set comprises those objects that are in principle empirically cognizable, but that we cannot in fact cognize (for instance, because our cognitive apparatus is not good enough). In this sense, it is possible that we form opinions on these objects (for instance, because this allows us to explain some empirical phenomena we do cognize), but we cannot attain knowledge regarding them. Kant lists «the ether of recent physicists» and the presence of rational inhabitants in other planets as matters of opinion²⁶. While he explicitly rules out that we can attain knowledge on these objects, he does not discuss whether there could be instances in which we could legitimately form beliefs on them.

In characterizing the set of matters of belief, Kant could use an approach similar to the one displayed for matters of opinion. Accordingly, matters of belief would not be all objects on which we can have a belief. Rather, matters of belief would constitute the set of objects on which we can attain a belief, but cannot obtain either opinion or knowledge. In this sense, the set of matters of belief is a subset of the set of objects of pure reason. The subset contains supersensible objects that we are legitimated to assume on the basis of practical considerations ultimately based on the moral law. Kant lists the highest good, immortality and the existence of God as the only

²⁵ KU, AA 05, § 91, p. 468; Eng. trans. pp. 332-333.

²⁶ KU, AA 05, § 91, p. 467; Eng. trans. pp. 331-332.

objects that can be matters of belief, so understood²⁷. They cannot be objects of opinion because they are not empirical objects, where opinion is not a legitimate attitude toward objects that could only be cognized a priori. They cannot be objects of knowledge either, given that they lie beyond the boundaries of possible theoretical cognition for us.

Importantly, if we characterize matters of belief in this way, this has no consequence for the question whether the scope of belief is restricted to only moral belief in the third *Critique*. Of course, matters of belief only comprises objects of moral belief. However, we have seen that we could have opinions on objects that fall outside the scope of matters of opinion, namely opinions on objects on which we can possibly obtain knowledge, but for which we do not have grounds that are sufficient for knowledge in a particular case. Similarly, there might be objects on which we can have beliefs but that fall outside the scope of matters of belief. For instance, these could be objects on which we could possibly obtain knowledge, but on which we are only legitimated to have a belief given the grounds that are available to us in a specific situation. Perhaps, it is in situations like these that it is possible to have a belief which is not a moral belief. In fact, Kant's example of pragmatic belief in the *Critique of pure reason* would fit this description. The doctor's belief that his patient has consumption concern an object on which the doctor could obtain knowledge (had he more evidence, or were he more competent), but on which he is only legitimated to have a (pragmatic) belief, given the grounds that are available to him²⁸.

3. *The reflective power of judgment and moral belief*

Even though Kant's classification of cognizable things cannot be used to establish that belief is just moral belief for Kant in the third *Critique*, there are in fact other passages that suggest exactly that. These are passages where Kant connects moral belief to an

²⁷ KU, AA 05, § 91, p. 469; Eng. trans. p. 333.

²⁸ KrV, A824/B852; Eng. trans. p. 687.

exercise of the reflective power of judgment. For instance, in § 90, Kant distinguishes between proofs *kat'aletheian* and proofs *kat'anthropon* and submits that:

In the first case [the proof] is grounded on sufficient principles for the determining power of judgment, in the second merely on sufficient principles for the reflecting power of judgment. In the latter case it can never produce conviction [*Überzeugung*], resting as it does on merely theoretical principles; but if it is based on a practical principle of reason (which is thus universally and necessarily valid), then it can make a sufficient claim of conviction from a purely practical point of view, i.e., moral conviction²⁹.

The passage is interesting for at least two reasons. First, it connects Kant's distinction between the determining and the reflecting power of judgments to his classification of the forms of taking-to-be-true. Moral conviction is just another word for moral belief, so it is clear that moral belief arises from an exercise of the reflective power of judgment. Kant makes a similar point in other passages, too³⁰. Assuming that a proof *kat'aletheian* is directed at knowledge, we can take the passage to also establish a connection between this form of taking-to-be-true and an exercise of the determining power of judgment.

Second, the passage legitimates a question concerning exercises of the determining and the reflective powers of judgment that do not result in either knowledge or moral belief. It would certainly be plausible to maintain that the only taking-to-be-true that results from an application of the determining power of judgment is knowledge. Yet, another possibility is that what Kant calls opinion arises from an exercise of this latter faculty, too. After all, opinion is a taking-to-be-true in which we have some objective or truth-conducive grounds that support our taking-to-be-true, but where these grounds are insufficient for a claim to knowledge. One might think

²⁹ KU, AA 05, § 90, p. 463; Eng. trans. p. 327.

³⁰ KU, AA 05, § 88, p. 455, pp. 457-458; Eng. trans. pp. 320, 322.

that as far as our confidence in the truth of a proposition matches the objective, truth-conducive, grounds we have, this taking-to-be-true arises from an application of the determining power of judgment. This reading is suggested by the sentence immediately following the passage I just quoted. Kant describes proofs that only «tends to conviction» while being only based on theoretical grounds as proofs that contain «only objective grounds» and «do not serve merely as subjective grounds of judgment»³¹. Since the taking-to-be-true resulting from these proofs is based on objective grounds, I submit that it involves an employment of the determining power of judgment³².

³¹ KU, AA 05, § 90, p. 463; Eng. trans. p. 327.

³² However, there is a complication here. Kant lists inferences from analogy, inferences for probable opinion, and for establishing hypotheses as cases of proofs based on theoretical grounds (KU, AA 05, § 90, p. 463; Eng. trans. p. 327). In the *Jäsche Logic*, inductive inferences and inferences from analogy are treated as inferences of the reflective power of judgment (I. Kant, *Logik*, in AA 09, §§ 82-84, pp. 132-133; Eng. trans. by J.M. Young, *Jäsche Logic*, in *Lectures on logic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 625-627). This suggests that we should consider takings-to-be-true arising from these inferences as exercises of the reflective power of judgment. I think there is an important distinction to be made, here. Kant considers analogy and induction inferences of the reflective power of judgments because they are forms of reasoning that proceed from the ‘particular’ to the ‘universal’ (see KU, AA 05, § IV, p. 179; Eng. trans. pp. 66-67). Therefore, there is certainly an exercise of the reflective power of judgment involved. A different issue is how we form the taking-to-be-true toward the ‘universal’ that we identify as a result of these inferences. In § 90, Kant links one function of the power of judgment to the way in which we develop different forms of taking-to-be-true. It is with respect to this function that it is plausible to think that inductive proofs and proofs by analogy that provide objective grounds for our taking-to-be-true require an exercise of the determining power of judgment, too. To see this, consider cases in which we arrive at empirical knowledge through inductive procedures. Being inductive, these procedures will involve an exercise of the reflective power of judgment. And yet, if we think of the taking-to-be-true that we have toward the results of these procedures, it seems plausible that it arises through an exercise of the determining power of judgment.

What about exercises of the reflective power of judgments that do not result in moral belief? That there are such exercises is clear. Aesthetic judgments, teleological judgments about organisms or nature in general and reflective judgments that accompany our search for new empirical concepts and empirical laws are all applications of the reflective power of judgment. They do not involve moral believing. The question is whether these applications of the faculty result in a different form of taking-to-be-true, were this non-moral belief, opinion, or something else. In Section 6, I will argue that we should treat the assumption of the principle of purposiveness in reflective judgments directed at empirical cognition as a case of what I call practical opinion. Given the aim of the present section, let me conclude by showing that these applications cannot result in non-moral beliefs. This is the case because Kant, in the passage above, explicitly maintains that the exercise of the reflective power of judgment that results in moral belief is the only one in which we can legitimately attain a conviction on the basis of non-theoretical grounds³³. Given that we can call conviction only those taking-to-be-true that are both subjectively sufficient³⁴ and based on a correct evaluation of the grounds we have³⁵, Kant is asserting that it is only in the case of moral belief that we can have a legitimate subjectively sufficient taking-to-be-true based on non-theoretical grounds. But since subjective sufficiency is a condition for belief in general³⁶, moral belief is the only type of belief according to the passage in question.

³³ KU, AA 05, § 90, p. 463; Eng. trans. p. 327.

³⁴ KrV A822/B850; Eng. trans. p. 686. As I already suggested in the previous section and in agreement with Pasternack (*Kant on Opinion*, pp. 43-4), I take subjective sufficiency to refer to the firmness of our taking-to-be-true (see also Gava, *Kant on Conviction and Persuasion*, in *Kant on Freedom and Human Nature*, ed. by L. Filieri and S. Møller, London, Routledge, 2023, pp. 135-150, p. 143). However, the point I am making here is independent of this approach to subjective sufficiency.

³⁵ See: G. Gava, *Kant on Conviction and Persuasion*.

³⁶ KrV A822/B850; Eng. trans. p. 686.

4. *Two senses of subjective sufficiency*

I now wish to suggest that Kant's restriction of the scope of belief in the third *Critique* resolves a tension in Kant's account of belief in the first *Critique*. This tension rests on the fact that Kant uses two incompatible senses of subjective sufficiency at the same time³⁷.

As I already mentioned above, in the Canon of pure reason, Kant characterizes belief as a taking-to-be-true that is objectively insufficient but subjectively sufficient. I suggested that subjective sufficiency refers to the firmness of our taking-to-be-true. Moreover, we also saw that Kant equates conviction with subjectively sufficient takings-to-be-true³⁸ that are legitimate as based on a correct evaluation of the grounds of the taking-to-be-true³⁹.

Given that Kant describes belief in general as a subjectively sufficient taking-to-be-true and he equates conviction with legitimate or justified subjectively sufficient takings-to-be-true, one would expect that all forms of belief, be they pragmatic, doctrinal or moral, are capable of conviction. Instead, Kant explicitly describes only moral belief as a taking-to-be-true based on practical grounds that is capable of conviction⁴⁰. Moreover, he claims that pragmatic belief «has only a degree»⁴¹. He uses the example of betting in order to show that even if we are ready to act on the assumption that a certain proposition is true when the stakes are low, our readiness to proceed in that way may radically change in we raise the stakes. He presents this test as way of checking whether our taking-to-be-true is firm enough to be subjectively sufficient and to be called a conviction⁴². Accordingly, the claim that pragmatic belief

³⁷ Stevenson (*Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge*) and Chignell (*Belief in Kant*) also ascribes to Kant two incompatible senses of subjective sufficiency. However, their view is different from mine, since they do not link subjective sufficiency in any of the senses they identify to the firmness of the taking-to-be-true. By contrast, both senses of subjective sufficiency that I here discuss are related to firmness.

³⁸ KrV A822/B850; Eng. trans. p. 686.

³⁹ See Gava, *Kant on Conviction and Persuasion*.

⁴⁰ KrV, A829/B857; Eng. trans. p. 689; see also Log, AA 09 p. 72; Eng. trans. p. 576.

⁴¹ KrV, A825/B853; Eng. trans. p. 687.

⁴² KrV, A824/B852; Eng. trans. p. 687.

has only a degree means that there are situations in which it would fail the test for subjective sufficiency and conviction. But this conflicts with Kant's claim that all beliefs are subjectively sufficient.

This tension in Kant's characterization of the subjective sufficiency of belief highlights that Kant actually uses two senses of subjective sufficiency in his description of belief, one that applies to belief in general and one that only applies to moral belief. Let us call these two types of subjective sufficiency conditional subjective sufficiency and unconditional subjective sufficiency, respectively. A taking-to-be-true is conditionally subjectively sufficient when our confidence in the truth of a proposition is enough to act on the assumption that it is true. In this sense, Kant sometimes describes belief as a taking-to-be-true that is «enough for action»⁴³. However, the taking-to-be-true is only conditionally subjectively sufficient because our confidence in the truth of the proposition in question would not be enough to act on it if the situation in which we are radically changed (for instance, if the stakes raise). A taking-to-be-true is unconditionally subjectively sufficient if our confidence in the truth of a proposition is enough to act on it no matter what the stakes are and independently of changes in the situation in which we are.

Kant uses the first sense of subjective sufficiency when he claims that all beliefs are subjectively sufficient. He uses the second sense when he stresses that only moral belief is capable of conviction. One way to explain Kant's restriction of the scope of belief in the third *Critique* is to say that he resolves this ambiguity and identifies subjective sufficiency with unconditional subjective sufficiency. As a consequence of that, moral belief becomes the only taking-to-be-true based on practical grounds that is subjectively sufficient. Accordingly, it also becomes the only form of belief.

5. *The need of the understanding*

I now wish to argue that that the assumption of the principle of purposiveness in exercises of the reflective power of judgment directed at empirical cognition presents essential characteristics of

⁴³ Log, AA 09, p. 68n; Eng. trans. p. 572.

takings-to-be-true based on practical considerations. In order to make this point, I compare Kant's identification of a need of the understanding in the third *Critique* with his discussion of needs of reason in the *Orientation essay*.

As I mention in Section 1, in the *Orientation essay*, Kant presents a version of his moral argument for the belief in God. What is distinctive of this version is that it frames the discussion by identifying two essential needs of reason (*Bedürfnisse der Vernunft*). There is first a theoretical need of reason⁴⁴, according to which we can be justified in assuming that a certain object exists if this is our only way of rendering some phenomena intelligible to us. Kant gives the example of our assumption of the existence of God as a way of making sense of how the different contingent things existing in the world can have a ground⁴⁵. Obviously, Kant bases his moral argument on the second need of reason he discusses, which is practical and concerns the possibility of the highest good⁴⁶.

For my purposes, it is important to emphasize three things about Kant's description of the theoretical need of reason. First, Kant is explicit that this need can legitimate an assumption⁴⁷. However, this assumption cannot be rational belief, which can only be based on the practical need of reason. Rather, it is rational hypothesis, which is «an opinion sufficient to hold something true on subjective grounds simply because one can never expect to find grounds other than these on which to explain *certain given effects*, and because reason needs a ground of explanation»⁴⁸. This gets me to the second thing I want to highlight. The theoretical need of reason is a need of intelligibility or explainability. It points toward the only way in which we can explain or make sense of some phenomena that are

⁴⁴ I. Kant, *Was heißt sich im Denken orientiren?*, in AA 08, p. 139; Eng. trans. by A.W. Wood and G. di Giovanni, *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 12.

⁴⁵ WDO, AA 08, p. 138; Eng. trans. pp. 11-12.

⁴⁶ WDO, AA 08, p. 139; Eng. trans. p. 12.

⁴⁷ WDO, AA 08, pp. 138-139; Eng. trans. p. 11-12.

⁴⁸ WDO, AA 08, p. 141; Eng. trans. p. 14.

already given. Third, Kant stresses that while the theoretical need of reason is conditioned, the practical need of reason is unconditioned, as based on the moral law. He writes: «we must assume the existence of God *if we want to judge* about the first causes of everything contingent»⁴⁹.

The principle of purposefulness is a principle according to which we treat nature as if it were created by a supreme intellect in a way that is cognizable to us in its empirical features. We assume this principle because our a priori knowledge of nature does not rule out that nature presents a variety of empirical forms and a manifoldness of empirical laws, which makes it impossible for us to attain cognition of them. Kant explicitly links the assumption of the principle to a need of the understanding (*Verstandesbedürfnis*). For example, he writes:

This correspondence of nature in the multiplicity of its particular laws with our need to find universality of principles for it must be judged, as far as our insight goes, as contingent but nevertheless indispensable for the need of our understanding, and hence as a purposiveness through which nature agrees with our aim, but only as directed to cognition⁵⁰.

A few pages before, he similarly speaks of «a necessary aim» (*notwendigen Absicht*), which he also labels as a «need of the understanding» (*Bedürfnis des Verstandes*) in brackets⁵¹. There are important structural similarities between Kant's use of needs of reason in the *Orientation essay* and the role of the need of the understanding in the third *Critique*. Even in the context of this latter text, appeal to the need has the function of legitimating a certain assumption.

⁴⁹ WDO, AA 08, p. 139; Eng. trans. p. 12.

⁵⁰ KU, AA 05, § VI, p. 186; Eng. trans. p. 73.

⁵¹ KU, AA 05, § V, p. 184; Eng. trans. pp. 70-71. One finds passages where Kant connects the assumption of the principle of purposiveness to a need in the *First introduction*, too. See I. Kant, *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in AA 20, pp. 205, 210, 214, 216; Eng. trans. by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, *First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment*, in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 10, 14, 17, 19.

However, in order to clearly determine what kind of assumption this is and what its grounds are, it is essential to compare more closely Kant's discussion in the two texts. While it is natural to see the need of the understanding in the third *Critique* as strongly related to the theoretical need of reason in the *Orientation essay*, there are important differences to be noted.

One first difference concerns the nature of the need. We have seen that Kant characterizes the theoretical need of reason as a need of intelligibility or explainability. There are some given phenomena that can only be explained by assuming an object that is beyond the boundaries of our knowledge. The need of the understanding is different. We do not identify some given phenomena that are in need of explanation. Rather, we have an epistemic end: attaining cognition of nature in its empirical forms and laws. The need specifies how nature should be in order for us to be able to attain that end. Accordingly, the need in this case is better described as a practical need where the end of our practice is epistemic⁵². The assumption of a certain proposition (say, God exists) is not made because it directly serves a theoretical need (say, explaining how existing contingent things can have a ground). Rather, it is required to make a certain practice (say, our inquiry into empirical nature) rational (we would act irrationally if we researched the empirical features of nature without assuming that these are cognizable by us).

A second difference concerns the modal status of the need. Kant describes the theoretical need of reason as conditioned, which is another way to say that it is contingent. By contrast, the need of the understanding is necessary⁵³. Of course, this cannot mean that it is based on an unconditional obligation. It is only moral belief that can have the latter status, given that it ultimately rests on the moral law. The need to assume that nature agrees with the principle of purposiveness is necessary in another sense. The need captures conditions that are essential for the pursuit of knowledge at a very basic level. After all, that nature agrees with the principle of purposiveness, at least to a certain extent, is a condition for attaining empirical

⁵² This comes very close to the way in which I described doctrinal belief above.

⁵³ KU, AA 05, § V, p. 184; Eng. trans. pp. 70-71.

cognition in general. In this sense, we experience that need as soon as we look for new empirical cognitions in our everyday life. We do not need to be engaged in highly sophisticated scientific research. It is in this sense that the need of the understanding is necessary. It is not so for the theoretical need of reason that Kant discusses in the *Orientation essay*. Recall that Kant's main example concerns the need to render intelligible how existing contingent things can have a ground. This is clearly a philosophical question that arises at a very far end in our research into nature.

These differences are relevant to determine the kind of assumption that the need of the understanding legitimizes. In this case, it is inappropriate to consider the taking-to-be-true a rational hypothesis. This category was suitable to describe the taking-to-be-true based on the theoretical need of reason as discussed in the *Orientation essay*. That need was a need of intelligibility or explainability regarding some given phenomena. Given that we could not attain knowledge regarding the grounds of those phenomena, the partial taking-to-be-true regarding these grounds was called hypothesis. Our assumption of the principle of purposiveness has a completely different nature. We do not assume it in order to explain or render intelligible some given phenomena. We assume it to make our investigation of nature rational.

More importantly for my concerns, that the need of the understanding is not a need of intelligibility or explainability shows that the grounds of our assumption of the principle of purposiveness are not straightforward theoretical. I have described them as practical grounds for a practice where the end we pursue is epistemic (extending our empirical cognition of nature). But this means that the assumption of the principle of purposiveness in exercises of the reflective power of judgment directed at empirical cognition can be described as a taking-to-be-true based on practical considerations.

One last point I want to make concerns the strength of our taking-to-be-true toward the principle of purposiveness. Given that Kant describes the need of the understanding as necessary, one might think that it legitimizes a degree of confidence that is higher than what he calls rational hypothesis in the *Orientation essay*. If this confidence were firm enough to grant subjective sufficiency, the taking-to-be-true could be called belief. After all, I just suggested that

the grounds of our taking-to-be-true are practical in this case, and subjectively sufficient takings-to-be-true that are based on practical grounds are beliefs. Yet, as we established in Section 4, in the third *Critique*, Kant rules out that we can have beliefs that are non-moral beliefs, or, to say the same, takings-to-be-true based on practical but non-moral grounds that are capable of subjective sufficiency. Therefore, we must describe this form of taking-to-be-true differently.

6. *Practical opinion*

Up to this point, I have established that Kant continues to accept takings-to-be-true based on practical grounds that are not moral. This is the case for our assumption of the principle of purposiveness in exercises of the reflective power of judgment directed at attaining new empirical cognition. However, this takings-to-be-true cannot be called belief, since Kant in the third *Critique* recognizes moral belief as the only case of belief. Therefore, I now propose to introduce a new form of taking-to-be-true in Kant's classification of such forms. I begin by providing a description of this form and then specify in which sense it is below the level of conviction or subjective sufficiency.

In the classification of the forms of taking-to-be-true in the Canon of pure reason, the only form of taking-to-be-true that is below the level of conviction or subjective sufficiency is opinion, which is a taking-to-be-true based on objective grounds, where these grounds are however insufficient to yield knowledge⁵⁴. I do not see any conclusive reason why there should not be a legitimate form of taking-to-be-true below the level of subjective sufficiency when our grounds are practical. I call this form practical opinion. Like opinion, it is a taking-to-be-true that is both objectively and subjectively insufficient. That it is objectively insufficient means that the truth-conducive grounds that we have are insufficient to grant knowledge. This includes cases in which we do not have any objective ground at all and cases in which these grounds are simply insufficient for knowledge. That the taking-to-be-true is subjectively insufficient

⁵⁴ KrV, A822/B850; Eng. trans. p. 686.

means that it lacks unconditional subjective sufficiency, as it was characterized in Section 4. As I have suggested, this is the only form of subjective sufficiency that Kant accepts in the third *Critique*.

Unlike the standard case of opinion, in practical opinion the grounds that support our partial taking-to-be-true are practical in nature. This fits the account of the assumption of the principle of purposiveness that I have given above. We have an epistemic end, namely, extending our empirical cognition of nature. That nature is organized according to the principle of purposiveness is a condition for attaining this end. This condition is the object of what Kant calls the need of the understanding. We do not have truth-conducive grounds that rule out that nature is organized in that way. Therefore, in pursuing our end, we are justified in assuming the principle of purposiveness.

At this point, one might point out that Kant had good reason for failing to acknowledge takings-to-be-true based on practical grounds that are below the level of subjective sufficiency. After all, it is in the nature of these takings-to-be-true to guide action. Since we are rationally required or at least legitimated to act in a certain way, we are justified in forming the attitude that puts us in a position to act. Therefore, when we speak of takings-to-be-true justified on practical grounds, the confidence we have in the truth of a certain proposition must be high enough to enable us to act. It would be absurd to speak of takings-to-be-true based on practical grounds where the level of confidence we have would not be sufficient for acting. Since there is no action in cases like these, it would be odd to even speak of practical grounds.

This objection can be met by acknowledging that takings-to-be-true based on practical consideration need to be action-driving. However, this does not mean that all these takings-to-be-true must possess subjective sufficiency. Recall the distinction I draw in Section 4 between conditional subjective sufficiency and unconditional subjective sufficiency. A conditionally subjectively sufficient taking-to-be-true is one in which the confidence we have in the truth of a certain proposition is sufficient to act on it in certain situations, but insufficient to act on it no matter what the stakes are. An unconditionally subjectively sufficient taking-to-be-true is one in which the confidence we have in the truth of a certain proposition is sufficient

to act on it no matter what the stakes are. I suggested that Kant identifies the subjective sufficiency of a taking-to-be-true with unconditional subjective sufficiency in the third *Critique*. When we use this notion of subjective sufficiency, it is clear that a taking-to-be-true can lack it and yet be action-driving (in some situations). We must think of these cases when we speak of taking-to-be-true based on practical grounds that are below the level of subjective sufficiency.

What I am suggesting is that, differently from what Kant proposes in the Canon of pure reason⁵⁵, we can use the test of betting to distinguish not between conviction and persuasion⁵⁶, but between takings-to-be-true that are (unconditionally) subjectively sufficient and takings-to-be-true that are not. If we use the test specifically to draw a distinction within takings-to-be-true based on practical considerations, we get a tool to distinguish between belief and practical opinion. Belief is just moral belief in the third *Critique*. It is a taking-to-be-true where our confidence in the truth of a proposition is firm. It does not waver no matter what the stakes are. We are justified in having a taking-to-be-true that has this degree of firmness, given that the taking-to-be-true is based on a categorical obligation. By contrast, practical opinion is a taking-to-be-true where our confidence in the truth of a proposition is enough to act on the basis of it in certain situations. However, it wavers if the stakes change. Importantly, given that the ends that support our taking-to-be-true are not based on moral obligation, we would not be justified in having a taking-to-be-true where our confidence does not waver independently of the stakes.

Let me conclude this section by answering one questions that readers might have at this point⁵⁷. Why do I call the form of opinion

⁵⁵ KrV, A824-825/B852-853; Eng. trans. p. 687.

⁵⁶ Kant describes persuasion as a taking-to-be-true in which our evaluation of the grounds we have is wrong, such that we take ourselves to have grounds that justify our taking-to-be-true, but in fact we do not (see Gava, *Kant on Conviction and Persuasion*). In this sense, the distinction between persuasion and conviction has more to do with the question whether our taking-to-be-true is apt or justified. It has not to do with the firmness of our taking-to-be-true. Plausibly, a case of persuasion, namely a taking-to-be-true based on a wrong evaluation of our grounds, can be very firm.

⁵⁷ I thank two anonymous reviewers for pushing me on this issue.

that I have here singled out ‘practical’ instead of using other alternatives, like ‘pragmatic’ or ‘doctrinal’? I call it practical because I want to point out some commonalities with moral belief. In this sense, ‘practical’ takings-to-be-true are those that are based on practical considerations or grounds, namely, grounds that essentially depend on ends that we pursue in our practice. The point is to insist on the fact that there is still a form of taking-to-be-true based on practical grounds that are not moral in the third *Critique*. Of course, one can ask if there is a more specific notion that can better capture the practical opinion that we have toward the principle of purposiveness. Since, as we have seen, the taking-to-be-true is based on an epistemic end in this case, it is perhaps plausible to use the term ‘doctrinal practical opinion’⁵⁸. This would be a way to mark the similarities between this form of opinion and what Kant called doctrinal belief in the Canon. Importantly, using the term ‘doctrinal’ to indicate the nature of the end that provides the justification would not be in conflict with considering the opinion ‘practical’, given that the end in question would still count as a practical ground.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the attitude that we should have toward the principle of purposiveness is best described as practical opinion. This is a taking-to-be-true that is based on practical grounds but is below the level of conviction or subjective sufficiency. My account of the attitude we have toward this regulative principle is different from existing characterizations of the attitude we have toward regulative principles more generally, where these characterizations have customarily focused on the first *Critique* and have described the attitude as either knowledge, belief or hypothesis (or as involving no positive attitude at all). Additionally, identifying practical opinion as a specific form of taking-to-be-true

⁵⁸ Calling it simply ‘doctrinal opinion’ would risk to conceal the fact that it is a form of taking-to-be-true based on practical grounds.

allows us to tell a different story regarding the evolution of Kant's notion of belief. While it is true that Kant in the third *Critique* considers moral belief as the only case of belief, this does not mean that moral belief becomes the only taking-to-be-true based on practical considerations.

It might be claimed that my position is not relevantly different from the view of those interpreters who read the attitude we have toward regulative principles as a form of non-moral belief. The tension between conditional and unconditional subjective sufficiency that I displayed in Section 4 shows that there is an important sense in which Kant recognizes doctrinal and pragmatic belief as below the level of (unconditional) subjective sufficiency already in the first *Critique*. But this means that the shift from belief to practical opinion as a characterization of our taking-to-be-true toward regulative principles is more terminological than substantial. While I think it is true that Kant already envisioned in the first *Critique* that doctrinal and pragmatic belief are in a sense below the level of subjective sufficiency or conviction, it is incorrect to claim that the shift is only terminological. After all, the shift resolves a tension in Kant's account of subjective sufficiency and an ambiguity in his description of pragmatic and doctrinal belief. Introducing the notion of practical opinion enables us to make a conceptual distinction that Kant was not able to make in the first *Critique*. In this sense, the shift is substantial.

Finally, one might wonder what consequences does my position have for the notion of subjective sufficiency more generally. For I have focused on the subjective sufficiency of takings-to-be-true based on practical grounds. But what about takings-to-be-true based on objective grounds? Kant characterizes knowledge as a taking-to-be-true that is both subjectively and objectively sufficient. Using the characterization of subjective sufficiency that I have used in this paper for the case of knowledge would mean that knowledge is a taking-to-be-true where our confidence in the truth of a proposition is firm and does not waver no matter what the stakes are. Additionally, we are justified in having a taking-to-be-true that has this degree of firmness, given that it is based on objective grounds that provide (or at least asymptotically approach) certainty. Describing the subjective

sufficiency of knowledge in this way goes against reading Kant as a pragmatic encroacher regarding knowledge. Still, Kant is an encroacher regarding practical opinion⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ I would like to thank Ralf Bader, Chris Benzenberg, Davide Dalla Rosa, Johannes Haag, Lewis Wang, Marcus Willaschek, audiences in Potsdam, Fribourg and Frankfurt, and two anonymous referees for this journal for useful feedback on previous drafts of this paper. This work was supported by the Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca, PRIN 2022, Project: Next Generation ITA: Increasing trust, making future generations possible, PI: Tiziana Andina, grant number: 20224BPEXZ.