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Critique of Pure Reason

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cognition of the object itself (as in the application of the categories to their sensible schemata), but only a rule or principle[a] of the systematic unity of all use of the understanding. Now since every principle that establishes for the understanding a thoroughgoing unity of its use *a priori* is also valid, albeit only indirectly, for the object of experience, the principles of pure reason will also have objective reality in regard to this object, yet not so as to **determine** something in it, but only to indicate the procedure in accordance with which the empirical and determinate use of the understanding in experience can be brought into thoroughgoing agreement with itself, by bringing it **as far as possible** into connection with the principle[b] of thoroughgoing unity; and from that it is derived. A 666/B 694

I call all subjective principles that are taken not from the constitution of the object[c] but from the interest of reason in regard to a certain possible perfection of the cognition of this object,[d] **maxims** of reason.[118] Thus there are maxims of speculative reason, which rest solely on reason's speculative interest, even though it may seem as if they were objective principles.[e]

If merely regulative principles are considered as constitutive, then as objective principles[f] they can be in conflict; but if one considers them merely as **maxims,** then it is not a true conflict, but it is merely a different interest of reason that causes a divorce between ways of thinking.[g] Reason has in fact only a single unified[h] interest, and the conflict between its maxims is only a variation and a reciprocal limitation of the methods satisfying this interest.

In this way the interest in **manifoldness** (in accordance with the principle[i] of specification) might hold more for **this** sophistical reasoner,[j] while **unity** (in accordance with the principle[k] of aggregation) holds more for **that** one. Each of them believes that his judgment comes from insight into the object,[l] and yet he grounds it solely on the greater or lesser attachment to one of the two principles, neither of which rests on any objective grounds, but only on the interest of reason, and that could better be called "maxims" than "principles."[m] If I see A 667/B 695

[a] *Princip*
[b] *Princip*
[c] *Object*
[d] *Object*
[e] *Principien*
[f] *Principien*
[g] *Trennung der Denkungsart*
[h] *einiges*
[i] *Princip*
[j] *Vernünftler*
[k] *Princip*
[l] *Object*
[m] *Principien*

insightful men in conflict with one another over the characteristics of human beings, animals or plants, or even of bodies in the mineral realm, where some, e.g., assume particular characters of peoples based on their descent or on decisive and hereditary distinctions between families, races, etc., while others, by contrast, fix their minds on the thought that nature has set up no predispositions at all in this matter, and that all differences rest only on external contingency, then I need only consider the constitution of the object in order to comprehend that it lies too deeply hidden for either of them to be able to speak from an insight into the nature of the object.[a] There is nothing here but the twofold interest of reason, where each party takes to heart one interest or the other, or affects to do so, hence either the maxim of the manifoldness of nature or that of the unity of nature; these maxims can of course be united, but as long as they are held to be objective insights, they occasion not only conflict but also hindrances that delay the discovery of the truth,
A668/B696 until a means is found of uniting the disputed[b] interests and satisfying reason about them.

It is the same with the assertion of, or the attack on, the widely respected law of the **ladder of continuity**[c] among creatures, made current by Leibniz[119] and excellently supported by Bonnet,[120] which is nothing but a pursuit of the principle of affinity resting on the interests of reason; for observation and insight into the arrangements of nature could never provide it as something to be asserted objectively. The rungs of such a ladder, such as experience can give them to us, stand too far apart from one another, and what we presume to be small differences are commonly such wide gaps in nature itself that on the basis of such observations (chiefly of the great manifoldness of things, among which it must always be easy to find certain similarities and approximations) nothing can be figured out about the intentions of nature. The method for seeking out order in nature in accord with such a principle,[d] on the contrary, and the maxim of regarding such an order as grounded in nature in general, even though it is undetermined where or to what extent, is a legitimate and excellent regulative principle[e] of reason, which, however, as such, goes much too far for experience or observation ever to catch up with it; without determining anything, it only points[f] the way toward systematic unity.

[a] *Object*
[b] *streitig;* the first edition reads "*strittig*" (dubious).
[c] *kontinuierlichen Stufenleiter*
[d] *Princip*
[e] *Princip*
[f] *vorzeichnen*